



midtown
HOUSTON

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

June 3, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Midtown Management District held a regular meeting, open to the public, on Wednesday, June 3, 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	Gary Noble
Pos. 8	Vacant	Pos. 17	Charles Washington
Pos. 9	J. Allen Douglas		

All of the above were present thus constituting a quorum.

In addition, present at the meeting were Midtown Staff members; Matt Thibodeaux, Kandi Schramm, Cynthia Alvarado, Mechelle Phillips, Marlon Marshall, David Thomas, Madeline Peña and Mark Leija; Clark Lord of Bracewell LLP; Peggy Foreman of Burney & Foreman, Adam Castañeda of Pilot Dance Project, Chelsea Smith, Development Manager of Musiqua, Anthony Barilla, Executive Director of Musiqua, Kenisha Coleman, Project Manager of the Harambee Art Gallery, Shannon Teasley of SRT Management, Erica Rocha of S.E.A.L. Security Solutions, LLC.; and Midtown residents - Kay Walton, Henriette Bodmer-de Heer; Debbie Anderson, Cindy Jackson and Julie Shockley.

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

Chairman Coleman called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS

Midtown resident Debbie Anderson expressed concerns regarding money being spent frivolously for art projects in the neighborhood such as the painting of the mini murals on the utility boxes, painted sidewalks and crosswalks and about the new bike lanes in the neighborhood. She stated that she does not believe these expenditures are in the best interest of the neighborhood and that money should be spend on other things. She also stated that she is concerned that there is a budget deficit.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MAY 6, 2020 BOARD MEETING**
- B. APPROVE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2020**
- C. APPROVE PAYMENT OF INVOICES FOR MAY 2020**
- D. APPROVE EQUI-TAX REPORT FOR MAY 2020**

Ms. Alvarado presented the consent agenda. Director Woodruff made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Morris and 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 on the activities of the Service and Maintenance Committee. He stated that the Field Services Team continues to work throughout the District in accordance with the regular maintenance schedule.

He also reported that the Committee and staff discussed continuing to work on tree trimming within the District. He stated that he had spoken with Cynthia Aceves Lewis and asked for her assistance in encouraging residents to report locations where tree trimming is needed through SeeClickFix. Director Lefsrud also stated that work on the Dark Blocks Project will begin toward the end of June and that 25 locations have been identified for the first phase of the project.

Director Lefsrud advised the Board that the Committee has been working with Design Workshop and Walter P. Moore to assess the playground area at Baldwin Park in an effort to determine what type of playground equipment is best suited for young children. He stated that the design team has presented 2 options which are being evaluated based on several criteria including safety and cost. He stated that the next step is to get with the design team and have further discussions with the City of Houston regarding obtaining approval of the selected equipment and direction regarding trees in the playground area that require trimming. Director Lefsrud reported that the estimated schedule for design, plan development, approvals and to obtain any required permits is approximately five to six months and that once permits are obtained construction is estimated to take an additional six months. He also stated that the Committee still has more work to do on the project including regarding funding.

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

Director Morris stated that the Committee was seeking Board approval for the following matters:

- i. Agreement with Grant Consultant

Director Morris stated that as a result of the re-negotiation of the City of Houston arts grant, there was an additional \$35,000 available for Micro Arts Grants for art projects in Midtown. She stated that the Committee would like to engage Shannon Teasley with SRT Management Services, as a grant consultant to help with the grant application and grantee selection process. Director Morris reminded the Board that the District had previously engaged Ms. Teasley to assist with the first round of Micro Arts Grants and that she did an excellent job. Director Morris stated that there were sufficient funds in the Committee’s current budget to pay the \$3,000 fee for Ms. Teasley’s services.

Director Baker made a motion to approve an agreement with Shannon Teasley of SRT Management Services in the amount of \$3,000 to provide grant consultant services as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Dillard. Following all discussion, the Chair asked for a roll call vote. The roll was called and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

ii. Letter of Support to Texas Commission on the Arts on behalf of The Pilot Dance Project

Director Morris advised the Board that the District received a request for a Letter of Support to the Texas Commission on the Arts on behalf of The Pilot Dance Project. She stated that the The Pilot Dance Project is a Midtown based organization and is seeking a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts. She further stated that the request did not entail any financial commitment from the District.

iii. Letter of Support to Texas Commission on the Arts on behalf of Musiqua

Director Morris further advised the Board that the District also received a request for a Letter of Support to the Texas Commission on the Arts on behalf of Musiqua, another Midtown based organization seeking a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts. She again advised the Board that the request did not entail any financial commitment from the District.

