



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

October 7, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Midtown Management District held a regular meeting, open to the public, on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 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	Dana Woodruff
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	Julie Tilton	Pos. 16	Vacant
Pos. 8	Vacant	Pos. 17	Charles Washington
Pos. 9	J. Allen Douglas		

All of the above were present except Directors Washington and Coleman thus constituting a quorum.

In addition, present at the meeting were Midtown Staff members Matt Thibodeaux, Kandi Schramm, Vernon Williams, Cynthia Alvarado, Marlon Marshall, David Thomas, Amaris Salinas, Mechelle Phillips and Mark Leija; Clark Lord of Bracewell LLP; Peggy Foreman of Burney & Foreman; Pat Hall of Equi-Tax, Inc., Linda Treviño of Metropolitan Transit Authority; Erica Rocha with S.E.A.L. Security; Alexis Loving of SEARCH Inc., Janice Bond of Contemporary Art Museum Houston, DeJuanna Bowie of Houston Community College Central Campus, Martin Cominsky and Sucre Woodley of Interfaith Ministries; Jennifer Gardner of DiverseWorks, artist Baba Rue Bob, Larry Unger of Houston Cinema Arts Society; Molly Miller of Dance Source Houston, Chelsea Smith and Anthony Barilla of MUSIQA; Stephanie Mitchell of Lawndale Art and Performance Center; Christine Phares of Young Audiences Houston, Troy Scheid, Peace P., Adam Castaneda, Patricia Ramirez, Shelbi Nicole Gregory, Oni Chambers Muhammad, Jacquelyne Boe and guests, Martha Diaz, Kay Walton, Scott Harbers, Michael Lewis, and Evianthia Poyatzis.

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 SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 BOARD MEETING**
- B. APPROVE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2020**
- C. APPROVE PAYMENT OF INVOICES FOR SEPTEMBER 2020**
- D. APPROVE EQUI-TAX REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2020**

Ms. Alvarado presented the consent agenda. Peggy Foreman advised the Board that there were some relatively minor corrections to the Minutes for the September 2, 2020 Board meeting and that a revised version of the Minutes was sent to the Board via email just prior to the meeting. She advised that the start time for the September 2, 2020 Board meeting was incorrectly shown as 6:00 p.m. when in fact it was 11:00 a.m. and that there were other minor grammatical and punctuation errors that were corrected. Ms. Foreman asked that the corrected version of the Minutes be approved.

Director Woodruff made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented including the corrected version of the Minutes. The motion was seconded by Director Lefsrud and carried by unanimous vote.

REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING AN ORDER SETTING THE RATE OF ASSESSMENT FOR YEAR SIX OF THE SERVICE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND ASSESSMENT PLAN (2015-2024)

Director Woodruff stated that the Finance Committee has received each Committee's budget requests and that based on the information submitted the Finance and Budget Committee is recommending maintaining the assessment rate at .1181¢ per \$100 of assessed value.

Ms. Foreman presented the Order Setting the Rate of Assessment for Year Six of the Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan (2015-2024) a copy of which was included in the Board Information Packet. Ms. Alvarado reminded everyone that the Board has not voted to increase the District's rate of assessment in the past 16 years.

Director Douglas made a motion to adopt an Order Setting the Rate of Assessment for Year Six of the Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan as presented. Director Chan seconded the motion. 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. Service and Maintenance – Darcy John Lefsrud, Chair

Director Lefsrud reported that CenterPoint has completed the installation of 25 additional LED Midtown Coach Lights in various locations throughout the District as part of the Dark Blocks Project. Director Lefsrud stated that the Committee submitted its FY 2021 budget requests which included funds for lighting improvements at Baldwin Park. He reminded everyone that there is a pending project for installation of additional playground equipment in Baldwin Park. Finally, Director Lefsrud announced that the Service and Maintenance Committee will hold a joint meeting with the Urban Planning Committee in October.

B. Cultural Arts and Entertainment Committee – Eileen Morris, Chair

Chair Morris reminded the Board that due to COVID-19 the Houston Arts Alliance granted extension of time to comply with the terms of the City of Houston Grant until December 31, 2020. Chair Morris announced that 13 MidtownHOU Arts Micro Grants were awarded to the following arts organizations and individual artists.

Arts Organizations	Individual Artists
Houston Cinema Arts Society	Troy Scheid
Dance Source – Houston	Peace P.
Lawndale Art and Performance	Adam Castaneda
DiverseWorks	Patricia Ramirez
MUSIQA	Shelbi Nicole Gregory
Young Audiences Houston	Oni Chambers Muhammad
	Jacquelyne Boe

Chair Morris stated that although she and Director Washington participated on the project review team, they each disclosed that they had a working relationship with certain applicants and did not participate in the review process or a vote on whether or not to recommend that a grant be awarded to those applicants. Director Morris recused herself from the discussions and decisions relating to Houston Cinema Arts Society and Director Washington recused himself from the discussions and decisions relating to Young Audiences Houston and Oni Chambers Muhammad. Ms. Foreman stated that based on reasonable inquiry it was her understanding that neither Chair Morris nor Director Washington would receive any financial or other benefit from the award of the grants to these applicants.

