

# **APPROVED**

**Downtown Providence District Management Authority**

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, January 19, 2012**

## **1. Roll Call**

**Chairman Lappin called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.**

**Directors present: Umberto Crenca, Joseph DiBattista, Wendy Doyle-Spatcher, Robert Gagliardi, Susan LaPidus, Richard Lappin, John Macliver, Christopher Placco**

**Ex Officio Members present: David Pontarelli, Lisa Paratore, Diana Burdett, Alan Chille, Joe Wilson, Jr.**

**Others present: 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, Robin Remy, DID Accounting Manager**

## **2. City of Providence Update**

**David Pontarelli with the city of Providence Department of Public Works reported the old VHP electric box will be removed, and a new electric box will be installed in back of the sidewalk area away from pedestrian traffic. Open utility cuts will be receive temporary**

patching; a database will be developed to record all pending utility patches; permanent patching will be performed in the spring 2012. The city has authorized spending for snow removal on sidewalks in highway overpasses; numerous bids have been received. Local 1033 donated two snow blowers to the city. Chestnut and Greene Streets will be repaved in the spring of 2012.

### **3. Approval of the minutes for the December 15, 2011, meeting**

Director DiBattista motioned to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2011, board meeting. Director Placco seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:

Director Crenca	Yes
Director DiBattista	Yes
Director Doyle-Spatcher	Yes
Director Gagliardi	Yes
Director LaPidus	Yes
Director Lappin	Yes
Director Macliver	Yes
Director Placco	Yes

Therefore the motion passed.

### **4. Program of Work**

Dan Baudouin presented the final version of the DID Program of Work. Dan voiced the need for board involvement with completing

**this ambitious program. Director Placco motioned to approve the Program of Work, Director Crenca seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:**

<b>Director Crenca</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director DiBattista</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Doyle-Spatcher</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Gagliardi</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director LaPidus</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Lappin</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Macliver</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Placco</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Therefore the motion passed.**

## **5. Financial Report**

### **Monthly Financial Reports**

**Robin Remy presented the financials for December 2011. The Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Operations reflect revenue and spending to be in line with the FY 2012 budget. The Collections Report shows a steady decrease in unpaid assessments.**

**A revised policy for collecting delinquent assessments will be finalized and presented to the city of Providence Tax Collector, John Murphy, for final approval. The DID office will contact local title**

**companies and condominium associations within the district to remind them to check for unpaid Downtown Improvement District assessments during real estate transactions.**

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

<b>Director Crenca</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director DiBattista</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Doyle-Spatcher</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Gagliardi</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director LaPidus</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Lappin</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Macliver</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Director Placco</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Therefore the motion passed.**

**Dan Baudouin discussed a new initiative being strengthened at The Providence Foundation and how there are common DID initiatives per the DID's Program of Work. The efforts are increased advocacy and strengthened Greater Kennedy Plaza initiatives. The DID can help by allocating \$10,000 to the Foundation for the management service that the Foundation provides. Dan reminded the Board that prior to the new management arrangement, the DID paid \$40,000 annually for**

these services. The Foundation has never charged the DID for its services but the \$10,000 would allow the Foundation to expand its efforts to implement initiatives that are important to each group and that require more public sector advocacy. The intention is to engage Cliff Wood to provide this expanded service. The Foundation has allocated \$30,000 from its funds for this effort. Director Crenca questioned what the DID role would be in determining advocacy issues, whether Cliff Wood would be advocating for the DID agenda or the Foundation agenda. Dan Baudouin stated that, so far, the agenda is the same for both organizations but regular updates will be provided to both Boards. Director Placco made a motion to approve the \$10,000 allocation from the Consultant budget item, conditional on reviewing the program in six months. Director Macliver seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:

Director Crenca	Yes
Director DiBattista	Yes
Director Doyle-Spatcher	Yes
Director Gagliardi	Yes
Director LaPidus	Yes
Director Lappin	Yes
Director Macliver	Yes
Director Placco	Yes

Therefore the motion passed.

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

**The Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation partnership has been approved and is moving forward. Their mission is to send the message to business outside Rhode Island about the advantages of locating business in downtown Providence. Joelle Kanter reviewed her Office Attraction work plan which focuses on initiatives to attract Rhode Island entrepreneurs and new office businesses into office space downtown.**

**Dan Baudouin reported on a recent DID staff meeting where methods of information-gathering and surveys regarding existing downtown office companies were discussed. The staff is considering various approaches, such as informal talks, a more scientific approach, consultants, etc. A staff recommendation will be forthcoming.**

**Director Crenca questioned how the Chamber of Commerce is handling quality of place in their marketing strategy and expressed concerns about inconsistent messages. Joelle Kanter will set up a meeting as soon as possible between Director Crenca and the Chamber office to address these issues. Director DiBattista stated the need to keep the focus on diversity and arts & culture in the city. Director Crenca discussed the need for revisioning our city.**

