

**MINUTES OF THE MIDTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**November 2, 2016**

The Board of Directors of the Midtown Management District held a meeting, open to the public, on November 2, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room of Central Bank, located at 2217 Milam St., Houston TX, 77002, inside the boundaries of the District, and the roll was called of the duly appointed members of the Board, to-wit:

Darcy John Lefsrud	Eileen J. Morris
Amar Mohite	Debbie Tyler Dillard
James Llamas	Dana Woodruff
Willie Coleman	Marylene Chan
Nancy J.W. Darst	William R. Franks
Diane Cervenka	Jesus Davila
Ben Robles	Gary Noble
Allen Douglas	Charles Washington

All of the above were present except Eileen J. Morris, thus constituting a quorum.

In addition, present at the meeting were Midtown Staff members Kandi Schramm, Cynthia Alvarado, Marlon Marshall, Michelle Ashton, Vernon Williams, Matt Thibodeaux, and David Thomas; Peggy Foreman of Burney & Foreman; Mechelle Phillips of One World Strategy Group; Sergeant Odell Haynes with the Precinct 7 Constables' Office; Captain Heather Morris and Sargent Shannon Farquhar of the Houston Police Department; Chief of Staff Jessica Kemp for Council Member Dwight Boykins Office, Pat Hall of Equi-Tax Inc. and Dwight Burton of S.E.A.L. Security Solutions LLC along with Midtown Residents and visitors Thomas Wang, Eric Botts, Elton Smith, Kate Rickel, Dan Barnum, Jim Honey, James Holston, , Jon Bradley, Cadelle Bradley, Jane Chance, Steven Waite, Janice Phan, Michael Lewis, Emmanuel Cole, Jacques Fox, Jason West, Dennis Rilsero, Jill Nauter, Cynthia Aceves-Lewis, Gary Bernard, Elizabeth Erikson, and Jen Shaw.

Cynthia Alvarado called the roll of the Board of Directors and verified that a quorum was present.

Chair Franks called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

**RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Kandi Schramm advised public attendees that their comments had a two minute limit. Gary Bernard commented that panhandling has become more aggressive and that the noise from Proof Roof Top Bar is a problem. He also thanked Ms. Alvarado for her help thus far, but wants to keep the pressure on the bar owners. Elton Smith shared that he is also concerned with the noise from bars in the area. Jim Honey stated that since the evening meetings are so well attended, they should be held at Houston Community College. Jane Chance, a new resident in Midtown, stated that cars in her neighborhood are being broken into and she would like to see increased security to prevent these break-ins. Cadelle Bradley commented that panhandling has become more aggressive recently. Elizabeth Erikson, a resident of Audubon Place, shared that her neighborhood has had increased car break-ins and homeless people. Eric Botts

commented that many of the car break-ins are related to identity theft. He also asked the Board to develop a data-driven strategic plan with clearly defined standards and achievable results so resources can be appropriated efficiently to achieve the desired goals. Steven Waite shared that he has not seen any improvements in public safety since last October. Finally, Cynthia Aceves-Lewis questioned whether the constables are the best use of limited resources. She stated that their contract ends in February and that it should be reconsidered since they can only deter crime and do not have a zero-tolerance policy. She suggested that the hiring of deputy constables may not be the best use of assessment funds.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE OCTOBER 5, 2016 BOARD MEETING.
- b. APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2016.
- c. APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF INVOICES FOR OCTOBER 2016.
- d. APPROVE EQUI-TAX REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2016.

Director Coleman made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Lefsrud and carried by unanimous vote.

### **DISCUSS AND TAKE NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING AN ORDER SETTING THE RATE OF ASSESSMENT FOR ALL PROPERTIES ON THE MIDTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT'S ASSESSMENT ROLL FOR YEAR TWO OF THE SERVICE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND ASSESSMENT PLAN (2015-2024)**

Peggy Foreman reminded the Board that 2016 was year two of the Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan and that each year the Board must set the rate of assessment for the year. Ms. Foreman stated that the Executive Committee and staff were recommending that the assessment rate remain at \$ .1181 per \$100 of assessed value.

