



CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE

Church Street Marketplace District Commission Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 19, 2025

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Mark Bouchett, Becky Holt, Linda Magoon, Romeo von Hermann, Erik Monsen, Sarah Beal (Zoom)

Absent: Chris Haessly, Cara Tobin, Sam Tolstoi

Staff: Kara Alnasrawi – Executive Director, Samantha McGinnis - Project & Event Manager, Stephanie Shohet – Administrative Assistant, Andrew Bacher - Church Street Marketplace Coordinator, Jessica Dudley - Marketing Manager, Aida Washburn - Project & Events Specialist, Isa Parades - Marketing Coordinator, City Attorney Emmet Wood, City Assessor Joe Turner

Public: Marketplace property owner Robert Fuller and others in person and on line

APPROVE AGENDA

- Motion to approve: Romeo. Second: Linda. Approval is unanimous.

APPROVE MINUTES

- Motion to approve: Linda. Second: Romeo. Approval is unanimous.

PUBLIC FORUM – GENERAL

- Robert Fuller, owner of the building that includes Leunig's Bistro, expresses his concern for the health of the Marketplace and his willingness to help counteract negative behavior and improve the vibe.

MATTHEW'S MONTREAL'S FAMOUS FOOD CART MENU CHANGE

a. PUBLIC FORUM ON ITEM

- Mathew's Montreal's Famous food cart would like to hire Maharaja Spice to manage the cart and offer Indian food – thus creating a full menu change
- Marketplace staff reached out to the owners of Lalgigas upon Commissions request at the February 19th, 2025 meeting, and they were not in favor of this. They requested that the Marketplace honor its historical non compete policy between carts and brick-and-mortar locations
- Staff recommendation is to reject this menu change.
- Romeo makes the motion to reject the change. Linda seconds this.
- Short discussion follows, and then vote is unanimous to reject the change.

COMMON AREA FEES ADJUSTMENT – 49 CHURCH ST. – “MALL” PROPERTY

a. PUBLIC FORUM ON ITEM

- As explained in accompanying memo, property owner is requesting that their common area fees be based on 10,000 square feet (reduced from 24,904), due to the absence of tenants and property line discrepancy.
- Marketplace staff, after consultation with the City Attorney's Office and the City Assessor's Office recommends that Common Area fees on this property are reduced, by 4,904 sq. feet and the property owner would this be charged for a total of 20,000 square feet.
- Linda makes the motion to follow staff recommendation. Becky seconds this.
- Discussion follows with input from the City Attorney's Office and the City Assessor's Office
- Commissioners vote, and the recommendation fails (2 yea/4 nay), resulting in no reduction of square footage, thus maintaining fees based on 24,904 Sq. Ft.

EVENTS UPDATE.

a. BRIEF UPDATE FROM STAFF

- Samantha updates commission about recent and upcoming events.
- Linda makes a motion to amend/add an item to the agenda, and this passes. She suggests creating an event to honor businesses that have been on the Marketplace for many years.
- Discussion follows about the Local Legend campaign in January, highlighting long-time businesses, and options for ways to celebrate them as well as newcomers to the street.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- In Sam's absence, Kara reports that we are in the same situation as last month.
- Although we are still expecting some income, we have cut down on our expenses due to a lack of corporate donations.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Kara reports that we have made some pivots this year as far as our events - Maple Madness instead of ice sculpting for example, and incorporating ideas from the new quarterly marketing meetings with merchants.
- Whim is moving out of the property that we own at 62 Church St. We will need to decide whether to sell the space or create an RFP and continue to rent it out.
- Kara explains that construction will be occurring on sections of Pine Street in addition to Main Street, and that she will be joining a meeting with DPW, SD Ireland (contractor) and all impacted Main Street businesses, as well as those on the City Hall block of the Marketplace.
- The new interim police chief will start on Monday, March 24, and she will meet with him and the mayor.
- The City Attorney has reviewed the charter and given a legal opinion that the City's general fund should assist the Marketplace in the cost of street maintenance. The

Marketplace will be receiving \$200,000 in reimbursement for street maintenance in the FY26 budget.

- Kara indicates she will not recommend raising merchant fees again due to the challenges of the downtown.
- She reports that the Pepper Palace has opened, Outdoor Gear Exchange has reopened their downstairs consignment, Whim and Dear Lucy will be consolidating and moving into 50 Church St., Cappadocia Bistro will be opening soon, a children's clothing store will open where The Store has vacated, and EB Strong's will expand to take over the former Danform location.
- Kara also explains that on April 1, over 80 households are expected to be ejected from the state's motel program in Chittenden County, and that the majority will likely come to Burlington.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Mark reports about the meeting he attended with long-time business owners and the mayor. They believe that the challenges seen today will improve in 3-4 years, but are unsure how to get there.
- Becky asks what was being done by the BBA or Vt Chamber of Commerce to continue attracting Canadian visitors. Kara notes that the state is addressing this and convening a group.
- Sarah requests that there is an agenda item at the April meeting to brainstorm ways to use our resources to make sure that the Marketplace continues to attract tourists this summer.

Meeting is adjourned.

Next Meeting: April 16th, 2025