

Portland Downtown Board of Directors
Board Meeting minutes
Thursday January 19, 2017
549 Congress St



Present: Kim Volk, Josh Benthien (on phone), Ken Cianchette, Anastasia Contos, Denine Leeman, Brad McCurtain (on phone), Trish McLellan, Suzie Rephan, Alen Saric, Penny St. Louis, Erik Urbanek, Matt Veith,
Excused: Phil Haughey, Sarah Martin, Mike McDonald, Greg Mitchell, David Packard, Robyn Violette
Staff: Casey Gilbert, Taffy Eaton

Minute 1. Kim called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone

Minute 2. Motion to accept

- a) **December 15, 2016 Board meeting minutes:** On a motion made by Trish McLellan, seconded by Denine Leeman and unanimously adopted,
it was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Board Meeting of **December 15, 2016** be and hereby are accepted as proposed.

- b) **December Treasurer's Report:** Erik reviewed his summary report.

- Casey will address sponsorship revenue, event revenue and event expenses in her Executive Director's report
- Insurance expenses are lower because a new underwriter consolidated special events costs
- Denine, Casey and Kim have reviewed the 990 and will meet with accountant. The Board will be presented with completed 990 to vote on in February.

On a motion made by Denine Leeman, seconded by Penny St. Louis and unanimously adopted,
it was

RESOLVED: that the December financial statements and Treasurer's report be and hereby are accepted as presented.

Minute 3. Committee minutes:

The Chair requested acknowledgement of the enclosed committee reports: Merchant Committee, Events Committee, Legal Affairs Committee. On a motion made by Denine Leeman, seconded by Matt Veith and unanimously acknowledged following a discussion in which the following points were raised:

- Merchant Meeting minutes: Request clarification from John Peverada on the "If City Hall is closed, parking meters are free" comment. Kim will ask John at the 1/25/17 Parking & Transportation Committee meeting and John's wording will replace this comment.
- The Cultural Affairs Committee held a very-well-attended workshop on attracting sponsorships for non-profit organizations. The Chairs would like to do a presentation every other meeting, gathering input on what topics constituents are interested in at the alternate meeting. Penny suggested reducing the speaker expense for meetings by having Casey present at the next meeting. Suzie referred to Casey's workshop at a 2015 Merchant meeting which got everyone present involved in sharing their top concerns Downtown. It would be beneficial to get feedback from all the different constituents on the Cultural Committee.

- Kim suggested using non-profit venues for the meetings – MECA, MaineHealth, Portland Public Library and others

it was

RESOLVED: That the following Minutes of recent Committee Meetings be and hereby are acknowledged:

- Merchant (Retail) Committee (12/1/16)
- Events Committee (12/7/16)
- Legal Affairs Committee (12/20/16)

Minute 4. Other committee Reports:

1. **Ad hoc Committee on Panhandling:** Ken described the first meeting on January 9, 2017 as a formational meeting. There were about 14 people that expressed interest in serving on the ad hoc committee. Committee involvement requirements are that committee members must live in, work in or own property Downtown. It will be a working committee and will produce a recommendation for a plan of action to the District & Community Services Committee. Social, community and legal aspects, as well as safety concerns, will be covered. Discussion:
 - a. Casey spoke about the City’s pilot project for panhandling. It’s a day labor program modeled on an Albuquerque, NM program. Casey will meet with the senior advisor to the City Manager to learn more about the program. Perhaps Portland Downtown can partner somehow.
 - b. Josh commented that this pilot project might dovetail with graffiti removal efforts that the District & Community Services Committee is discussing.
 - c. People Ready hires day labor so it might be beneficial to see if they can be involved somehow.