Director Woodruff made a motion to approve the award of the MidtownHOU Arts Micro Grants 2020 to the individuals and organizations above except for Houston Cinema Arts Society. Director Tilton seconded the motion which carried by unanimous vote.

Director Douglas made a motion to approve award of a MidtownHOU Arts Micro Grant 2020 to Houston Cinema Arts Society. The motion was seconded by Director Woodruff. The motion passed by majority vote. Chair Morris abstained from any discussion and vote on this motion.

Finally, Chair Morris announced that the Cultural Arts & Entertainment Committee will host combined meetings with the Marketing and Economic Development Committee every third Wednesday starting at 4:00 p.m. for the remainder of FY 2020.

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

Director Tyler-Dillard reported that the Spring/Summer 2020 digital edition of the Midtown Buzz was available on the Midtown Houston website. She also reported that the Committee will be partnering with Brass Tap Midtown to give away two (2) charcuterie boards as a way of increasing engagement on Midtown’s various social media platforms.

Director Tyler-Dillard announced that the next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Cultural Arts & Entertainment Committee and will be held on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

D. Urban Planning Committee – James Llamas, Chair

Director Llamas reported that the two pilot locations for installation of Pedestrian Safety Enhancements have been submitted to the City of Houston for review and approval. He stated that Barry Goodman of The Goodman Corporation attended the September 2020 Committee meeting and provided an update regarding the North Houston Highway Improvement Project and the Wheeler CAP Park.

Director Llamas reported that one of the older Bicycle stations is showing signs of wear and needs to be repainted. He stated that the Committee would like to follow up with the Cultural Arts and Entertainment Committee and explore whether some type of public art could be incorporated into the repainting project.

The Committee discussed the FY 2021 budget requests and submitted same to the Finance Committee.

Finally, Director Llamas announced that the next Committee meeting will be held virtually on October 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

E. Finance and Budget Committee – Dana Woodruff, Chair

Director Woodruff gave the Finance Committee report. She reported that revenues and expenses were within budget for the current year. She stated that there were some committees that were under budget for FY 2020 because certain projects were impacted by COVID-19.

Director Woodruff stated that the Finance Committee and the Staff are working on the preliminary draft of the FY 2021 budget. David Thomas stated that the District received revenue projections for FY 2021 from Equi-Tax, Inc. He stated that a final budget is expected to be presented for approval at the November 2020 Board meeting.

Director Woodruff reminded the various committee chairs to notify the Finance Committee if they have projects that will not be completed or funds that will not be expended in FY 2020 so that those funds could be re-directed and used to complete other needed projects within the District.

Director Woodruff announced that the next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

F. Community Activity Report – Christopher Johnston, Liaison

i. SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD #62

Director Johnston reported that Super Neighborhood #62 held a meeting on September 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. He announced that the group is currently looking for two board members and encouraged anyone interested to reach out to them via their Facebook page or website. He reported that the HPD South Central Division Commander and her executive staff gave a general report to the group.

Director Johnston also reported that Houston City Council Member at Large Sally Alcorn spoke to the group and covered items of interest such as, efforts to address homelessness, the City-wide Adopt a Drain Program, and the recently approved Walkable Places Ordinance. Council Member Alcorn also talked about the City's VISION Zero and encouraged people to participate in the online survey. Director Johnston reported that the next meeting is on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. and that the featured speaker will be District D Council Member Evans-Shabazz.

G. Public Safety – J. Allen Douglas, Chair

Director Douglas reported that the September 2020 Public Safety Committee meeting was his first opportunity to Chair the Committee meeting with Staff and law enforcement representatives. He asked that the Board members think about what data from the law enforcement agency reports they would like to see and at what frequency they wanted to see it.

i. SECURITY COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Security Coordinator Mark Leija reported that he continues to receive phone calls, emails and text messages on a regular basis from Midtown stakeholders and that he responds to the extent possible. He stated that he also continues to host monthly meetings with representatives of the various law enforcement agencies and S.E.A.L. Security Solutions, LLC. to discuss public safety issues and incidents in Midtown.

Mr. Leija reported that he continues to invite guest speakers to attend the Committee meetings to share information and help educate the Midtown Community regarding various public safety issues. He announced that the guest speaker for October 2020, will be .HPD Assistant Chief Wendy Baimbridge, who will make a presentation regarding the recently announced Cite and Release Program for certain lower level crimes.

