



**FINANCE AND GROWTH COMMITTEE MEETING
By Teleconference**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023
4:30 PM**

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Chair Toni Moran, Mario Conjura, Steve Ferrigno, Mike Switchenko

Absent: Ryan Aylesworth, Shamim Patwa, Prithvi Satish

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Joshua Stern

1. Call to Order

Chair Toni Moran called the meeting to order at 4:39 p.m.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Finance and Growth Committee Minutes from January 18, 2023

Mike Switchenko made a motion to approve the minutes of January 18, 2023. Mario Conjura seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Review of December 31, 2022 Financials

Cynthia van Zelm noted the memo from Interim Finance Director Cherie Trahan outlining the December 31, 2022 financials. She said the Partnership's membership campaign will begin in early March, which is slightly later than usual.

Ms. van Zelm pointed to the Fund 270 page and said the budgets of some of the events have been combined into spring/summer and fall/winter categories, while the Festival and other major events still have their own line items. She said the deficit shown under Paterson Square Events is inaccurate and was due to a coding error that is being corrected. Events will begin for the year with Poetry Month in April, the Summer Stroll May 25, and the Bike Tour June 3.

Ms. van Zelm said \$4,000 out of the Town Square Project account will be used to engage the UConn Landscape Architecture program for their work on the Square. They will begin by holding a walkthrough on February 22, with one class taking inventory of the downtown infrastructure and another class making recommendations. The plan is for the students or professors to present to the Board in May.

Ms. van Zelm said the payroll for LAZ was higher in December because there were five Saturdays and therefore three pay periods that month, and because LAZ was fully staffed at the time and had employees who were able to work longer on Saturdays.

In response to a question from Ms. Moran, Ms. van Zelm said the increase in revenue over expenditures is due to UConn making its contribution as a lump sum while the Town makes a quarterly contribution.

Steve Ferrigno made a motion to recommend approval of the December 31, 2022 financials to the Partnership Board. Mr. Switchenko seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Update on Downtown Storrs Strategic Action Plan and Downtown Storrs

Ms. Moran and Ms. van Zelm noted that Brooklyn Dumpling Shop closed. Indo-American café Spice Venue recently opened in the former Fresh Fork Café space. Ms. van Zelm and Joshua Stern said Kathmandu Kitchen is under new ownership and has brought back their lunch buffet on Fridays.

Ms. van Zelm said the Partnership has been looking into ways to activate the empty downtown storefronts. Local artist Jillian Welenc has painted a mural in the former Bliss space.

Ms. van Zelm said the second annual Taste 2 Towns Restaurant Week will take place February 20 – March 5. Lt. Gov. Bysiewicz will be holding a press conference about Restaurant Week this Friday at Trigo Wood Fired Pizza. Ms. van Zelm said marketing efforts are in progress for Restaurant Week, and Jorgensen will be placing inserts about it in their event programs; members of the Restaurant Week team promoted it on John Murphy's WILI show last week.

Ms. van Zelm said the property owner on Wilbur Cross Way said negotiations to fill the Grille 86 space have been taking place.

Ms. van Zelm said signage consultant Merje has almost completed the programming for the Town's wayfinding and signage plan. An informational presentation for the Town Council is planned for February 27. In response to a question from Ms. Moran, Ms. van Zelm said funding for the signage plan came out of the Town marketing budget and the signs will come out of the capital budget. She will be meeting soon with Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth to discuss Partnership staff Downtown Storrs operations roles.

Ms. Moran said the first public participation meeting for the development of a master plan for the Parks and Recreation Department will take place tonight. The Partnership will be a partner in this effort.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Conjura made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ferrigno seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Minutes taken by Joshua Stern