2. **The Ad-Hoc Committee for City of Portland Master Agreement and SSA:** Denine received changes proposed by the District & Community Services Committee. She will create a redline draft of the SSA and put it on Google docs.
 - a. Amy has created an excel spreadsheet to track how much time is being spent on various tasks (ie. Sidewalk cleaning, winter operations, trash removal) by our downtown public works crew. In the past, the data was reported on each task simply as a “Yes” or “No” data point, but Amy has created a new way to track and report each task based on number of hours worked. This information will help the DCS Committee and Board make improvements and adjustments to future SSA contracts. Amy was asked to make the Public Works department aware of the proposed changes to the contract at the monthly Public Works meeting as a courtesy to them. They cancelled yesterday’s meeting due to the snow but they will meet next week.
 - b. There is some interest from Board members to see more proactive work from the Public Works crew. Kim suggested that See Click Fix is another tool that can be used to report issues. Amy and Casey walk the district daily and most agreed that we’re in good shape as far as reporting issues.

3. **Advocacy:**
 - a. **Update on Parking Study with City of Portland:** Kim
 - i. The study is in the final stages.
 - ii. Nell Donaldson with the City of Portland Planning Division will provide the Parking & Transportation Committee an update and potentially a draft of the parking study at the January 25th meeting
 - iii. Lori Paulette let Casey know that Portland Downtown’s costs are only \$7,500 vs the expected \$15,000. A PEDPIP matching grant will provide the matching \$7,500.

- iv. Kim suggested that the \$7,500 no longer needed might be put towards the Marketing Study and/or Don Shoup's students who may be doing a project for Portland Downtown. Don Shoup is coming to the Build Maine Conference to provide a keynote address on parking and parking-related development issues.

Minute 5. Executive Director's update – Casey distributed her report then sent the Board an updated version which is attached.

- Website improvements: Adam has added a password protected page on the website where board members can access important documents. Click on "About Us," then "Board Resources". The password was communicated in the Board meeting. The links in red are clickable. The Board thanked Adam for making this happen.
- Events over the last 3 years: (reports attached) More expenses have come in since the Executive Committee meeting, thus the report has been adjusted to reflect these changes. It is the first time in 3 years that we've seen a positive net revenue.
- Sponsorships made the difference. Merry Madness ticket sales increased and we sold all 1,200 tickets. We need big sponsorships every year to make money.
- Ken added that Portland Downtown received great feedback on all events.
- Portland Downtown presented a check for \$8,000 to Milestone Foundation, but due to contributions that were received after the press conference, Portland Downtown has now raised more than \$10,000. Casey thanked Suzie and the merchants for making such a big impact on Milestone Foundation. Casey got some help from PR specialist to help get media coverage for the check reveal.
- Casey showed the holiday event sponsor thank you books Adam produced through Shutterfly.
- The Hyatt sold out the rooms with the special Merry Madness rate.
- Feedback comes in from many avenues and a survey will be sent to the merchant group.
- Casey thanked the Board for their continued support.

Minute 6. Other business:

- Kim reminded Committee Chairs to keep the top 3 committee priorities in mind for the remainder of the 2017 fiscal year
- Board retreat: Casey said it will most likely be 2 half days at the end of February or early March
- Executive Director Employment Contract Review – Board went into Executive Session

There being no further business to come before the Board, Kim adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Taffy Eaton, Recorder

Executive Director's Report

December 2016

Light Up Your Holidays Events (December)

In last month's report, I recapped the Tree Lighting in Monument Square, Shop For A Cause, Holiday Window Display Contest and Elfternoon lunchtime shopping. This month, I have added a few notes on those events and have highlighted the success of the horse & wagon rides and Merry Madness.

Tree Lighting in Monument Square: This year, despite the soggy weather, we had a wonderful event! Thanks in a large part to our Presenting Sponsor – *Hood Eggnog* – as well as our other awesome sponsors, *MEMIC* and *Machias Savings Bank*. This was the first year (in recent history) that the event had positive net revenues – making nearly \$4,000 to support Portland Downtown's programs and services.

Shop For A Cause: In partnership with downtown businesses - through Portland Downtown's Merchant Committee - and *Machias Savings Bank*, Portland Downtown raised more than \$10,000 – plus \$2500 in medical scrubs and supplies – for Milestone Foundation. Though the press conference held on January 10th stated that we raised only \$8,000 – due to some late contributions, the total inched over the \$10,000 mark just this week (January 16-22). What an amazing gift for a very deserving organization! As well, Portland Downtown received tremendous news coverage – TV, print and social media. A big thank you to *Northeast Media Associates* for their in-kind assistance with PR. *Machias Savings Bank* also brought their entire marketing team into town – including videographers – to shoot an inspiring video around Shop For A Cause Day. We'll be sure to share the link to the video as soon as we can.

