

Joliet City Center Partnership

**Board of Directors
February 9, 2023
8:00 a.m. – In-person**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 8:05 a.m.

1. Approval of January Minutes

- Jim Roolf motioned to approve.
- Ron Romero seconded.
- All Aye – Motion approved.

2. Approval of January CCP and “Ready to Rock” Financials

- Priscilla presented both the CCP and the Ready to Rock financials. Priscilla stated that we have already made several large deposits for events. Michele Kubitz has put in a request for reimbursement for SSA funds with the City. The Ready to Rock financials have a separate bank account and separate financials for ease of keeping general CCP funds and Ready to Rock funds separate. We will be providing these to the board for the duration of the project.
- Doug Pryor made a motion to approve.
- Ron Romero seconded.
- All Aye – Motion approved.

3. Committee Chair Reports

- **Marketing Committee:**

- Monica provided an overview of the 2023 event calendar to include the Shamrock Stroll on March 7th, our new Lunch and Learn series which kicks off on March 13th on the topic of social media marketing, our new event Salsa Fest, Kidz Fest, Panic at the Plaza, the Stone & Steel Spooky 5k, another new event Spirits with the Spirits and Light up the Holidays. She also stated that Cupid’s Quest, a new event that encourages visitors to stop in various retailers, is going well.
- Monica stated that both newsletters now have a name; the business-to-business newsletter will be known as City Center Connections and the visitors’ newsletter will be known as Back Stage Pass.
- The business spotlight last month featured Mousa Tapas Bar. Tentative spotlights for the next few months include J&M Jewelers, Tamales Korrina and Internode Greenery & Home.
- The Slammers have confirmed they are taking over Paws on 66 and the CCP will work with them to help make it successful. It will coincide with their Dog Days of Summer event.

Name	Present	Absent
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant		X
Susan Bornhofen		X
Mike Brick		X
Monica Cicimov	X	
David DiLorenzo	X	
Amber Duffy	X	
Diane Harris	X	
Jen Howard	X	
Bryan Kopman	X	
Cornell Lurry	X	
Megan Millen	X	
Sue Moore	X	
Mayor Bob O’Dekirk		X
Doug Pryor	X	
Ron Romero	X	
Jim Roolf	X	
Rod Tonelli (Chair)	X	
Diana Viveros	X	
Wade Welsh		X
Denise Winfrey		X
Garland Mays (on behalf of JBT)		X
Priscilla Cordero (Director)	X	
Vicki Sanchez (E&M Manager)	X	
Cesar Suarez (ED Director, City of Joliet)	X	

- Monica also presented an event grant request for the Rialto Square Theatre’s “A Shamrockin’ Good Time” event in the amount of \$1,000. Ron Romero made a motion to approve the grant and Doug Pryor seconded it. Jennifer Howard abstained. All aye-motion approved.
- **Owners & Managers Association Meeting**
 - Megan provided a recap of the February 2nd meeting which was held at the library. The original topic of the City Square Design was tabled, but we had many new attendees and new businesses which resulted in an introduction of these new businesses. Rod stated that the City will be hosting an Open House on the City Square Design on February 23rd from 4:00-7:00.
- **Economic Development Committee**
 - Jim presented a grant request from Azul Celeste. At the September 2022 meeting, the board approved a \$41,500 grant. At the time of approval, the owners did not yet have all the quotes for the work proposed. In order to begin some of the work, they chose to submit the application for a majority of the work with the remaining items to be completed to come at a later date. The work that was previously approved has already begun. Because our grant sliding scale only funds 20% of a project for project amounts between \$50,000-200,000, the increased grant amount requested is only \$7,564. The Economic Development Committee met on February 7, 2023, to review the request and voted 6-0 to recommend an increase of \$7,564 in the grant amount to the board for a total grant of \$49,064. Jim made a motion to approve the increased grant amount of \$7,564 and Megan Millen seconded the motion. All aye – motion approved.
 - Jim presented another grant request for Maha, Inc. Salah Bashir is the owner of Ranch Liquors located at 83 W. Jefferson Street. He has owned and operated this liquor store since 2006. He previously owned several other locations and decided to sell several years ago. He has been in the industry for over 40 years. He is seeking to sell the liquor store business, retain ownership of the building, and open a pizzeria in the vacant space next to the liquor store. Although he does not have restaurant experience, he has a local individual in mind for the position of restaurant manager who has managed restaurants for over 10 years. The proposed space is 2,200 square feet. The total budget is approximately \$180,000 and includes a complete rehab of the electrical, plumbing, framing, drywall, some new ductwork, new doors and the kitchen build-out. He has budgeted another \$80,000 for equipment. He has already obtained permits for the work and intends to begin work as soon as possible. His goal opening date is May 2023. The Economic Development Committee met on February 7, 2023, to review the request and voted 6-0 to recommend a grant to the board in the amount of \$26,000. This project and grant would allow us to add another restaurant space to the downtown and bring much needed revitalization and foot traffic to the north side of Jefferson Street. Priscilla stated that she spoke with Mr. Bashir about the façade and any intentions to renovate the façade. He stated that he did not intend to update the façade at this time. Priscilla and the board expressed concerns over the current façade. Priscilla will again bring up the topic to Mr. Bashir and remind him that additional funding is available if the façade is updated. Diane Harris made a motion to approve a \$26,000 grant and Jen Howard seconded. All aye – motion approved.

