



**midtown**  
H O U S T O N

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

**July 7, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the Midtown Management District held a regular meeting, open to the public, on Wednesday, July 7, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. via video and telephonic conferencing, and the roll was called of the duly appointed members of the Board, to-wit:

Pos. 1	Darcy John Lefsrud	Pos. 10	Eileen J. Morris
Pos. 2	Gloria Haney	Pos. 11	Debbie Tyler Dillard
Pos. 3	Amar Mohite	Pos. 12	Vacant
Pos. 4	James Llamas	Pos. 13	Marylene Chan
Pos. 5	Willie H. Coleman	Pos. 14	Christopher Johnston
Pos. 6	Nancy J.W. Darst	Pos. 15	Herbert Baker
Pos. 7	Vacant	Pos. 16	Kelly Young
Pos. 8	Vacant	Pos. 17	Charles Washington
Pos. 9	J. Allen Douglas		

All of the above were present thus consulting a quorum.

In addition, present at the meeting were Midtown Staff members Matt Thibodeaux, Kandi Schramm, Cynthia Alvarado, Vernon Williams, Marlon Marshall, Madeline Peña, David Thomas, Jaime Giraldo, Theresa Gilmore, Mechelle Phillips, Peggy Foreman of Burney and Foreman, Clark Lord of Bracewell LLP, Erica Rocha with S.E.A.L. Security Solutions LLC, Linda Treviño with METRO, Jessica Ortiz and Alyssa Hill of CRI, James Thayer Jr., Dr. Muddassir Siddiqi of Houston Community College Central, Nick Cooper of The Free Radicals, D. Llewelyn, Satish Mehta of South Asian Folk Arts, Jonathan Danforth of SEARCH, Benito Vasquez of TEATRX - A Latinx Theatre Company, Eoles Whitaker and Midtown resident Scott Harbers, Barbara Cannetti.

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

Chair Morris called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

**RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 2, 2021, BOARD MEETING**
- B. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2021**
- C. APPROVE PAYMENT OF INVOICES FOR JUNE 2021**
- D. APPROVE EQUI-TAX REPORT FOR JUNE 2021**

Ms. Alvarado presented the consent agenda. Director Coleman made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Washington and carried by unanimous vote.

**REVIEW, DISCUSS, AND TAKE NECESSARY ACTION THE DISTRICT ANNUAL INSURANCE POLICY FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST 1,2021, THROUGH JULY 31, 2022.**

Ms. Alvarado briefly presented information regarding the District’s proposed insurance coverages for the period from August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022. She advised the Board that a premium summary was included in the Board packet along with a historic summary. She reported that there was a slight increase in the annual insurance premium. Director Coleman made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Lefsrud and carried by unanimous vote.

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

- A. Finance and Budget Committee – Eileen Morris, Interim Chair**
  - i. FY 2020 Audit – Presentation by Carr Riggs Ingram**

Ms. Alyssa Hill of Carr Riggs Ingram reported to the Board of Directors that the District received a clean audit report for 2020. She further stated that the District has a solid financial position at the end of the year. She stated that that the District has historically had a good assessment collection rate, generally around 99% each year. She stated that overall, the District had consistent disclosures, policies, and financial statements.

Lastly, Ms. Hill stated that CRI made some internal control recommendations which the District Staff reviewed and responded to the recommendations and is currently moving forward with implementing the recommendations to improve and streamline certain accounting processes.

Director Douglas made a motion to accept the audit as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Baker and carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Thomas reported that the electricity bill for FY 2020 was for an estimated \$78,571 which represented a 48% decrease from the prior year’s electricity billing. He reported that the District Staff followed up with the City of Houston to confirm the 48% decrease and was advised by a City of Houston representative that the substantial decrease was likely caused in part by a rate adjustment by CenterPoint among other factors. Mr. Thomas stated that the City representative advised him that the rate is reviewed and adjusted every four years and was last adjusted in May of 2020. Additionally, Mr. Thomas stated that the electricity bill was likely impacted by the conversion to

LED lights in Midtown. Ms. Alvarado reminded the Board and attendees that Midtown was the pilot community for CenterPoint's LED conversion program a few years ago, and that CenterPoint began the process of replacing the bulbs in the Midtown signature coach streetlights with LED bulbs. She stated that at the time, the Board was advised that there would be significant electricity savings as a result. Mr. Thomas stated that a copy of the electricity invoice was included in the Board packet, along with a historical summary showing the annual electricity costs for the last several years. He pointed out that prior electricity bills sometimes exceeded \$200,000.

Mr. Thomas reminded the Board that the timeline for submission and review of FY 2022 budget requests has been provided to Committee Chairs and to all Board members as part of the Board packet. He encouraged all Committees to be sure to timely submit their budget requests and to reach out to the Staff with any questions.