**Dan Baudouin reported the Bank of America's lease ends in April 2013. Going forward, BOA has a space requirement of 50,000 s.f.**

**Dan confirmed that Bank of America has committed to remaining in Providence; BOA will announce in February 2012 whether they will renew their lease to 2013 or relocate to another downtown location.**

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

**Frank LaTorre reported on the reconfiguration and rebuilding of Weybosset Street roadway and sidewalks. Alan Chille of Providence Performing Arts Center stated cars seem to be handling the new two-way traffic pattern, but pedestrians need to be alert and remember to check traffic from both directions. Remaining work will be completed in spring of 2012. The corner of Weybosset & Dorrance has tight turns now that the road has two-way traffic. PPAC will sponsor 10 new hanging baskets in front of the theater.**

**The next big project is rebuilding sidewalks in the Financial District. Frank is in constant contact with the Department of Transportation and Bryant Engineering to ensure the project keeps moving ahead as planned.**

**The DID has organized a merchants meeting to discuss on-street parking.**

**The Board of License has made the 3:00 am “soft closing” of nightclubs a permanent option for club owners. The DID and Hospitality Resource Partnership are continuing to push for new zoning regulations for nightclubs. They believe the combined**

regulation of property owners through zoning and club owners through licensing will help restrict undesirable club operators or unsuitable club locations. Director DiBattista made a motion to support requesting that the City Council require a special use permit for nightclubs; Director Doyle seconded the motion. Director Placco expressed concern about the lengthy zoning permit process deterring desirable business from coming into the city. Director Lappin questioned whether requiring zoning to issue a special use permit was a true solution or merely a way to work around a problematic licensing board. Other directors voiced reluctance to vote on supporting a law without knowing the entire scope. Dan Baudouin will bring all the information on the proposed zoning change to the February board meeting. With the motion made and seconded to support submitting the proposed zoning change, a roll call vote was held as follows:

Director Crenca (absent)

Director DiBattista Yes

Director Doyle-Spatcher Yes

Director Gagliardi No

Director LaPidus No

Director Lappin No

Director Macliver No

Director Placco No

Therefore the motion did not pass; those voting “no” indicated that

they voted “no” because they want more information.

## **8. Marketing Report**

Joelle Kanter reported on her continued work with designers to develop wayfinding signage for the downtown. Once the signage design is complete, she will turn her focus to fundraising in the upcoming months.

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

Frank Zammarelli reported his team is completely ready to handle snow removal. He is taking a complete inventory of DID trash receptacles to identify painting, repairs, or replacement needs.

## **10. Greater Kennedy Plaza**

Dan Baudouin requested that the board approve allocation of \$10,000 to The Providence Foundation to help with the Greater Kennedy Plaza initiative. (This \$10,000 is in addition to funds from budget line item Consultant Services which have previously been allocated to fund advocacy.) Cliff Wood made a presentation on public/private partnerships and their role in developing and managing downtown parks throughout the country. The end result has been an increase in nearby property values, rents and occupancies. The same benefits can be achieved with Greater Kennedy Plaza nearby; DID rate payers can benefit substantially. Cliff Wood discussed his plans for the upcoming six months and noted three main goals:

•Reorganize bus berths in Kennedy Plaza – This will involve working with representatives from the City of Providence planning and public programming departments. There are currently 11 lanes of traffic flowing through Kennedy Plaza; the plan is to eliminate the four middle lanes and create a small public space in the middle of the plaza. The City of Providence will issue a Request for Proposals to begin the center island; a selection committee to review the RFPs will likely include Cliff Wood and representatives from DID, The Providence Foundation, RIPTA, and the City of Providence.

•Increase programming and usage of Burnside Park

•Determine sustainability of an ongoing Greater Kennedy Plaza organization – Cliff will develop a work plan that details programming, staffing, and ongoing operational costs and identifies funding sources and long-term committed partners.

Director Doyle voiced concern about RIPTA's plan to establish sub-hubs outside the downtown area. She stated that many of the potential new businesses that will emerge as a result of economic development activities will employ lower-paid workers who typically rely on bus transportation to get to and from work. Cliff explained that the sub-hubs would be developed on those bus routes that do not have Kennedy Plaza as the final destination.

Director Placco made a motion to approve the allocation of \$10,000 to support the Greater Kennedy Plaza program, Director DiBattista seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:

**Director Crenca (absent)**

**Director DiBattista Yes**

**Director Doyle-Spatcher Yes**

**Director Gagliardi Yes**

**Director LaPidus Yes**

**Director Lappin Yes**

**Director Macliver Yes**

**Director Placco Yes**

## **11. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Robin J. Remy**

**Accounting Manager, Downtown Improvement District**