

MINUTES OF THE  
MIDTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 5, 2012

The Board of Directors of the Midtown Management District held a meeting, open to the public, on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012 at 11:00 a.m. in the Midtown Offices, located at 410 Pierce Street, Houston, Texas, 77002, inside the boundaries of the District, and the roll was called of the duly appointed members of the Board, to-wit:

Roger Neal	John G. Castillo
Katherine Cabaniss	Vernus Swisher
Willie Coleman, Jr.	William Franks
William Tilney	Gayle R. Fortson
F. Charles LeBlanc	Gary Noble
Ramiro Orta	M. Todd Triggs
Eileen Morris	

All of the above were present except Director Castillo thus constituting a quorum.

In addition, present at the meeting were Matt Thibodeaux, Kandi Schramm, Cynthia Alvarado, Marlon Marshall and Peggy Foreman of Burney & Foreman, Pat Hall of Equi-Tax, Inc., Leo Flores of Houston Community College. Also present were Ted E. Stiles, Dianne Reece, Jay Vinekar, and Dave Hildebrandt.

Chairman Triggs called the meeting to order.

**RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Triggs welcomed guests and invited them to introduce themselves and make comments to the Board.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. **Approve Minutes for the August 1, 2012 regular Board meeting.**
- b. **Approve the July 2012 Financial Report.**
- c. **Approve the payment of invoices for September 2012.**
- d. **Approve Equi-Tax Report for August 2012.**

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

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

**A. Executive**

Chairman Triggs gave a brief report on matters discussed at the August 28, 2012 Executive Committee meeting.

Mr. Triggs announced that Midtown had received notification that it was being designated as a Cultural Arts & Entertainment District by the Texas Commission on the Arts. Chairman Triggs stated that the formal designation would occur on September 6, 2012 in Austin, Texas and that it was his understanding that Midtown was one of only three applicants to be awarded the designation this year.

The Managing Director advised the Board that Midtown received high scores on all of the judging criteria and will be the first management district in the State to be designated as a Cultural Arts and Entertainment District.

Chairman Triggs and other Board members thanked the Urban Planning Committee, other volunteers and the Midtown Staff for their hard work on getting the designation.

**1. Request for authorization to spend remaining funds from the original amount allocated for additional expenses related to the Midtown Cultural Arts & Entertainment District designation application process.**

The Managing Director reminded the Board that as part of the FY2012 Budget, it had previously approved \$10,000 to pay for expenses related to applying for the Cultural Arts & Entertainment District designation. She stated that approximately \$5,714 had been spent so far; including costs for video production, legal assistance, postage, and a day trip to Austin, Texas for certain Midtown staff members to meet with the staff of the Texas Commission for the Arts and review previously submitted applications. Ms. Alvarado stated that certain Board members and Staff members would like to attend the September 6, 2012 meeting of the Texas Commission on the Arts in Austin, Texas and would also like to host a press conference and reception to formally announce the designation, acknowledge the hard work of Board members, volunteers, arts groups and Staff and to thank elected officials for their letters of support for the project.

Director Noble made a motion to approve the request for authorization to spend remaining funds from the original amount allocated for additional expenses related to the Midtown Cultural Arts & Entertainment District designation application process. The motion was seconded by Director Morris and carried by majority vote. Director Neal voted against the motion.

**2. Request to hire a new District Coordinator.**

Cynthia Alvarado advised the Board that the Staff conducted a review of the job duties and the skill set that would be required for a second staff person for the District. Ms. Alvarado stated that based on that review, she was recommending the creation of a new District Coordinator position and requesting authorization to go forward with the hiring process. Ms. Alvarado stated that the new position would entail a much higher skill set than the prior assistant's position, would come with more responsibilities and therefore would most likely require a higher salary. Ms. Alvarado shared a preliminary job description and proposed salary range. Following all discussion, Director Swisher made a motion to approve the hiring of a new District Coordinator. The motion was seconded by Director Morris and carried by unanimous vote.