- Jim presented “The Shops on Chicago Street” program, a retail program concept developed by Priscilla based on other retail attraction programs throughout the country. The program is proposed for the space at 70-74 N. Chicago Street. The concept will allow retail tenants to share a short-term, affordable retail space with other up-and-coming retailers, participate in business counseling, and experience the Downtown Joliet market. We will seek proposals from local businesses, entrepreneurs, and start-ups to participate in this program. Selected applicants will share a retail space with the potential for long-term occupancy. The concept includes subdividing an approximately 2,000 square foot space to accommodate three to six retail tenants. Tenant floorplans will range from 300-650 square feet with tenant rent set at \$300-550 per month. By subdividing the space, tenants will be mitigating their risk in taking on a large lease. Further, the plan is for lease terms to be one-year in length which further mitigates risk for tenants concerned about taking on a long-term lease in a Downtown that is still rebuilding. Staff recommended providing a financial incentive in the form of a rent-matching program that would allow each tenant to receive a grant to cover 50% or \$300 whichever is less of their rent expense for one month, if signing a 6-month lease; or 50% for 3 months or \$750 whichever is less, if signing a one-year lease. The Economic Development Committee met on February 7, 2023 to discuss the program and the addition of a cap to allow staff flexibility to accept new tenants if there is tenant turnover. The cap was set at \$7,000. Doug Pryor asked why the cap was set at \$7,000. Rod stated that we expect tenant turnover, so this allows us the ability to provide grants to new tenants. Bryan Kopman suggested a rent-reimbursement to the tenant should be made to ensure the funding is used for rent. He also expressed concerns about other landlords having issues with the CCP subsidizing rent for tenants. Rod stated that other tenants are eligible for the Small Business Assistance Grant which can be utilized for rent. Jen Howard stated that the timing of the project is not great given the expected construction on Chicago Street. Priscilla agreed, but stated that all we can do is disclose this to prospective tenants and work with the city and businesses to minimize disruptions. Megan Millen expressed concerns, as did Diane Harris, with the types of business uses that would be allowed. Priscilla stated that the city has prohibited uses in Downtown and our program would be in line with the city’s zoning codes. Megan also expressed concerns with CCP selecting the businesses that are eligible to participate and citing discrimination on the CCP’s part. Priscilla stated that the selection criteria will be clearly communicated to all applicants to mitigate this risk. Several board members stated that the CCP should have a written agreement with the landlord outlining each parties’ responsibilities. Given the above concerns, a motion was made by Megan Millen to table the program until the March board meeting. Ron Romero seconded. All aye – motion tabled.
- Jim stated that the Economic Development Committee discussed a change to the current grant agreement that allows staff the ability to internally increase the amount of a grant approved to no more than 25% of the total grant amount not to exceed \$5,000. This change was approved at January’s board meeting, but at the time the decision was made to change language on the grant agreement to include these policy changes. Following the board

meeting, Priscilla discussed this change with Bryan Kopman and he advised that we do not change the grant agreement and leave the above change as an internal policy change adopted by the board.

- **Beautification Committee**

- Megan stated that the Beautification Committee did not meet this month, but Priscilla is moving forward with the Granby's Landscaping contract to provide plant material. Priscilla stated that we cut some material, but that as the plants grow and fill in, it should not be noticeable. This allowed the CCP to save \$4,287 on plant material this year. The total quote from Granby's is \$19,861.00. We are still awaiting a final quote from Illiniscaping for maintenance of the planters.

4. Chair Report

- Rod stated that Greg Peerbolte of the Joliet Area Historical Museum will be replacing Mike Brick on the board. Jim Roolf made the motion to approve the replacement and Diane Harris seconded. All aye – motion approved.

5. Staff Report

- Priscilla congratulated Vicki on her one-year anniversary with the CCP.
- Priscilla stated that the Ready to Rock Sculpture project is going well, and sponsors have been secured for all 12 sculptures. A ribbon cutting is tentatively scheduled for May 20th.
- Priscilla reported that Top Notch Barbershop and Town Center Realty have both been approved for \$1,500 Small Business Assistance Grants. She also reported that Noe Patino is moving forward with his \$75,000 grant on both properties as initially approved.
- Unidos Marketing is working on a Downtown Map listing all our retail, restaurants, and major attractions. They are also working on an economic development attraction piece. A contract has been signed with Unidos through May 31, 2023.
- Last, Priscilla presented social media analytics from March-December of 2022 and stated that we have had an increase of over 1,300 followers on Facebook.

6. City Report

- Cesar provided an update on the Auditorium and Munroe Building TIF extensions. He stated that Mike Petry demonstrated a gap in his pro-forma on both properties. On February 7th, the City Council approved a TIF extension for Mike Petry for both buildings. Mike Petry will receive \$50,000 per year in reimbursements for both properties.
- Cesar also reported that Robert Laskey has been hired as the new Economic Development Specialist.
- Cesar stated that the Renaissance Center Banquets received their liquor license.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

- Diane Harris motioned to adjourn.
- Ron Romero seconded.
- All Aye – Motion approved.