Mr. Anthony Barilla of Musiqua provided a brief overview of his organization and summarized the request for a Letter of Support.

Director Woodruff made a motion to consider agenda items B(ii) and B(iii) together and approve the Letters of Support for The Pilot Dance Project and for Musiqua as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Lefsrud and carried by unanimous vote.

iv. Consider Sponsorship Request for A.B.C. Mask Project

Director Morris presented the request for Sponsorship of the A.B.C. Face Mask Project. She announced that the request was for financial support to pay a portion of the cost of the project and invited Keneisha Coleman, Project Manager of Harambee Art Gallery to provide an overview of the project and the various sponsorship levels. Ms. Coleman stated that the request was for \$2,500 for 500 masks or \$5,000 for 1,000 face masks along with safety education information for distribution within the Midtown and surrounding communities to help protect against the spread of Covid-19. She stated that the masks would be designed by a team of to be selected local artists. A question was raised regarding Director Washington's role with Harambee Art Gallery. Ms. Coleman stated that Harambee Art Gallery was owned by Director Washington. There was a discussion regarding exactly how the District's funds would be used and whether a potential conflict of interest existed. Director Woodruff made a motion to table this agenda items pending receipt of additional information and resolution of any conflict disclosure requirements. The motion was seconded by Director Douglas and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

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

Director Tyler-Dillard reported that staff is working to make the Winter/Spring 2020 edition of the Midtown Buzz a digital publication. She also reported that staff has been working on improving the load speed for the Midtown Houston website. She stated that the load speeds have increased significantly on both desktops and mobile computers.

Director Tyler-Dillard also reported that staff is working to negotiate pricing for creation and production of generic advertising videos for Midtown. She stated that virtual programming will continue throughout the month of June 2020. Finally, Director Tyler-Dillard reported that the staff has been reaching out to various Midtown businesses to determine their level of activity during the past few months and how they may have been impacted by Covid-19.

D. Urban Planning Committee – Allen Douglas, Chair

Director Douglas reported that the Committee had a presentation on parking issues in Midtown from Jeremy Rocha of Wantman Group, Inc., who is currently working with Midtown Parks Conservancy to study available parking assets in Midtown and how they are currently being used.

Director Douglas reported that the Committee received an update from Peter Eccles, a transportation planner with the City of Houston regarding the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan (MTFP) for certain streets in Midtown.

He also announced that the Committee is working on an initiative for certain pedestrian enhancements to facilitate increased safety precautions at intersections for pedestrians. He reported that the District is working with the Midtown Redevelopment Authority and Consultant Walter P. Moore to help with assessment and recommendations as well as with design and implementation of the pedestrian enhancements. He stated that 2 intersections have been identified for inclusion in a potential pilot project and that the next step will be to approach the City of Houston to better understand what will be required to move forward with the project. Pending City approval, the Committee would move forward with public engagement efforts and identifying other potential locations for additional pedestrian enhancements.

He also stated that the staff is looking at decal options that could be used on the bike racks and fix-it stations that the District has installed in various locations throughout Midtown.

E. Finance and Budget Committee – Dana Woodruff, Chair

Director Woodruff reported that approximately 96% of 2019 assessments have been collected as of May 31, 2020. She also reported that expenditures are within budget and that while there are some budget variances they are the result of timing issues and/or the need to cancel certain events such as Art in the Park 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Director Woodruff provided an update on the status of the FY 2019 audit and stated that it is moving a bit slower than in prior years because of the need to work virtually. Finally, Director Woodruff announced that planning for FY 2021 is underway and asked that community members attend the respective committee meetings and provide any recommendations for projects that they would like to have considered for inclusion in the FY 2021 budget.

F. Community Activity Report – Christopher Johnston, Liaison

i. SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD #62

Director Johnston stated that there was no Super Neighborhood #62 meeting in May 2020.

G. Public Safety – Willie Coleman, Interim Chair

i. SECURITY COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Security Coordinator Mark Leija reported on various public safety issues impacting the Midtown Community and efforts to address those issues. He stated that he continues to stay in frequent contact with the various law enforcement agencies working in Midtown.