Mr. Leija announced that HPD is working to identify and compile a list of clothing donation boxes in the area and asked that anyone who knows of the location of any clothing donation boxes share that information with Mark Leija so that he can pass it on to HPD.

The next Public Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.

PRESENTATION: Alexis Loving of Search, Inc., Vice-President of Programs

Director Douglas introduced Alexis Loving the Vice-President of Programs at SEARCH to discuss the proposed Homeless Outreach Specialist Pilot Program.

Ms. Loving provided an overview of SEARCH INC. and the services the organization provides. She stated that SEARCH is part of the Way Home collaborative, which helps provide housing for the most vulnerable individuals. She stated that outreach is a critical component of what SEARCH does as they work to assess and offer solutions to homeless persons living in encampments. She stated that SEARCH has been successful by working in a targeted area with weekly and sometimes daily intervention so that they can build on progressive outreach and create a deeper understanding of what the individual's needs are and work on ways to reduce homelessness.

Review, discuss and take necessary action regarding a contract with SEARCH related to the Homeless Outreach Specialist Pilot Program.

Director Douglas reported that the Public Safety Committee had some unspent funds due in part to cancellation of certain activities due to COVID-19. He stated that he would like to propose using a portion of the funds for a Homeless Outreach Specialist Pilot Program with SEARCH, Inc. to use the services of a homeless outreach specialist to assist with addressing homelessness in Midtown. He stated that the pilot program would be funded out of the Public Safety Committee's budget for FY 2020.

Chair Morris stated that there would be an evaluation and review at the end of the Homeless Outreach Specialist Pilot Program to determine whether continued funding of the project was beneficial to Midtown.

Director Woodruff made a motion to enter into a contract with SEARCH Inc. for a Homeless Outreach Specialist Pilot Program for the period ending December 31, 2020. The motion was seconded by Director Tyler-Dillard and carried by unanimous vote

H. Nomination Committee – Nancy Darst, Chair

Director Darst announced that agenda items H (i) and (ii) were being pulled from the agenda and would be presented at a future meeting.

Director Douglas asked why the items were being pulled from the agenda. Chair Morris explained that the items were not ripe for consideration and that additional work was needed. Several Board members asked questions and expressed disappointment and concern that these agenda items were pulled. There was general discussion as to why the items were being pulled from the agenda. Chair Morris asked the Nominating Committee to reconvene to address certain issues and report back to the Executive Committee.

I. Executive Committee – Eileen Morris, Chair

Chair Morris reported that matters discussed at the Executive Committee were addressed in the various Committee reports.

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 project will be wrapping up shortly. The restroom and storage facility is being stained and substantial completion inspection will be scheduled for later this month.

Caroline Street Reconstruction. The Contractor’s paving activities are continuing. The Contractor is focusing on driveways and intersections. Plans are to open both lanes south of McGowen between Elgin and McGowen for traffic at the end of this month. CenterPoint is scheduled to begin installation of the new larger electrical poles which will allow for electrical wires to be lifted and fewer poles to facilitate the new trees that will be planted in the public right-of-way and the installation of new Midtown decorative lighting.

Other Pending Projects.

Baldwin Park. There are plans to install certain electrical and lighting improvements in the Park. The plans include installing additional electrical receptacles to better accommodate some of the events that are held in the Park. The design team is working on the plans for the electrical and lighting upgrades which will then be presented to the City of Houston for approval. The Midtown Staff and Consultants are hoping to install the electrical and lighting improvements at the same time that the playground equipment is installed.

STEPS Pilot Project. The City has granted approval to proceed with the two locations for the Pedestrian Safety Enhancements Pilot Project. The Staff plans to bid those projects in late October or early November.

City of Houston’s Tuam Street Water Line Project. Work is continuing with Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis’ office to finalize an agreement to fund a portion of the Midtown proposed improvements. The cost estimates for such Midtown proposed improvements are being finalized with the City of Houston and will be provided to Commissioner Rodney Ellis’ office for review.

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).

There was no executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Morris advised the Board that the next Midtown Management District Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. via video and telephonic conferencing.

PRESENTATION: Martin Cominsky, CEO – Interfaith Ministries

Mr. Martin Cominsky CEO and Ms. Sucre Woodley, Director of Marketing and Communications, gave a presentation on the various services offered by Interfaith Ministries which included the Meals on Wheels Program, which is one of the top five Meals on Wheels Programs in the nation. He stated that normally they serve 5,000 seniors daily, however due to COVID-19 the program now provides a week of meal at one time. He further reported that Interfaith Ministries reaches out to seniors using technology. Mr. Cominsky also provided an overview of the expansion project that his organization is working on. He reported that the project will involve the development of a new building on a recently purchased nearby site in Midtown, which will house the Interfaith Ministries Volunteer Resource Center.

ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

DocuSigned by:

CA3EF7D600B04BD...

Marylene Chan, Board Secretary

11/12/2020

Date