Holiday Window Display Contest: Portland Downtown staff hosted the window display judges on December 13th at the Portland Downtown office. Adam provided the judges – from local media and universities - with a clipboard and list of participating businesses. After viewing all of the windows, they returned to the office for some Taco Escobarr and deliberation. Winners were selected and presented with awards and recognition. Many of the prizes awarded were valued at \$1,000 or more, including an advertising prize package from the *Portland Press Herald*, the *Convention and Visitor's Bureau*, *Old Port Magazine*, *The Portland Phoenix* and Portland Downtown (ad space in our annual directory). The number of participants for this event increased from 35 in 2015 to 52 in 2016. As well, we were delighted to have *Portland Glass* as the event sponsor, which helped cover marketing and production costs associated with the event.

Elfternoon Lunchtime Shopping: The number of participants doubled from 2015 to 2016 (from 17 to 35). By all accounts, Elfternoon is becoming an event that is adored by local merchants and shoppers alike. The addition of stickers for shoppers donning the #elfternoon hashtag was positively received by merchants and consumers.

Horse & Wagon Rides: People absolutely LOVE the free horse & wagon rides that are provided each year by Portland Downtown in Monument Square. In year's past, this has been a negative line item in our budget, as

Portland Downtown has paid for the rides 100% from assessment revenues. This year - thanks to *People's United Bank, Northland, Casco Bay Ford* and the *Courtyard Marriott* - we were able to completely cover the cost of the rides. As well, we were able to provide VIP rides to our sponsors from Tommy's Park and thank the sponsors with large banners displayed on both sides of the wagon. Based on sponsor feedback, this was a wonderful opportunity and I can see this serving as a model for years to come.

Merry Madness: Held at the Portland House of Music and completely SOLD OUT (1200 tickets), this was a successful event by ANY measure. Happy sponsors, happy attendees, happy venue and delighted businesses. Controlling the number of attendees allowed us to predict our order quantities of big ticket items such as glasses, tote bags and food. The addition of the Merry Madness "snacks-to-go" bags ensured that every attendee had the same experience. Many of the food items were donated as well, which helped us to control costs. The most successful advertising was on-line through Facebook and Twitter. Another improvement this year was the number of volunteers, including many board members, who showed up to help make the event run perfectly. Kudos to all who pitched in! Merry Madness donates \$1 from every ticket sold to the Portland Press Herald Toy Fund, so this year we were able to present a check for \$1200 - another amazing contribution by our organization to a very important local cause. Thanks to *Hyatt Portland Old Port, SVN: The Urbanek Group, Machias Savings Bank* and *AARP Maine* for their partnership. Merry Madness netted a little more than \$8,000 this year – up from \$3100 in 2015.

Graciously thanking our sponsors: Adam, as always, came up with a simply perfect way to thank our sponsors. Created in Shutterfly, the hardcover book illustrates in words and captivating photos, the magic of our holiday events. A book was mailed with a personalized thank you note to all those who contributed to our **Light Up Your Holidays** event series. We have a limited number available for board members – if you would like a copy, please let me know.

Overall, 2016 was the most successful holiday event season in years. Our LUYH event series was "in the black" – positive net revenue – just shy of \$10,000.

A full financial breakdown of holiday events from 2014 – 2016 accompanies this report.

Other important updates

Board documents are now on-line! Thanks to the brainstorming sessions at Portland Downtown, staff was able to come up with a simple solution for the storage and access of important board documents. Simply log on to portlandmaine.com, click on the "About Us" tab and then click on "Board Resources". You will be prompted to enter a password. The current password is downtown549. The password can be easily changed when we have board turnover. From the Strategic Plan, to our Master and Supplemental Contract with the City, to board and committee notes – you'll find everything you need to help you stay informed.