Mr. Leija announced that Commander Johnson of the South Central Division has 2 additional DRT officers and that there has been an approximately 29% overall decrease in crime in the areas of Midtown patrolled by the South Central Division.

He also announced that the Solid Waste Department of the City has received certain grant funds for clean-up and with the assistance of HPD has conducted several clean-up projects in Midtown. Additionally, he stated that HPD officers have been provided with masks to hand out to persons they interact with who don't have masks in an effort to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

Mr. Leija reported that Harris County Precinct 7 Deputy Constables continue to respond to patrol alerts in Midtown, patrol areas with higher concentrations of people on the streets, and generally provide law enforcement presence in the residential areas. He further stated that Constable Walker has temporarily assigned extra officers to patrol in Midtown at no additional cost to the District.

Mr. Leija reported that S.E.A.L Security officers continue to assist HPD and Precinct 7 Constables as needed, monitor homeless encampments throughout the entire District and maintain a presence around local businesses, residences and parks within the District.

Mr. Leija reported that he has worked with City representatives and certain property owners to address issues relating to homelessness, clean-up of trash and debris left by homeless persons who are camping on property without authorization and the existence of dangerous buildings and other conditions at certain locations in Midtown. He also stated that he contacted the Texas Alcohol & Beverage Commission in response to concerns expressed by residents that someone had applied for a liquor license for a property on Chenevert Street. He was advised that no application for a liquor license had been filed as of May 19, 2020 and that once an application is filed anyone objecting can file a protest within 60 days of the date the application is filed.

Finally, he announced that the previously scheduled meeting of Midtown apartment managers has been rescheduled for June 18, 2020 and will be held virtually and that the next Public Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.

H. Nomination Committee – Nancy Darst, Chair

Director Darst provided a report on the process used to receive nominations and select a slate of candidates for recommendation to serve in the various Board officer positions. She presented the Nomination Committee’s recommended candidates:

- Eileen J. Morris – Chair
- Darcy Lefsrud – Vice-Chair
- Dana Woodruff – Treasurer
- Marylene Chan – Secretary
- James Llamas – Assistant Secretary

Director Darst then responded to questions from Board members and proceeded to conduct the election by asking if there were any additional nominations from the floor. Director Woodruff nominated Director Allen Douglas as a candidate to serve as Board Chair. Director Douglas respectfully declined to serve.

Chair Coleman made a motion to approve the slate of candidates as recommended by the Nomination Committee. The motion was seconded by Director Dillard and carried by unanimous vote.

Chair Coleman congratulated the newly elected Board officers and thanked the Nomination Committee for their service.

Chair Coleman inquired as to whether there has been any action taken by the City regarding appointment of new Board members. Ms. Alvarado stated that she has made follow-up inquiries with the City and that the matter has not yet been considered by City Council. Chair Coleman asked that the Staff follow-up again with the City.

i. Executive Committee – Willie H. Coleman, Chair

Chair Coleman stated that the Executive Committee met via video and telephonic conferencing in May 2020. He stated that all matters discussed at the Executive Committee meeting have been addressed under the various agenda items.

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:

Midtown Park. The Staff and Design Consultants continue to place a hold on the design process for the Food Hall while they assess the impact of COVID-19 on the restaurant industry in Houston and whether it is advisable to move forward with the recommendation for construction of a Food Hall on the Front 90 area at the corner of McGowan and Travis Streets. The team is considering all options including the feasibility of a ground lease of the site.

Caroline Street Reconstruction. The Contractor is making steady progress on the project and recently completed the water line and the sanitary sewage installation up to McGowen Street. Paving activity has started on the east lane between Elgin and McGowen Streets. The streetscape installation is starting with electrical conduit for street and pedestrian lighting between Elgin and McGowen Streets. Upcoming work includes rain garden and sidewalk construction on the east block faces between Elgin and McGowen Streets.

Bagby Park. The Contractor is wrapping up installation of the canopy lighting and there was a training session for the programmable lights that have been installed on the stage. Staff is waiting for the City of Houston to grant its final approval to begin construction of the storage and restroom facilities. The kiosk tenant has decided to move forward and is opening the kiosk without the second level improvements and will aim for a soft opening in the fall of 2020.

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 Coleman advised the Board that the next Midtown Management District Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 1, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. via video and telephonic conferencing.

ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

DocuSigned by:

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 Eileen Morris
 Board Secretary

7/8/2020

 Date