Director Coleman made a motion to approve the Order Setting the Rate of Assessment at \$ .1181 per \$100 of assessed value for all properties on the District's assessment roll for year two of the Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan. The motion was seconded by Director Darst. Director Woodruff stated that she supports not raising the rate, but raised concerns about whether the District could respond to the community's concerns regarding public safety without an increase in the assessment rate. Director Coleman shared that the rate was discussed at length at the Executive Committee meeting and Director Chan stated that the Finance Committee discussed the issue as well and neither Committee was recommending a change in the assessment rate. Following all discussion, the motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **RECEIVE COMMITTEE ACTIVITY REPORTS AND REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING THE FOLLOWING, AS APPROPRIATE:**

#### **A. Public Safety Committee – Ben Robles, Chair**

Director Robles was introduced as the new Committee Chair. He shared that he is a property owner and resident of the east side of the District and has a background in

social work. He assured the community that he is hearing their concerns and takes them seriously.

i. **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE BOARD CHAIR AND/OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT FOR PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES IN MIDTOWN**

Peggy Foreman gave a brief summary of the resolution. Director Robles reminded the Board that what was being proposed was a six (6) month pilot program for two security officers with licensed K-9 units patrolling Midtown for an eight hour shift. Director Woodruff expressed concerns about the source of funding for the pilot program. Director Douglas made a motion to amend the resolution to remove authorization to "execute" the contract, and that the contract would be brought back to the Board at the December meeting for consideration. The motion was seconded by Director Woodruff.

Mr. Thibodeaux stated that he was working on a plan that might result in the Midtown Redevelopment Authority providing long-term funding for the program, but that it might take some time to get the needed approvals. He stated that the District had sufficient funds to pay for the pilot program immediately. Director Coleman stated that now is a perfect time to discuss funding since the budget has been adjusted and is not yet final. Director Woodruff raised additional questions regarding the use of private security. Mr. Dwight Burton responded that the private security officer and K-9 Unit would be in the District 100% of the time and that they would be focused on crime deterrence and prevention. He stated that the private security officers would work with HPD and the Deputy Constables. Director Lefsrud stated that the Board needed to define criteria for measuring whether the pilot program is successful. Director Mohite agreed that now is the right time to set realistic expectations. Ms. Foreman reminded the Board that the resolution provides that the Public Safety Committee will monitor the private security firm and can set criteria to measure the success of the pilot program. Following all discussion, the resolution, as amended by Director Douglas, passed by unanimous vote.

**B. Marketing Committee – Debbie Tyler Dillard, Chair**

Director Tyler-Dillard reminded the Board that it is important to promote the District as an exciting place to live, work, and play. She stated that 20,000 copies of the Cultural Arts and Entertainment Guide are on track to be printed prior to Thanksgiving. She shared that the Committee is investigating creative ways to distribute the Guide as well. She reported that the Committee is moving forward with a pilot of a Midtown newspaper thanks to feedback from the community engagement survey. She stated that the newspaper will be designed to work in conjunction with the eNews and is scheduled to be on stands a month prior to Super Bowl. She also commented that work is wrapping up on the implementing the anti-littering campaign and that 25 signs will be affixed to trashcans at high-traffic intersections in the next few weeks. Finally, she reported that the Committee is investigating more advertising opportunities and invited all to the next Marketing Committee meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the Cultural Arts and Entertainment Committee, on November 16, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. in the new offices of Houston First.

**C. Service & Maintenance Committee – Darcy Lefsrud, Chair**

Director Lefsrud reported that tree pruning has begun on trees that present a light impediment. He also shared that administration of SeeClickFix has transferred to the new Maintenance Manager, Mark Sullivan. Director Lefsrud stated that the conversion to decomposed granite in the Glover Park dog run is going to require some design work to address drainage issues per the City of Houston. He shared that the Committee Vice-Chair, Thomas Wang, is in contact with Trees for Houston about obtaining donated trees for Midtown, particularly to replace those removed from Baldwin Park. Finally, he reported that the Committee has identified and prioritized sidewalks for repair or replacement and that he hopes work will begin soon.

