



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

4:00-5:00 p.m.

via

Zoom Virtual Meetings

MINUTES

A meeting of the Downtown Dayton Partnership (DDP) Executive Committee was held Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., via Zoom Virtual Meetings. Co-Chair Dan McCabe presided.

Also in attendance were Mr. Edward Bentley, Mr. Michael Colbert, Mr. David Dickerson, Ms. Shelley Dickstein, Mr. Peter Haley, Ms. Madeline Iseli, Ms. Julie Liss-Katz, Commissioner Deborah Lieberman, Mr. Daniel Meixner, Mr. Ryan Powell, Mr. Ty Sutton, Mr. Sam Warwar, and Mr. Jason Woodard. All other Executive Committee members were absent and excused. Other attendees included Mr. Bob Ruzinsky, Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority. Downtown Dayton Partnership staff members in attendance were Ms. Sandy Gudorf, Mr. Scott Murphy, and Ms. Colleen Turner.

Welcome & Approval of Minutes

Co-Chair Dan McCabe opened the Executive Committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. He made introductions, and welcomed all who were present. After receiving a quorum, Mr. McCabe asked for a motion to approve the February 23, 2021, meeting minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Julie Liss-Katz and seconded by Ms. Shelley Dickstein. The motion unanimously passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Downtown Business Survey

Ms. Gudorf reported that every year the DDP surveys downtown businesses to get an understanding of where the DDP's priorities should be, along with other information, such as individual businesses' growth of jobs and/or space. This year, the DDP prepared two separate surveys: one geared toward office users, and another targeted at first floor businesses. Ms. Gudorf introduced Mr. Scott Murphy, who gave an overview of the survey results. He reported that the DDP received 140-150 responses. Questions were asked relative to COVID-19's impact on revenue and staffing in 2020 compared to 2019. Results included:

First Floor Business:

- 78% report 2020 revenue declines of at least 26-50%. One in three businesses (primarily restaurants and bars) report declines of 50-80% or more.
- Staffing was less impacted. 63% reported a 2020 decline of less than 25%, but 1 in 3 reduced staffing by 26-50% or more.
- 3 out of 4 businesses believe they will survive the next 4-6 months. A small group of businesses (primarily lunch and coffee businesses) said they only expected to survive 1-2 more months.
- There was a broad appreciation across the board for all the various relief programs provided in 2020. The most popular relief programs were the Re-Open Dayton grants, the gift card bonus buy and Downtown Dollars programs, and the Open* initiatives.

Office Tenants:

- The DDP asked about remote working trends and what businesses are expecting their office situations to look like post-COVID. Pre-COVID, two-thirds of office employees were working entirely in the office. Post-COVID, 60% are expecting to do some hybrid/remote work as they come out of the pandemic, with more bias toward working in the office. One in three will be in the office at least 3-4 days per week, which is a significant impact in terms of daytime population in downtown.
- Impact on office culture, productivity, and teamwork: One area that worsened the most during the pandemic is organizational culture, in particular with the larger office employers. Those working from home say their office culture has worsened.

- Approximately one in five (17%) are expecting some type of change to their office space post-COVID, whether it be reducing office footprint, adding hot desks, increasing teaming areas, or changing the office layout to use the space better. A very small group said they may not be in the office at all. More than 50% are not anticipating any changes in office layout.

In the survey, the two audiences were asked to rate COVID recovery initiatives based on how important the initiatives are to downtown. The following were listed as important priorities coming out of COVID:

	First Floor Business %	Office Tenants %
	Very Important	Very Important
• Encouraging employers to bring their employees back downtown	76%	46%
• Hosting events and programs to bring the public downtown	81%	46%
• Making the expanded first-floor patio spaces permanent		49%
• Continuing the momentum in downtown development	83%	45%

Confidence in Downtown’s Recovery moving forward:

- Reassuringly, in both survey groups, 60-75% said they are very confident in downtown’s ability to bounce back from pandemic. First floor businesses were more mixed in that regard, but all are feeling good about coming out of the pandemic.

DDP Job Performance:

- More than 70% said job the DDP’s performance was excellent in 2020. This high score reflects work the DDP team’s work to support businesses during the pandemic.

Downtown Recovery Plan

Ms. Gudorf reported that the DDP recently had a very positive first Downtown Recovery Plan meeting. Mr. Dan McCabe and Commissioner Chris Shaw are co-chairing the Recovery Plan efforts. Mr. McCabe commented that the DDP has been very proactive throughout the pandemic. He said that providing a sense of hope for the downtown’s businesses has been very important. While hopefully entering into the last phase of the pandemic, the DDP is focused on recovery. Mr. McCabe said he is very proud to be co-chairing this effort with Chris Shaw because this is critical work to do.

