

**Portland Downtown Board of Directors**  
Board Meeting minutes  
**Thursday September 21, 2017**  
**549 Congress St**



**Present:** Kim Volk, Ken Cianchette, Anastasia Contos (on phone), Mike Erickson, Phil Haughey, Denine Leeman, Sarah Martin, Mike McDonald, Trish McLellan, Greg Mitchell, David Packard, Alen Saric, Penny St. Louis, Peter Tousignant, Matt Veith, Robyn Violette

**Excused:** Suzie Rephan, Erik Urbanek

**Staff:** Casey Gilbert, Taffy Eaton, Amy Geren

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

**Minute 2.** Motion to accept

a) **August 17, 2017 Board meeting minutes:** On a motion made by Phil Haughey, seconded by Alen Saric and unanimously adopted following discussion:

- Kim asked the Board if we should renew the Lease now or wait. Denine said that she would review the price per square foot with Erik and update the Board at the next meeting. The Lease is not up until 2018 and does have extension built in at stated rates.

it was

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Board Meeting of August 17, 2017 be and hereby are accepted as proposed.

b) **August Treasurer's Report:** Casey reviewed Erik's attached summary report. On a motion made by Ken Cianchette, seconded by Sarah Martin and unanimously adopted following discussion:

- The timing of payroll causes it to appear over budget in August
- Casey is keeping her eye on the Cadet program expenses. There is a \$20,000 budget. Casey and Erik will use Amy's Cadet evaluations and look at the budget and send recommendations to Executive Committee for review. Kim mentioned using the extra \$2,000 from the Visitors Booth budget to balance out the Cadet Program deficit.
- We processed the Hometeam payment in September

it was

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

**Minute 3. Board member resignation:** Kim has told all Board members that Brad resigned from the Portland Downtown Board but continues to support the organization's mission. Brad played an important role in sustaining Portland Downtown and we thank him for that. Kim has the resignation letter available and Board members are welcome to review.

**Minute 4. Committee reports:** The Chair gave a quick overview of the enclosed committee reports: Merchant, Marketing & Events, District & Community Services, Night Life Oversight, Parking & Transportation, Legal Affairs

- Merchant: No additional comments on the attached minutes
- Marketing & Events Committee: There were no Board members present at the August meeting but there has since been a September meeting with Board members attending
- District & Community Services Committee: Committee name change discussion
- Night Life Oversight Committee: The North Point outdoor dining issue on Silver Street was addressed with the Public Works department. North Point has offered to share the cost of the sidewalk expansion in October 2018.
- Parking & Transportation: The Multi-modal Marketing RFP has been released by the City. METRO will be adding Gorham/Westbrook routes. Parking Study being finalized.
- Legal Affairs: No additional comment on the attached minutes

On a motion made by Denine Leeman, seconded by Mike McDonald and unanimously acknowledged it was

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

- Merchant Meeting (8/3/17)
- Marketing & Events Committee (8/8/17)
- District & Community Services (8/10/17)
- Night Life Oversight Committee (8/15/17)
- Parking & Transportation Committee (8/23/17)
- Legal Affairs Committee (9/6/17)

**Minute 5. Other Committee reports:**

- Advocacy – Kim asked Greg Mitchell for City updates. Greg reviewed some major projects:
  1. Cold storage project on West Commercial Street: This project is important to international shipping and for economic development for the state. There is a private lawsuit ongoing concerning the height of the building and view disruption. Kim asked whether there is anything Portland Downtown can do to assist the City. Greg thanked Kim but said not at this time. In the same area, Portland Yacht Services received a grant to accommodate larger ship repair services.
  2. The new WEX office building on Thames Street has been approved by City Council. WEX has an international footprint and wanted a Portland location additionally for talent attraction. They are growing and will maintain their South Portland location. A new parking garage will also be built with 500 plus spaces in order to accommodate the additional demand from the new employees.
  3. The City is selling 4 old Public Works properties in Bayside, a total of 4 acres. It has been voted on at the Council Committee level and will go before City Council on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bayside is starting to mature. Greg suggested it is a logical area to look at for possible Portland Downtown expansion. City zoning changes are underway to accommodate shelter buildings off peninsula.
  4. Kim inquired about Peaks Island residents' issues. Greg responded that many islanders feel there should be waterfront parking for them at low or no cost.
  5. Penny St Louis asked about Portland's reaction to Maine Medical Center's educational facility. Greg responded that City staff working on an overlay zone approach. It is being looked at as a positive move. The balance of a new parking location, pedestrian flow and traffic flow is being looked at. Sarah Martin commented that neighbors are not pleased with the outside footprint of the project and removal of retail and housing. Greg assured everyone that there is a public process in place too.