**D. Urban Planning Committee – Allen Douglas, Chair**

Director Douglas reported that the Urban Planning Committee is working on both planning and implementation. He thanked Michael Lewis for his engagement with the Committee, particularly in helping to look at the grid in Midtown, and Thomas Wang for taking the lead on a proposal for a farmer's market in Midtown. Director Douglas announced that the Committee is proposing to enter a pilot partnership with Bike Houston that will include training classes and group bike rides in Midtown. He reported that the Committee is still exploring ways to partner with B-Cycle to fund additional stations, which will include approaching additional potential funding partners such as Houston Community College and the United States Postal Service. He also shared that the Committee is looking at long-term planning projects, such as reexamining the street guidelines to aid developers interested in building in Midtown. Director Douglas invited all to attend the next Committee meeting on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

**E. Finance Committee – Marylene Chan, Chair**

Director Chan thanked community members for their input in the budget process. She gave a brief report on the sources and uses of funds through September 2016.

**i. UPDATE ON FY 2017 BUDGET**

Director Chan reported that the Committee had shared the proposed FY 2017 Budget with the Executive Committee and that a copy had been sent to the full Board for review. She stated that there are still a couple of adjustments to be made to the proposed FY 2017 Budget and that the final FY 2017 Budget will be considered and voted on at the December 2016 Board meeting. She also remarked that the Board packet included a comparison of the proposed FY 2017 Budget with the Service Plan, per Director Coleman's request. She advised the Board that the biggest differences related to the Board's decision not to increase the assessment rate at the time the Service Plan was adopted in December 2015.

**F. Cultural Arts & Entertainment – Eileen Morris, Chair**

Ms. Alvarado updated the Board on the 2016 Mistletoe Market event. She stated that 20 single booths and seven (7) double booths have been sold. Ms. Alvarado invited all to attend the 2016 Mistletoe Market on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

**G. Nominating Committee – Gary Noble, Chair**

Director Noble reported that Board member Kim Cook tendered her resignation due to a change in employment and that the Committee was recommending the appointment of Jason West to fill the vacant seat on the Board.

**i. CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION TO FILL BOARD VACANCY**

Director Noble made a motion to appoint Jason West to fill Position 2 on the Board. The motion was seconded by Director Coleman and carried by unanimous vote.

**H. Executive Committee – William Franks, Chair**

Chairman Franks shared that the Executive Committee focused primarily on safety and budget concerns in their recent meeting. He stated that matters discussed were addressed in the various Committee reports.

**APPROVE BOND, OATH, AND SWORN STATEMENT OF NEW BOARD MEMBER APPOINTED TO POSITION 2**

Kandi Schramm administered the oath of office to Jason West. Director Coleman made a motion to approve the bond, oath and sworn statement of Jason West. The motion was seconded by Director Noble and carried by unanimous vote.

**REPORT ON CAPITAL PROJECTS OF THE MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MRA).**

Marlon Marshall presented the following report on the status of the current MRA capital improvement projects:

Midtown Park Project – The garage construction is in its final phase and is expected to be in operation in the next 30-45 days depending on obtaining final approval from the City and issuance of a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. The garage contractor is currently working on the interior, permanent power, and elevator installation. Work on the Midtown Park is proceeding with a focus on the dog park and the bayou. Mr. Marshall reported that the event announcing ESPN's use of the Park during Super Bowl and the Capital Campaign announcement was a big success.

Caroline Street Project – TXDoT anticipates the project can be rebid in November 2016 with construction anticipated to start in the first quarter of 2017.

Holman Street Project – The project is wrapping up with installation of the irrigation system and should be completed by the end of the year.

Main Street Project – The Contractor is working to get certain tasks completed prior to Super Bowl.