Lastly, he reminded everyone that the next Finance Committee meeting will be held virtually on July 27, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

**B. Service and Maintenance – Christopher Johnston, Chair**

Director Johnston reported that the Staff is working to prioritize sidewalk locations to recommend to MRA for repair/replacement. He advised that some of the repairs will not take place until 2022. He then reported that the Staff is focusing on aligning the recommended repairs with the goals of the Walkable Places initiative and will look at implementing 6-foot-wide sidewalks in Midtown.

Director Johnston also stated that regular cleanup which includes pressure washing in the District continues. He reported that the maintenance team has also been working on curb repairs along Bagby Street and they have completed re-staining all of the wood decking in the community. Director Johnston reported that information regarding the proposed playground equipment upgrades planned for Baldwin Park were shared with SN#62 representatives with a request that they share the information with their members.

Lastly, he announced that the next Service and Maintenance Committee meeting will be a joint meeting with the Urban Planning Committee on July 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

**C. Cultural Arts and Entertainment Committee – Charles Washington, Chair**

Director Washington updated the Board on the midtownHOU Arts Micro Grant process. He reported that there were 10 applications received for the micro arts grants. He stated that the selection panel is recommending the award of grants to the following: The Free Radicals music group (\$3,000); Diane Gellman for a mural design in the District (\$8,333); Teatrx for a live theatre performance (\$3,000); and The South Asian Folks Art Council for the inaugural SMOsa Festival (Spiritual Music of South Asia). (\$8,333). Director Washington reported that the amount of the recommended grants was \$22,666. He reported that the Committee has approximately \$27,000 remaining in the FY 2021 approved budget and is preparing to award another round of grants in the next few months.

Director Llamas made a motion to accept the Cultural Arts and Entertainment Committee micro arts grants recommendations as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Dillard and carried by unanimous vote.

Finally, Director Washington announced that the Cultural Arts and Entertainment Committee will have a joint meeting with the Marketing and Economic Development Committee on July 21, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

**D. Marketing and Economic Development Committee – Debbie Tyler-Dillard, Chair**

Director Tyler-Dillard reported that the Staff will start recording the new #midtownHOU feature videos on Friday. She stated that the new videos will replace the Feel-Good Friday videos and will be recorded at different businesses in the District. She further stated that the first video interview will be filmed at F45 Gym and that they will air every Friday in August at 9:30 a.m. Director Tyler-Dillard also reported that the Public Safety video has been completed and staff is in the editing process. She stated that the next video to be edited will be Marketing and Economic Development.

Director Tyler-Dillard shared statistics from Google Analytics for the Midtown Houston website for the second quarter. She stated that website users for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2 were up by 17.7% totaling 19,430 active users from April 2021 to June 2021 and that the top 5 visited pages from our website were the homepage, nightlife, Midtown Park, MRA, and restaurants. She reported that the Staff worked to improve the click rate (the percentage of people who visit a webpage using a provided hyperlink) for the eNews by delivering more interesting and relevant content. The click rate for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter increased by 12%

Finally, Director Tyler-Dillard announced that the Marketing and Economic Development Committee will have a joint meeting with the Cultural Arts & Entertainment Committee on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

**E. Urban Planning Committee – James Llamas, Chair**

**i. Updated letter of support for the City of Houston’s creation of the Midtown Entertainment Zone with amended boundaries.**

Director Llamas reported that the Urban Planning Committee had a presentation from Kathryn Brunning, the Assistant Director of Regulatory Permitting from the City of Houston regarding the boundary changes to the proposed Midtown Houston Entertainment Zone which would be created via a proposed local ordinance that would allow the sale of alcohol within 300 feet of church, school or public hospital. Director Llamas reported that in response to community feedback, changes have been made to the ordinance establishing the Entertainment Zone to encourages restaurants with a food and beverage permit and not bars and nightclubs. Ms. Brunning asked that the District provide a letter of support based on the updated boundaries that were re-drawn and changes to the ordinance in response to concerns of the community. Director Llamas stated that a draft of a proposed Letter of Support was included in the Board packet.

Director Johnston made a motion to accept the Letter of Support as presented in the Board packet in support of the updated Midtown Entertainment Zone boundaries as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Mohite and carried by unanimous vote.

Director Llamas also reported that the Midtown Staff provided the Committee with an update regarding the STEPS survey. He stated that approximately 80% of responders indicated that they noticed the improvements; approximately 70% felt safer overall as a result of the improvements;

and many expressed an interest in making the improvements more permanent and more aesthetically pleasing. He stated that the Committee is looking to continue to work with the City of Houston, to explore ways to connect Midtown to Montrose using the STEPS program.

Director Llamas also reported that the design is coming together for the sidewalk and bike rack improvements at Glover Park and is expected to be submitted to the City of Houston within the next several weeks.

He reminded everyone that the deadline for public comments regarding the City of Houston's proposal to extend parking meter hours in the Northwest corner of Midtown is July 8, 2021.

Finally, Director Llamas announced that the Urban Planning Committee will have a joint meeting with the Service and Maintenance Committee on Monday, July 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

**F. Community Activity Report – Christopher Johnston, Liaison**

**i. Super Neighborhood #62**

Director Johnston reported that Super Neighborhood #62 did not meet in July, but they did host a neighborhood gathering at Baldwin Park. The next gathering will take place July 8, 2021, at Gypsy Poet at 2424 Austin Street.

