

# **APPROVED**

**Downtown Providence District Management Authority**

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 15, 2011**

## **1. Roll Call**

**Chairman Lappin called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.**

**Directors present: Umberto Crenca, Wendy Doyle-Spatcher, Evan Granoff, Susan LaPidus, and Richard Lappin.**

**Ex Officio Members present: Diana Burdett, Lisa Paratore**

**Others present: Councilman Bryan Principe, City of Providence, Cliff Wood, Director of Greater Kennedy Plaza, Dan Baudouin, Executive Director of The Providence Foundation; Joelle Kanter, The Providence Foundation Program Manager; Frank LaTorre, DID Director of Public Space; Frank Zammarelli, Block By Block Operations Manager, and Robin Remy, DID Accounting Manager.**

## **2. Approval of the minutes for the July 21, 2011, meeting**

**Director Granoff motioned to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2011, Board meeting. Director LaPidus seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:**

**Director Crenca Yes**

**Director Doyle-Spatcher Yes**

**Director Granoff Yes**

**Director LaPidus Yes**

**Director Lappin Yes**

**Therefore the motion passed.**

### **3. City of Providence Update**

**Frank LaTorre is working with the city to identify locations of all utility cuts and ensuring that the city has contractors fill in the cuts properly when utility work is completed. Frank is urging the city to repaint crosswalks.**

**Frank organized a meeting with Dept. of Public Works, Mayor's representative, Fire Chief, Chief of Police, Public Safety Commission Pare, Steve Durkee of Cornish Associates, and building owners to resolve the ongoing problem of dumpsters and trash blocking access to Worcester Street. He sees this meeting as evidence of improved responsive by the city.**

**Bike racks installed by the DID are not holding into brick sidewalks; the DID will review having bike racks reinforced with concrete footings.**

**The owner of the historic building façade is working with the city to**

**get the steel support structure moved to the rear of the façade. The owner is working with a developer as well as the City of Providence, Providence Preservation Society, and the Revolving Fund to preserve the façade and develop the open land into a park. The city wants the steel moved prior to repaving Weybosset Street. If the steel is removed prior to November, the paving can be completed in 2011.**

#### **4. Financial Report**

##### **Monthly Financial Reports**

**Robin Remy presented the financials for August 2011.**

**The Statement of Financial Position reflects large cash deposits. Robin will arrange to move funds to a CD at a new bank. Dan Baudouin noted that Net Unrestricted Assets includes approximately \$70,000 of unspent budgeted items from FY 2011. Robin will provide detail to support this \$70,000 at the next board meeting.**

**The Statement of Operations shows taxable revenue below budget due to a court-ordered reduction in property value on the Biltmore Hotel and exempt revenue over budget due to new contributions from Providence Housing Authority and Providence Public Library. Clean and Safe labor costs are approximately \$5,000 over budget year-to-date due to overtime incurred to remove and reinstall hanging baskets when Hurricane Irene hit Providence. However, recent staff changes with the Clean and Safe ambassadors are projected to result**

**in approximately \$15,000 less in annual labor costs; this amount will help offset these unforeseen overtime costs and provide a cushion for future unplanned expenses.**

**The Collections Report shows 94% of assessments have been collected for 4th quarter FY 2011 and 1st quarter FY 2012. Robin will make a renewed effort to collect delinquent amounts.**

**Director LaPidus motioned to accept the August 2011 financials as presented, Director Granoff seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:**

**Director Crenca Yes**

**Director Doyle-Spatcher Yes**

**Director Granoff Yes**

**Director LaPidus Yes**

**Director Lappin Yes**

**Therefore the motion passed.**

#### **5. Thayer Street District Management Authority (TSDMA)**

**Dan Baudouin requested board approval to negotiate a contract with TSDMA to provide administrative services (billing, collections, accounting, etc.) to be billed out at \$60 per hour. Either party will be able to cancel the contract with 30 days' notice. Director LaPidus motioned to approve contract negotiation, Director Doyle seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:**

**Director Crenca Yes**

**Director Doyle-Spatcher Yes**

**Director Granoff Yes**

**Director LaPidus Yes**

**Director Lappin Yes**

**Therefore the motion passed.**

## **6. Economic Development Joint Initiative**

**Dan Baudouin distributed the Office Marketing, Recruitment, and Retention work plan matrix. The first item involves marketing the knowledge district/downtown. RIEDC has committed \$250,000 toward this campaign, and the Chamber of Commerce will raise approximately this same amount from their efforts. Now that the city has named James Bennett as Director of the EDC, the city is reviewing this initiative. In the future, Dan will request funds from the DID to contribute to these marketing efforts.**

