

Downtown Providence District Management Authority

Operations Committee Minutes

June 13, 2006 2pm

**Present: Mike Corso, Chris Placco, Maria Ruggieri, Joe DiBattisita,
Bob Gagliardi, Richard Lappin**

Dan Baudouin, Frank Zammarelli, Frank LaTorre, Leslie Huikko

1. Report on June 6, 2006 RIDOT sidewalk survey.

The survey was successful in identifying and prioritizing the sidewalks for replacement on the 6 designated streets. The work is anticipated to begin in spring 2007 with the most easily-repaired sections replaced first. When a section of a sidewalk is determined to be in need of replacement, the entire block will be replaced. The more complicated replacement projects will be the second phase of the project. The ADA funding for this project allows for 3% of the budget to be spent on landscaping. AS a result, RIDOT is coordinating with City Forrester Doug Still to purchase the trees that will be needed and having them planted after the repairs. The committee encouraged Frank LaTorre to continue working closely with RIDOT to facilitate these more difficult replacements, as they are a priority. Frank L will also inquire as to the possibility of installing bollards to preserve the integrity of the replaced sidewalks.

2. New “graffiti offenses and rewards” ordinance

Rita Murphy from City Hall has proposed a new ordinance regarding graffiti that has passed or will pass soon. It is a much more comprehensive ordinance than the one it replaces. It provides for a reward for information leading to the conviction of offenders, a fine of up to \$1,000 for any offense, a maximum of 100 hours of community service for a first offense and 200 hours for a subsequent offense. The ordinance also addresses the sale of graffiti materials to minors and time limits for graffiti removal by property owners. As this is a City ordinance, the City will be responsible for enforcement. As a component of the Mayor's graffiti removal initiative, 3 vans will be equipped with staff and graffiti removal equipment to be used throughout the city. Frank L. reminded City Hall that the DID can no longer be responsible for graffiti removal at Waterplace Park and encouraged them to develop a comprehensive plan to address that area.

3. Groundwork Providence/DID flower planting, maintenance, watering

Thomas Brendler will complete his tenure as the Executive Director on Friday June 16 due to financial issues at GroundWork Providence. Jenn Cole of the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program will be formally stepping in to see our partnership through to the completion date of October 26, 2006, and Mr. Brendler has committed to remaining informally involved. The entire program is still expected to cost \$22,000. The DID is contributing \$12,000, and \$10,000 is being collected from contributors and adopt-a-spot participants. Public

feedback has indicated that the planters need more plants in them, so GroundWork is focusing on supplementing the existing plants this week. National Grid has been approached for permission to add hanging baskets to their poles, and the DID awaits an answer. Frank L. will forward the picture of the hanging basket model to committee members for their review.

4. Report on Streetlight Committee meeting.

This committee is convened by the Mayor and led by Garry Bliss, and Frank LaTorre and Joe DiBattista are participating to represent the interests of the DID. The committee had its initial meeting last week and is intent on improving the lighting downtown. The first phase is a complete survey of National Grid and Johnson Controls lightpoles. Once the inventory is complete, the second phase is to ensure that all poles are maintained and fully functional. Lastly, a comprehensive plan will be developed to add more lighting via tax incentives to property/building owners. The next meeting is next month.

5. Trash receptacles and smoking butlers update

The DID has not yet received the \$40,000 from the Community Development Block Grant that was awarded for trash receptacles, but anticipates receiving the check this month. The Steel Yard has committed to producing 60 of the revised model receptacles for a total cost of \$41,898. The order will not be placed until the funding is received. Thirty-six smoking butlers were purchased for the \$2,500 ear-marked for this purpose. They arrived today and will be placed in

the areas of highest need, as determined by the Block-By-Block Clean Team.

6. Report from Frank Zammarelli, Block-By-Block Operations Manager

Tree-well mulching has been on hold for 2 weeks. The weed eradication program is starting up. All equipment and vehicles have been serviced and painted. The decals are on order.

Sidewalks pressure-washing is in full-force with significant results. Gum stains the sidewalks badly, the pressure-washing does not remove this stain completely. Block-By-Block sidewalk repairs have been limited to an area on Empire St. This remains a priority and a service the DID is interested in offering to the District.

7. Other business

Maria raised two concerns brought to her as President of the Downtown Neighborhood Association by residents of the Cosmopolitan, Regency, and Peerless buildings. Trash is being picked up at 4:45am when the City ordinance states that pick-up may not happen prior to 7am. Additionally, there is regularly a person, who is believed to be a City employee, using a leaf blower at 3am. Frank LaTorre will speak with John Nickelson and Rita Murphy about these issues and Maria will write a letter to City Hall and the landlords as the President of the Downtown Neighborhood Association.

Chris Placco announced that Johnson and Wales will be renovating

the comfort station in front of PPAC to prepare it for use as a Police substation. Johnson and Wales will also pay for the utility costs.

The committee agrees that would be beneficial to have a professional provide over-sight for a comprehensive plan for downtown. This professional would be charged with clarifying an overall concept for the Downtown Providence streetscape and provide a long-term plan allowing for coordinated efforts and well-planned funding requests.