



Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.
January 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes
6:00 PM - In-Person Alfonso's Trattoria

Opening Remarks:

Mike Kerwin called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm on January 29, 2024.

Mike started the meeting with brief comments regarding the accomplishments from 2023 and his service to the Board as chair.

He spoke about visioning for the future and working with the borough on the “new playbook” mentioned by Mayor Gallagher and a partnership to ensure the continued growth of the district.

He reiterated the importance of getting involvement from all of our stakeholder groups and mentioned that the DSA will continue to “think big” where it pertains to project impacting and services to the district.

Swearing in of New Board Members:

Kevin administered the oath of office to:

Tania Althoff
Natalia Kleyman
Andrianna Popowych

Roll Call:

Present: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff,
Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Late: none

Absent: none

Excused: Ed Rebenack

Election of Officers:

Natalie advised the Board that she had received nominations for the following slate of officers:

Chas Stevens, Chairman
Michael Kerwin, Vice Chairman
RanD Pitts, Treasurer
Kevin Sluka Secretary

She then asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Seeing as though there were none a motion was called for to approve the slate as presented.

Vote to Elect Officers:

MOTION: Rick St. Pierre

SECOND: Kevin Sluka

Vote to Accept:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Kevin Sluka, Chas Stevens, Rick St. Pierre,
Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman, Andrianna Popowych

Nay: None **Recuse:** None **Abstain:** None

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chas called attention to the meeting minutes in the meeting Packet and called for a motion to approve:

Vote to Approve October and November 2023 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Chas Stevens

SECOND: RanD Pitts

Vote to Accept: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Kevin Sluka, Chas
Stevens, Rick St. Pierre,

Yea:

Nay: None **Recuse:** None **Abstain:** Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman, Andrianna
Popowych

Chairman Remarks

Chas Stevens acknowledged Mike Kerwin for his service and discussed being excited to lead the organization as chairman. He reiterated the important work that is done by the DSA and encouraged the stakeholders present to get involved with the DSA committees. He expressed that we are looking forward to a great year and encouraged everyone to stay tuned for all of the exciting initiatives that will come from the DSA this year.

Executive Directors Report

A. New Business

Natalie advised the Board that she recently met with Patrick Mannion to discuss plans for the St. Patrick Day Parade this year. He advised her that RWJUH- Somerset dropped from their premiere sponsorship level and the spot was offered to the DSA. Natalie negotiated a rate of \$4000 (down from \$5000) pr year for a 3 year commitment_

a. Vote to Approve St. Patrick's Day Parade Sponsorship

Vote to approve

MOTION: Michael Kerwin

SECOND: Kevin Sluka

Vote to Approve:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Nay: none **Recuse:** none **Abstain:** none

B. Other New Business

a. RanD Pitts Commended Rick St. Pierre and Joe Clancy for fixing the lighting in the Giardina Walkway. He commented on its beauty and also commented that it feels much safer. Rick mentioned that it also makes that walkway more "Instagrammable."

b. Rick Provided an update on the Reginal Center Partnership meeting and the 2024 Challenge Grant. Advised that Somerville presented the theme of signage, wayfinding, tourism etc. If we can have that theme that can facilitate additional digital kiosks for each municipality through the Regional Center

Public Hearing on the 2024 DSA Budget

Motion to open the Public Hearing

MOTION: Chas Stevens

SECOND: Kevin Sluka

Motion to Open:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Nay: none **Recuse:** none **Abstain:** none

A. Public Comments on the Budget

Greg Storms asked about the clean and safe contract and expressed that for the amount budgeted, he felt like we aren't getting the services contracted. He expressed that he has received complaints from businesses

and residents about the condition of the district.

Natalie reiterated that the clean and safe program is currently contracted out to a third-party vendor. She advised that the contract is up at the end of Feb. and that the DSA would be issuing a new RFP for services. She also advised that the DSA has reduced the budgeted amount for this service and is hopeful that the DSA will find a vendor that is more efficient and cost effective for the district.

Ryan Storms asked about the process by which a vendor is selected. Natalie advised that one the proposal come in following the RFP, that the infrastructure committee will evaluate those, call for interviews and then make a recommendation to the Board.

Alvin Chingcuanco from New Start Consignments questioned the lack of an AAPI Heritage Event in the event list for the year.

Natalie advised that most cultural events are partnerships with outside agencies and non-profits and informed the group that she would look into establishing such a partnership for 2024.

Motion to close the Public Hearing

MOTION: Kevin Sluka

SECOND: Michael Kerwin

Motion to Open:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Nay: none **Recuse:** none **Abstain:** none

Vote to Adopt the 2024 DSA Budget

Chas Stevens called for a motion to adopt the 2024 Budget

Vote to Adopt

MOTION: Michael Kerwin

SECOND: Kevin Sluka

Vote to Approve:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Nay: none **Recuse:** none **Abstain:** none

Other New Business:

None

Finance Reports:

Chas Stevens called for a motion to approve the finance reports

Vote to approve

MOTION: Rick St. Pierre

SECOND: RAnD Pitts

Vote to Approve:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Nay: none **Recuse:** none **Abstain:** none

Comments from the Public

John Vraniak from Osprey Lane Boutique questioned if there is a central information system where businesses can communicate with each other if there is a crime or emergency in the district.

Natalie advised that there currently is not but that the DSA can look into such a system.

In response, Vito Spadea from Somerville Police Department advised that it is not feasible to have a system solely for business owners to exchange information because, like social media, that inadvertently stops people from reporting crimes in a timely fashion.

He advised however, that the police department - through community police, is invested in figuring out a way to more efficiently get information out to the SID community and will work with the DSA to figure out a process that works for everyone.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

MOTION: Michael Kerwin

SECOND: Chas Stevens

Vote to Approve:

Yea: RanD Pitts, Michael Kerwin, Chas Stevens, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Tania Althoff, Natalia Kleyman. Andrianna Popowych

Nay: RanD Pitts **Recuse:** none **Abstain:** none