**Dan discussed the importance of staying in touch with existing businesses. He suggested the need to develop a formal process to interview businesses and determine what issues they are experiencing. The directors also put forth the idea of fostering a city image that inspires workers to “want to work downtown,” thus drawing potential employers to the city. Director Crenca suggested identifying and clearing up any misconceptions about problems with leasing space downtown.**

**Directors discussed the high commercial real estate. The Providence Revenue Commission has been established and charged with recommending property tax reforms for the city. The Commission will hold a meeting on September 20, 2011, to hear input from the business community. Dan distributed information about the meeting; he asked board members to attend this meeting and to urge other business owners to attend as well.**

#### **7. Report from the Director of Public Space**

**Frank LaTorre discussed the recent meeting with parking lot operators. Some operators have already agreed to contribute funds toward the parking ad campaign. The Parking Advisory Committee will hold a joint press conference with the Mayor on October 12 to announce the new customer-friendly parking website.**

**The sidewalk brick repairs are moving along. Paving of Westminster Street from Dorrance to Exchange Street will be completed as part of Phase III, which also includes the redesign of Emmett and LaSalle Squares.**

**The Hospitality Resource Partnership will meet with Public Safety Commissioner Pare on September 21 to discuss nightclub licensure issues. There are two appointments to the Licensing Board coming up. The DID is focused on ensuring that the Mayor is aware of all critical concerns of the HRP.**

## **8. Marketing Report**

**Joelle Kanter introduced the newly designed downtown and parking websites. Using the laptop computer and video projector, Joelle connected to the sites through the internet and presented the key features of each site.**

**The wayfinding signage bids have been reviewed and narrowed to four finalists. The committee will be reviewing references and making their final selection within the next few weeks.**

## **9. Greater Kennedy Plaza Report**

**Cliff Wood with the Greater Kennedy Plaza Coalition presented the vision for Greater Kennedy Plaza. The Providence Foundation has applied to the Champlin Foundation for grant funding to install upgraded electrical utilizes and lighting.**

**Dan Baudouin mentioned that the City of Providence had received an energy efficiency grant that was used to replace bulbs in existing lighting fixtures with high efficiency bulbs. Additionally, grant funds have be obtained to cover the cost of installing decorative lighting and a permanent stage in the park.**

**Dan requested that the DID board allocate \$2,000 to contribute to the local match for the Champlin Foundation grant. Director Crenca motioned to approve, Director Doyle seconded the motion, and a roll**

**call vote was held as follows:**

**Director Crenca Yes**

**Director Doyle-Spatcher Yes**

**Director Granoff Yes**

**Director LaPidus Yes**

**Director Lappin Yes**

**Therefore the motion passed.**

#### **10. Report from Block-By-Block**

**Ground gardens were not damaged by Hurricane Irene; however, flowers in the street planters were severely damaged and had to be removed and replaced.**

**Tropical Storm Katia created massive amounts of debris in the downtown. In the area between Greene Street and I-195, approximately two tons of debris was removed by the Clean and Safe crew. The second round of debris clean-up was in the area between Dorrance and the Providence River. The crew is beginning their final round of debris removal and weed eradication this week.**

#### **11. Other business**

**Councilman Bryan Principe discussed the following items:**

- Thank you to Frank LaTorre for his work in bringing together all city decision-makers when working on issues affecting downtown**

**Providence. Bryan has received positive feedback to have more of these meetings on a regular basis.**

- The Mayor has received numerous compliments about the flower program.**
- The owners of the Fogarty building have applied to the Zoning Board for permission to demolish the building and building a surface parking lot.**
- In the wake of Bank of America's (BOA) announcement of plans to lay off 30,000 employees nationwide, someone should make a pitch to Bank of America to move employees from other cities to Providence when they begin consolidating offices. It is not good enough to focus only on having BOA renew their existing lease; we need to repopulate the offices in that building and have those workers in the city creating a demand for services and supporting the local economy.**

**Bert Crenca announced the upcoming installation of a 45' x 50' wave/oceanscape mural on the building wall abutting the Coastway Credit Union parking lot.**

## **12. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Robin J. Remy**

**Accounting Manager, Downtown Improvement District**