**B. Public Safety**

Director Tilney reported on the activities of the Public Safety Committee. He reported that the current crime statistics for Midtown show no significant increase or decrease over the prior year.

Director Tilney announced that an event to feed the homeless known as "The Feast of Joy" had been moved from Baldwin Park to a different location. He reported that upon initially learning that the event had been approved by the City of Houston to be held in Baldwin Park, he received a number of email complaints from Midtown residents regarding the appropriateness of Baldwin Park as a location for the event. He further reported that the emails were also sent to the Midtown Staff and the City of Houston.

### **C. Marketing**

Director Morris reported that her first meeting as the new Marketing Committee Chair was held on August 21, 2012. She reported that matters discussed included the status of the website improvements, renewal of the domain name, an October event in place of the fall festival, ways to bring more national attention to Midtown, and hosting a periodic meet and greet for businesses and arts organizations.

### **D. Service & Maintenance**

Marlon Marshall reported on the activities of the Service & Maintenance Committee. Mr. Marshall reported that he and the Managing Director were still making efforts to work with METRO to address landscape maintenance issues along the METRO Rail line on Main Street. Mr. Marshall advised the Board that according to METRO, they have insufficient funds to maintain the median on a regular basis. There was general discussion regarding the ongoing concerns about the status of landscape maintenance in the median along the METRO Rail line and Mr. Marshall was asked to continue to work with METRO on improving the landscape maintenance on Main Street.

Directors Neal asked the Staff to explore whether the District could paint the street cross walks in FY 2013.

### **E. Urban Planning**

Director Coleman reported that the Urban Planning Committee is working on the committee's FY 2013 budget requests.

Cynthia Alvarado reported that she notified the conference coordinator for the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts ("NCECA ") that the Midtown Park would be closed due to construction and would not be available to display "public art" during the NCECA conference in March 2013.

### **F. Finance**

Director Noble reported on the activities of the Finance Committee. Pat Hall of Equi-Tax, Inc. reported on the review of homestead exemptions preformed at the request of the Finance Committee. Ms. Hall reported that at this point 26 homestead exemptions will be removed because the property owners failed to provide proof that they qualified

for the homestead exemption. Ms. Hall further reported that Midtown lost less than 5% of valuation due to protests for the 2012 assessment year. She stated that according to HCAD data this was one of the lowest valuation loss percentages of all the other management districts in Harris County.

#### **G. Nominating**

Director Fortson reported that the Nominating Committee was still working on filling vacancies and reminded the Board that there would be additional vacancies in the next few months due to several current Board members being “term limited”.

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

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

Bagby Street Reconstruction Project – Construction is progressing well, the underground portion of the work is now near McGowen street and the Bagby street exit off IH 45 has reopened to Webster street.

Caroline Street Project - Preliminary design work is being finalized, and a public meeting regarding the project is planned for the last quarter of 2012.

Gray Street Project – Construction is underway on the eastern side of the street and is scheduled to last a total of 9 months with construction having started approximately 45 days ago. T

Baldwin Park Project – Design work is approximately 50% complete and the project is scheduled to go out for bids in late October or early November 2012.

Glover Park Project – Awaiting final comments from the City of Houston and is expected to go out for bids at the same time as the Baldwin Park Project.

Superblock Park – Design is 100% complete, however, the MRA is working on a land exchange agreement which, if successful, will result in the need to redesign for a larger park space.

Finally, Mr. Marshall stated that the MRA expects to spend \$35 to \$40 million on capital improvement projects in Midtown in the next 5 years.

**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.

**RECONVENE THE PUBLIC SESSION AND, IF NECESSARY, TAKE ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED DURING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

There was no executive session.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Triggs announced that the next Board meeting would be on Wednesday, October 3, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. at the Midtown offices located at 410 Pierce Street, Houston, Texas 77002.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

  
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William R. Franks, Board Secretary

12.5.12  
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Date