**WITH RESPECT TO THE FOREGOING AGENDA ITEMS, CONDUCT AN EXECUTIVE SESSION WITH REGARDS TO THE FOLLOWING, AS APPROPROATE AND NECESSARY.**

- a. **Consultation with attorney (Section 551.071, Texas Government Code);**
- b. **Personnel matters (Section 551.074, Texas Government Code).**

The Board did not conduct an executive session at this meeting.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Alvarado invited all to Safety Saturday on November 12, 2016 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p. m. at Baldwin Park. She stated that South Central HPD officers and Precinct 7 Deputy Constables would be in attendance. Ms. Ashton encouraged all to take the Midtown Community Outreach and Engagement Survey.

### **PRESENTATION BY MARC EICHENBAUM, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR FOR HOMELESS INITIATIVES**

Marc Eichenbaum shared that homelessness is a complex issue, with new complexities always arising. He reported that currently 100 organizations are working together on a single set of data-driven strategies and goals to reduce homelessness in Houston. Housing First is leading this work since their housing program has no barriers to entry. He stated that experience shows that once people are housed, they are more open to participating in other social services. Mr. Eichenbaum reported that the City originally focused its efforts on housing homeless veterans, which resulted in over 4,000 persons receiving housing, effectively ending veteran homelessness in Houston. He stated that they are now focusing on housing the chronically homeless, with 3,000 already housed and 400 awaiting spaces. He stated that based on their data from the last count in January of 2016, housing has been provided to all homeless families in Houston. He shared that they do a count every January and are always looking for volunteers to help with that effort. He stated that overall there has been a 50% decrease of homelessness in the region, with a substantial decrease in Midtown and Downtown. However, it still remains an issue in key hotspots. Mr. Eichenbaum cites the new development along Buffalo Bayou and increased enforcement in Hermann Park as the reason for the displaced of many people from those areas. He reported that other neighborhoods feel that Midtown is pushing the homeless into their communities. He shared that a large percentage of panhandlers are not homeless and many of the Kush users congregating under Interstate 59 are not homeless. Mr. Eichenbaum reported that Kush use is difficult to enforce, and that while the City is working to change laws, there is no immediate solution. He stated that Kush is marketed to the most vulnerable people in a community and that the City is working to target distributors as well as users. He reported that the PIT Van has been an invaluable resource, and that they are conducting outreach surges in hotspots with collaborating agencies and that the City is working to identify gaps in the substance abuse treatment system and on efforts to help develop vacant properties as a long-term way to address these issues.

### **PRESENTATION BY LEONARD KINCAID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HOUSTON RECOVERY CENTER**

Mr. Kincaid stated that his organization is a jail diversion program for substance abusers. He shared that the PIT (Public Intoxication Transport) Van has been successful in that the program is keeping officers on the street and lowering the cost on the health care system, but they could do more work with an additional van. The original pilot of ten weeks was funded by Near

Northside, Downtown, and Midtown Districts and he asked the Board to strongly consider continued funding for the PIT Van.

**PRESENTATION BY SGT. FARQUHAR, HPD SOUTH CENTRAL**

Sergeant Farquhar shared that thanks to his meetings and communications with TXDoT, two sections under Interstate 59 will be fenced in the upcoming weeks for pedestrian and vehicle safety. He acknowledged that people will be displaced from that area and he is not sure where they will go. He also stated that burglaries of motor vehicles have increased in the community and that HPD South Central Division was deploying as many resources as they can to try to address the problem.

**PRESENTATION BY SGT. HAYNES, PRECINCT 7**

Sergeant Haynes gave an overview of activities of deputy constables. He stated that the deputy constables can enforce City ordinances, but that making an arrest for a class C misdemeanor would result in the deputies having to leave Midtown without patrol services for several hours in order to book the person into either the City or County jail. He further stated that frequently the person is released from jail within a few hours for minor offences. He stated that the deputies have to make judgment calls based on the circumstances they encounter on the streets but that a zero tolerance policy for class C misdemeanors is often not practical. .

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next Midtown Management District Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, at 11:00 a.m. in the third floor conference room in the Midtown Management District's offices, 410 Pierce St., Houston, TX 77002.

**ADJOURN**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

  
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Eileen J. Morris, Board Secretary

Date: 12-7-2016