**G. Public Safety – J. Allen Douglas, Chair**

**i. Security Coordinator's Report – Jaime Giraldo**

Director Douglas reported that there was substantial discussion of the recent incidents occurring at bars and nightclubs in Midtown and options to best address them. He stated that TABC presented ways the community could report illegal activities around the neighborhood. He also reported that Precinct 7 Constables provided statistics regarding the allocation of Precinct 7 resources to certain retail businesses in Midtown. He stated that the Committee discussed integrating SEARCH with other law enforcement agencies and contracted agencies to coordinate their efforts and better support each other and HPD.

Ms. Alvarado introduced the new full time Security Coordinator, Jaime Giraldo. Mr. Giraldo gave a brief introduction to the Board of Directors. He stated he is a retired HPD officers with 31 years of experience. He was a co-founder of the Houston Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team. Lastly, he stated that he is excited to be a part of the Midtown Houston team.

Jonathan Danforth of SEARCH Homeless Services reported that the pilot program now evolved into a longer-term effort. He stated that the new 18-month contract with the District started July 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that SEARCH being a part of The Way Home and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) gave them the opportunity to hit the ground running in the pilot program. He stated that the second Outreach Specialist has begun work in Midtown and that their staff has identified areas of Midtown where unhoused persons tend to gather and continues to partner with law enforcement agencies in the District. He reported that beginning in June 2021, SEARCH started doing regular nighttime outreach with S.E.A.L. Security Solutions LLC and other agencies in Midtown. He reported that SEARCH has reached approximately 300 individuals and from that group, 67% engaged in a productive way and 10% of those were new to homelessness. Of the 97%

of individuals who SEARCH has been following up with approximately 11% (18 people) have been moved into housing.

Finally, Director Douglas announced that the next Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, July 20, 2021, at 11:30 a.m. via telephone and video conferencing.

**H. Nomination Committee – Nancy Darst, Chair**

Director Darst reported that Director Woodruff submitted her letter of resignation effective May 31, 2021. She stated that the required package of information for appointment and reappointment of directors had been submitted to the City of Houston but had not been acted on prior to receipt of the letter of resignation. The Staff alerted the City of Houston Office of Boards and Commissions of the resignation and the submittal to City Council was delayed until such time as the District provides another recommended candidate for consideration to fill the position held by Director Woodruff. She stated that the Committee will reconvene, interview potential candidates, and make a recommendation to the Board for consideration at the August 2021 Board meeting. Following Board approval of a recommended candidate, the entire package will be resubmitted to the City for consideration.

**I. Executive Committee – Eileen Morris, Chair**

Director Lefsrud stated that all matters discussed at the Executive Committee meeting were discussed and addressed in the various Committee reports. He thanked everyone for their work on behalf of the Midtown Community.

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

Marlon Marshall gave the following report on the status of current Midtown Redevelopment Authority Capital Improvement Projects:

*Bagby Park*

The kiosk tenant is progressing well, and the target completion date remains scheduled for late July 2021.

*Caroline Street Reconstruction*

The project has lost momentum over the past month due to the weather and unforeseen utility conflicts with the City of Houston. The drainage installation is moving between Webster Street and Pierce Street. The roadway paving and sidewalk installations are moving forward between Hadley Street and Pierce Street. TXDOT is in the process of reviewing their schedule and time impact analysis for May and June. Currently the most recent approved schedule for the project has completion in July 2021, however the TXDOT staff projects September or October 2021 for completion of the project.

Partner Projects

Baldwin Park in Partnership with the MMD Service and Maintenance Committee.

Designs for the proposed Baldwin Park improvements have been approved by the City of Houston. The announcements to receive bids from contractors have been published and the deadline to receive bids is July 14, 2021. The improvements include installation of additional playground equipment and additional perimeter lighting and electrical assets. These assets will help support additional Midtown events on the east side of the park. Construction is targeted to begin in September or October and should last approximately 6 months.

Glover Park in Partnership with the MMD Urban Planning Committee.

Staff and consultants are working with to finalize the proposed improvements for sidewalks on Austin Street and installations of pads for the Bike Fix-It Stations for submittal to the City of Houston.

STEPS Pilot Project in Partnership with the Urban Planning Committee.

The survey is complete, and as of the date the survey closed, 123 responses were received. Staff is planning to work with consultants to move forward to expand the project to other locations throughout the District.

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

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

There was no Executive Session.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Phillips announced that the Midtown Staff will begin programming events in the Midtown Parks as of August 1, 2021.

Ms. Alvarado announced that Midtown Houston won the World Landscape Architecture (WLA) Professional Merit Award for Design Excellence

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Director Lefsrud announced that the next Midtown Management District Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 4, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. via video and telephonic conferencing.

**ADJOURN**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Marylène Chan, Board Secretary

Date: 8/6/2021