February Greendrinks: Thanks to Amy's awesome writing skills, Portland Downtown was awarded the honor of being the nonprofit partner for February's GreenDrinks event! For those of you who are unfamiliar with the

event, GreenDrinks is a fundraising event that involves adult beverages. It is extremely well-attended (300-500 attendance) and has a wide audience. Portland Downtown will select and secure the venue, develop an interactive activity and help to market the event. In turn, we will get to educate attendees about our mission and will receive a check for \$1000! Mark your calendars for February 14th, 5pm-7pm – place TBD.

Committee Cliff Notes

Merchant: The Merchant Committee discussed upcoming holiday events and 2017 goals. The committee also heard from John Peverada about proposed improvements to the City's parking department technology infrastructure.

Events: The events committee completed planning and preparation for Merry Madness.

Marketing: The committee did not meet in December.

NLOC: The committee did not meet in December.

District & Community Services: The committee did not meet in December.

Parking & Transportation: The committee did not meet in December.

Advocacy Issues

Sound: The Sound Oversight Committee of the City of Portland is meeting monthly and is open to public comment. As part of the agenda, the committee reviews all of the noise complaints that the City's Police Department receives each month, regardless of whether or not they meet the 92dbL 'trigger' criteria. I continue to remain in contact with Belinda Ray, who is actively moving forward to ask staff and council to review current sound ordinances and whether there are conflicts that need to be resolved.

Parking & Transportation: Nell Donaldson from the City's Planning Department will meet with Portland Downtown's Parking & Transportation Committee in January to provide updates on the parking study conducted by Fort Hill Associates. The study was funded through a partnership with the City of Portland, Portland Downtown and supplemented with a PEDPID grant from the City. Jessica Grondin is drafting an RFP for a multi-modal marketing campaign, which will be presented to a large group of stakeholders for feedback before it is sent out to bid.

Panhandling: Ken Cianchette and Suzie Rephan are co-chairing the panhandling ad-hoc committee, a committee that has been formed with the blessing of the District & Community Services Committee. They have scheduled weekly meetings – each Thursday at 2:00pm at 549 Congress Street. The committee will establish members, research best practices and develop a list of recommendations to present to the DCS and the Portland Downtown board for consideration and potential endorsement. Once approved by the board, the advocacy letter and recommendations will be presented to the City of Portland's executive staff, Mayor and council.

Notes of interest

In December, I: was invited to City Hall by **Greg Mitchell** to hear from **Bill Needleman** and **Tuck O'Brien** about the proposed cold storage facility on West Commercial Street and the proposal by the Economic Development department to increase the height allowance to 70 feet for a large section of W. Commercial St, attended **PPH** event '*Like A Boss*' at Portland House of Music to hear from VIA CEO Leeann Leahy, attended **GPCOG** event at Portland Jetport Executive Terminal welcoming new municipal officials, welcomed VIP **horse & wagon ride sponsors** at Tommy's Park, attended City Council inauguration, met with **Mary Eschelman** and Erik Urbanek to discuss financial reports, met with James Morin from **Flowfold** to provide him an overview of Portland Downtown and to see how Flowfold can get more involved, went to Portland Ballet for "*Anything Helps God Bless*"- a play depicting the median strip panhandling ordinance and court case, met with Tim Delhanty from **Learning Works** for a Graffiti Busters 2016 program recap, attended *Maine Developers: Leadership In Action* **Lift 360** breakfast at Holiday Inn By The Bay, met with **NLOC** chairs to discuss goals and committee direction, met with Heather Davis – the new Executive Director of **Learning Works**, hosted holiday potluck party for Portland Downtown board members, staff and public works team, met with Tim Honey of **Creative Portland** board to learn about their upcoming Cultural Plan, met with Elizabeth Jones from the **PMA** to discuss their grand reopening event in conjunction with the March FFAW, met with Andrew Volk of **Hunt + Alpine Club** to discuss winter snow removal and the Yellow Zone ban, attended the **Sound Oversight Committee** at the Portland Police Department on Middle Street, and executed successful LUYH events.