

Jewelry District Association

Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2017

Meeting called to order at approximately 4:00 pm by President Salisbury.

1. After noting that the minutes for the May meeting are on the JDA Website, Salisbury introduced the day's special guests **Greg Nordin**, RIPTA Associate Planning Director, and **Martina Haggerty**, Providence Planning Department, for a presentation on RIPTA's plans for the new Providence Downtown Transit Connector.

They offered an overall slide presentation of the concept and its route, highlighting points of special focus in the District. In essence, they said that the goal was to have buses operating on 5-minute headway along a 1.5-mile corridor between the Providence Railway Station and Rhode Island Hospital. Traffic signal optimization, bus green-lighting and bus-only lanes will expedite movement along the route. Custom bus shelters will offer enhanced information on bus arrivals and passenger amenities.

A lively discussion ensued. Someone asked how many parking spaces will be lost. **Nordin**: estimated 41 or 42 on the whole route. And almost as many replacements identified. **McClure**: will the riders be students and workers, not residents? **Nordin**: Not exactly. Riders will come from all over the state; and it will also mean increased mobility for new employees and residents expected to move into the corridor in the next three years. And the goal is to have free transit on the downtown section of the route. This will be better and more economical than the street car would have been.

Nordin: We're in the early engineering phase. We hope to be fully designed by year end. The biggest amount of work will be striping the route. Aiming for some service prior to complete opening January 2019. **McNally**: Good proximity to all sorts of key points; especially the train station. I-195 Commission supports this. **Nordin**: It's actually a unique project in the US, and it's getting national attention. **Dahlberg**: Brown is very supportive, too. **Salisbury**: What's going to happen at Kennedy Plaza? **Nordin**: KP is very much a part of this, but the routes won't be ending there; that's a big difference.

Nordin: We're trying to establish off-route driver break areas. **Orenstein**: Gotta change driver habits: at KP they didn't always open back doors for entry. **Nordin**: RIDoT is reconstructing their last I-195 project to get driver's a dedicated rest area at Blackman St. To keep tabs on progress, check out the RIPTA website. We're regularly updating it. Thank you for this chance to talk about this exciting, important project!

2. Police Report **Lt. San Lucas**: Generally it's been quiet. Mostly larceny from vehicles. Major events coming up including Pride Week. **Significant event**: a shooting at Richmond and Elm Street. Some part of the PVD Fest. We got notification the day before that a group was making a movie under a PVD Fest permit. Making a Rap video. That ended and several individuals began making a YouTube video. One of the video people got shot. Detectives are investigating. PVD Fest is planned a year out; but they gave an ad hoc permit at the last minute. Because of the PVD Fest we were stretched really thin -- but that's not a trend. **Steele**: On Thursday last week a Ray Watson left me a message that he wanted a street closing. 15 minutes later I got a call from The District: someone asked to use their liquor license for an event.

They replied **NO!** So we assumed nothing would go on. Then South St. was closed between Richmond & Chestnut. No police. Stage built. Crowds arriving. This band was on no PVD Fest agenda. **San Lucas:** I got an e-Mail at the last minute that the closure was approved. No one knows who got the closure. **Orenstein:** What's before the Board of Licenses? **Steele:** Nothing.

3. I-195 Commission Update **McNally** We'll bid out the park on the east and west ends of the bridge this fall, start construction in 2018. Finalize plans at the July meeting. No identifiable hurdles. With regard to the bridge, there's a small delay due to fabricating the steel beams. **Thompson:** With the arcs, that's challenging fabrication work. **Steele:** My RIDoT contacts say O'Donnell is doing a good job — "summer of cement, fall of steel" (please note: no 'e', Ed.) **McNally:** Yes, we hear good things about their work. On Parcel 42, we are still having conversations with Fane. Nothing to report. From our perspective, north tower only.

On our agenda for Monday's meeting: final approval for Wexford, hoping to close this summer. Waldorf will be in for a 2nd design review, maybe close this summer. The hotel for 1A is not on the agenda. Vision 3 will offer public info on the Garrahy garage. \$3 million has been allotted for screening the National Grid Switchgear building and transformer yard. And we may have a brief presentation on the temporary food facility at 1 Ship.

Blake: All positive, especially the extension of the River Walk to Point St. **McClure:** Any news on the high tension wires? **McNally:** Yes, we're involved in getting the wires under Point St. from South St. to the Manchester plant and taking down the tower behind South St. But not the wires across the river. **Orenstein:** Conduit's already built under Point St. Part of the deal is that the little substation alongside South Street will come down. And does anyone know who's supposed to maintain the traffic islands on Wickenden? Trees look sick. **McNally:** Amber is working to find out who's responsible.

4. Committee Updates

Planning & Zoning Apologies: neglected to get notes from P. Blake. (Ed.)

Salisbury: At the Downtown Design Review Committee, the design for Chestnut Commons was re-presented and approved with the stipulation that the color on the highly visible Clifford facade match the Friendship St. color.

Quality of Life **Steele:** Serena Conley has left the B. of L. Her replacement, a transfer from human resources, is Heather Kilkenny. No outside interviewees for the post. **Santurri:** We're back to status quo on closures and procedures.

Infrastructure **Orenstein:** The Whiskey Republic dumpster remains solidly in place. Nat'l Grid has apparently "licensed" a piece of that property to them.

Membership **Salisbury:** We've taken in \$2825 for 2017 dues. **Dana:** Betty Dana is willing to make phone calls to people who haven't renewed. **Thompson:** What can we do to get new residents to join? **Santurri:** The Downtown N.A. visits new residential buildings to meet with people, sort of a Welcome Package. **Steele:** New companies are moving in. **Dana:** We need to update our three-year old brochure. I can work on that. **Salisbury:** How about a motion to do a "welcome" party and a new brochure. **Orenstein:** So moved. — Motion approved.

Website Dana: Just posted a bunch of photos of misplaced, obscured, missing and damaged street signs from around the District. Two of them have subsequently been restored. But the rest remain... in limbo.
Thompson: The media uses our site for reference and information updates!

Other items Salisbury: The 195 Commission is working on a temporary food operation in the grassy triangle at 1 Ship Street. Called "The Shack" it's basically a food wagon or trailer with awnings and a landscaped open-air seating area. More details to come. **Steele**: Next Wednesday, for the Summer Solstice, it's free music: 55 acts at 30 venues around the state, from 5-10 pm. The Children's Museum and Nick-N-Nee's are participating in the JD. **Orenstein**: The Public Library is creating an archive and has agreed to take over the JDA historic files. A real resource!

On which note, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm

Respectfully submitted, 11 July 2017, by Lewis D. Dana.