Ms. Gudorf asked that if anyone would like to serve on a Recovery Plan sub-committee, to please fill out the interest form she sent to the DDP board, Executive Committee and SID board asking for volunteers. Ms. Gudorf also reported that the DDP is starting work on the Place Lab project, with the first placemaking project slated to launch in the next 60 days. The DDP is putting together a Place Lab Advisory Committee. She asked for volunteers.

Retail Lab

Mr. Murphy reported that the DDP launched its first cohort of the downtown Retail Lab in 2020. The DDP works with many partners on the Retail Lab, including most prominently the Entrepreneurs’ Center. Mr. AJ Ferguson leads the project with a broad team of partners. Mr. Murphy introduced Mr. Ferguson who reported on the first cohort and the launch of the second cohort. Mr. Ferguson emphasized the major goals of the program, which include:

- Result in a new pipeline of first floor prospects, and be an on-ramp for them into new developments as well as existing buildings that have first floor space
- Use as a vehicle to support existing first floor businesses (extremely relevant this past year), but also will continue to be relevant as those business owners are thinking about growth and expansion, or just stabilizing their business
- Build on the success of the Pop-up Shop program to attract woman-owned businesses and minority-owned businesses and continue to drive the diverse collective mix of businesses on downtown’s first floor

Over the two rounds of applications, below are high level stats on who is in the program/interested in the program:

- More than 70 applicants, which include 36 minority-owned, and 46 woman-owned business
- More than 20 participants, including 10 minority-owned, 18 woman-owned.
- During the first round of the program, 8 of 11 participants either were already downtown, or have made a commitment to downtown. Two of the businesses held their grand openings during the first cohort, and one expects to open this spring. It was a good launch pad for those businesses.

Mr. Ferguson gave highlights of Cohort 1 businesses who held grand openings in 2020. He reported confidentially that there is a business who is actively looking at a major expansion from their current to another location downtown. All are success stories on stabilizing their business and setting the foundation for success in the future.

Cohort 1 Feedback & Outcomes:

- 3 were satisfied; 7 were very satisfied with the Retail Lab experience

- 8 definitely would, 2 probably would recommend to another business owner
- Positive stories from the cohort of how their monthly income has changed
- Favorite sessions and topics include goal setting, payroll & HR, financial foundation, and customer discovery tools to help participants reframe their business

Mr. Ferguson announced that Cohort 2 will start in April. Participants will include 9 businesses with new points of emphasis focusing on:

- Entrepreneur in Residence
- Workbook
- Weekly goal setting & accountability structure
- Peer monitoring & relationship building, more in-person engagement via Zoom

There will be 12 weeks of workshops over the summer. In August, a pitch-night/demo day is scheduled, where participants will have a chance to tell their stories and ask questions.

Mr. Ferguson entertained any questions or comments.

UPDATES

Fifth Third Bank Loan Forgiveness

Ms. Gudorf reported that DDP received full loan forgiveness from Fifth Third Bank from its receipt of the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan.

RSM

RSM, the accounting firm that performs the DDP audits and 990s, has recommended the DDP apply for the Employee Retention Credit Plan. DDP, Treasurer, Mr. Ed Bentley's made positive comments about the benefits of having an Employee Retention Credit Plan, and based on his comments, Ms. Gudorf recommends the DDP apply for the credit plan. Ms. Gudorf said it is estimated from 2020 preliminary numbers that the DDP would be eligible for up to \$49,500. The program is in play for the first two quarters of 2021. Ms. Gudorf asked for any concerns about applying for the credit. None were made.

Downtown Relief Efforts

Ms. Gudorf would like to hold off drawing down more funds for relief efforts. She recommends postponing that conversation and waiting to see what comes out of the Recovery Plan. She said if the DDP receives money from the Employee Retention Credit Plan, those funds will cover the downtown relief effort initiatives.

Events Strategy

Ms. Gudorf said DDP is proceeding with its event strategy for 2021. Events will be realigned so that there is no large gathering of crowds. The DDP is still pausing on plans for the Dayton Holiday Festival for now because it traditionally gathers a lot of people in a very congested area. The DDP will be moving forward with events slated to occur in early summer and early fall 2021.

Out On 5th

Ms. Gudorf announced Out on 5th, the closing of Fifth Street in the Oregon District on weekends, will start this weekend with a soft opening. The official 2021 season opening is scheduled in April on Easter weekend. In order to help businesses that are not in the Oregon District, the DDP is coordinating a series of downtown-wide sidewalk sales. More than 40 businesses will be participating. More information to follow.

Executive Session

Mr. McCabe made a motion to go into executive session to discuss legal issues. Mr. Dave Dickerson seconded the motion. A roll call was taken and the motion carried. Ms. Colleen Turner and Mr. Scott Murphy were excused. The Executive Committee was given an update on the legal issues by Mr. Sam Warwar. A motion was made and seconded to go out of executive session. The motion carried.

Other Business

Co-Chair Dan McCabe thanked all for coming. With no further business to discuss, Mr. McCabe asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ryan Powel motioned, and Ms. Julie-Liss Katz seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.