**Minute 6.** Executive Director’s update: Casey distributed and reviewed her report:

- The City has sent out the Multi-modal Marketing campaign RFP
- Panhandling – Casey and several stakeholders met with Councilors Ray and Thibodeau in September, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, and are now looking for public policy response. Concerned business owners and other concerned organizations are doing all they can but need help from the City. The Text-to-Donate program is underway (Text “CREW” to 91999 and you will be directed to an App.).
- Sound – the City budgeted \$50,000 for sound monitors to be placed around the City to collect ambient sound readings. In 2018, once the data has been collected, the Sound Advocacy Committee will evaluate current sound ordinances. The collected data will be public information.
- International Downtown Association conference – Amy and Casey both presented at the conference. Casey thanked the Board for prioritizing professional development so they could attend the conference. They accepted an IDA Award for the Graffiti Busters program. Trish thanked them both for representing downtown Portland so well. Casey said they discovered that this organization is already doing many things right.
- Casey is enjoying the Board member one-on-one meetings
- Holiday event season is rapidly approaching – Casey encouraged Board members to think about sponsorships and to refer businesses that might be interested in sponsoring events to her or Adam for more information.
- Behind the scenes projects – Casey is very happy working with Chris Branch and Marc Spiller in the Public Works Department. They are very responsive to Portland Downtown and business owners’ needs. The Capital Improvement Projects on Wharf St, Monument Way and Silver St could only be bolstered by a letter from this Board. Greg encouraged the Board to think about specific projects and present them to the City for future budget requests. Be specific about the issue and include a plan to fix the problem. Denine spoke about the 5,300 overhead lights being replaced (street light LED upgrade project). They will go on existing CMP poles and the City will only pay for electricity. City-wide Wi-Fi will be added at a later date.
- Denine spoke briefly about new information kiosks the City will be installing

**Minute 7.** Other business:

- Committee assignments confirmation: Casey has been meeting with all the Board members and everything seems in place
- Ad-hoc committees meeting dates discussion: Erik and Suzie were not able to attend but dates have been discussed for the Old Port Festival ad-hoc committee. Kim will be reaching out to the Board regarding the Growth Committee.
- Discuss Cadet Program financing: Discussed earlier, see above.
- Downtown Census report: Amy Geren displayed her census “dashboard” on the screen. She has been compiling the data for a year. The census includes personal and business properties. There are 1,900 Excel entries that comprise this dashboard overview. Non-profits are not included. She can sort this report in many ways, depending on how the information will be most useful. According to the bylaws, Portland Downtown is supposed to do a census every 5 years. It will be useful for district expansion conversations, realizing the different types of constituents and other needs. Amy will keep it updated with any information she can get. Some businesses are hard to track, depending on whether or not they file a personal property form with the report with the city. Amy will load the report into the Board Resources section of the website.
- An RFP for Portland Downtown’s banking relationship will be written and distributed to all banks in the district.

- Presentation by Mark Lammon, VP of Business Development of Block by Block: Block by Block offers programs to Business Improvement Districts (<http://blockbyblock.com/>)
  - i. Mark introduced himself and the Block by Block program. It is the largest provider of Clean & Safe Services to BIDs in the U.S.
  - ii. They see a couple of trends:
    1. Downtowns are in demand and resources aren't keeping up – assessments are not keeping up, quality of life issues are widespread, infrastructures are suffering. BIDS are being asked to do MORE with LESS.
    2. Compassion fatigue has set in
    3. Less safety focused, more engagement driven (ie. Ambassador programs)
    4. Metrics matter – Smart System is designed for downtowns. It is tracked by month, by ambassador, or by event. The program does mapping and can track the ambassadors' whereabouts.
    5. Downtown organizations are expanding their roles
    6. Mark feels Portland is more vibrant than most cities twice its size, has some quality of life issues, is clean but attention to detail is lacking, and it needs wayfinding. There is a high number of smokers for a city this size. Block by Block offers a cigarette butt recycling program too.
    7. If hired, Block by Block provides full time peak/non-peak season programs, hospitality programs during peak season, mostly manual cleaning, a second chance program, and a volunteer program. Mark offered a sample work schedule. There would be about 12 people employed during the peak season, including a full-time manager and supervisor. The sample budget is \$400,000.
    8. Why outsource and why Block to Block? Casey said she wanted the Board to think about supplementing the Supplemental Services Agreement with some of these services. They do not offer snow removal services. A la cart services are available. They would require free equipment storage space.
    9. Mark commented that Portland is in a unique situation, giving assessment dollars back to the City. Maybe we would use Block by Block's hospitality program only, not the cleaning portion. Greg Mitchell suggested weighing the cost benefits of the SSA and Block by Block programs. Mark offered that better wages remove the hiring difficulties. Mark was asked to provide some information to the District & Community Services. Casey will put Mark's presentation on the Board Resources portion of the website.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Kim adjourned the meeting at 10:35.

Respectfully submitted,  
Taffy Eaton, Recorder