

Order 268-16/17

Passage: 9-0 on 6/19/2017

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**CITY OF PORTLAND
IN THE CITY COUNCIL**

Effective 6/29/2017

DAVID H. BRENERMAN (5)
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NICHOLAS M. MAVODONES, JR (A/L)

**ORDER ADOPTING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR
PORTLAND DOWNTOWN
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018**

ORDERED, pursuant to 30-A M.R.S. Section 5224, after public hearing, the City Council of the City of Portland hereby adopts the Development Program submitted by the City Manager, a copy of which is attached hereto, for the Downtown Improvement District, Inc. doing business as Portland Downtown for fiscal year 2017-2018.



May 2017

To the Portland City Manager, City Councilors, and Mayor Strimling:

Portland Downtown, a 501c4 nonprofit business improvement district (BID), is in the business of maintaining a clean, safe, and vibrant downtown. We are able to achieve this through a supplemental tax levied on the property owners in the downtown district. Established in 1992, we have 25 years of success upon which we build each year through our programs, services, and events. Another hallmark of our success is the outstanding relationship that we have with the City of Portland and the continued collaboration between members of Portland Downtown and City of Portland staff. As well, we look to the City Council each year to renew its faith in our organization and the good work that we do for the community.

Fiscal year 2017 was one of achievements and accolades. In September, our Executive Director traveled to Atlanta, Georgia for the International Downtown Association (IDA) conference, which is the professional association for BIDs. At the conference, Ms. Gilbert accepted two awards on behalf of Portland Downtown: an IDA Excellence Award for the Downtown Cadet Program and a Downtown Achievement Award for "*Portland Downtown: Revamped & Revitalized*", which encapsulated our rebranding, new website, and beautiful banners. The board and staff were honored and humbled to be recognized for our efforts as change-makers and exemplars of best practices among our colleagues.

Another proud moment was raising sufficient sponsorships and ticket sales to cover the expenses of our events, which include: *Light Up Your Holidays* (Tree Lighting in Monument Square, Horse & Wagon Rides, Elfternoon Lunchtime Shopping, Shop For A Cause, Window Display Contest, and Merry Madness), *Police Awards Breakfast*, *Downtown Worker Appreciation Day*, and *Summer Kick-Off Weekend* (Square Hop, Summer Shop For A Cause, and Old Port Festival). The board did not have to rely on income from the tax assessment to offer these beloved community events, which is a testament to our successful rebranding and continued outreach to our property owners, downtown businesses, and beyond.

With expanded visibility and engagement comes ever-increasing communication and feedback. As a result, we heard from many constituents about their frustrations with issues such as noise, parking, and panhandling. Portland Downtown recognized an opportunity to have a thoughtful conversation with our stakeholders and to conduct research, which would enable us to bring a list of viable solutions to the City Council and City Manager. For all intents and purposes, we view our advocacy work as a great success, and feel honored to work alongside the City to tackle these multi-faceted issues through conversation and compromise. We hope that the City sees us as a valuable asset and that we are able to continue to address difficult issues together.

Portland Downtown understands the complexities that we face in our urban core. As such, we contribute thousands of dollars each year, above and beyond our Supplemental Services Agreement to keep downtown clean, safe, and vibrant. Our financial support of the Downtown Cadet Program, in partnership with the City of Portland's Police Department enables the department to have more presence during the busy summer months and to groom new talent

for a career in law enforcement. Our support of the Milestone Foundation's Home Team Program ensures that there is increased outreach to our most vulnerable populations, and our financial partnership with the City of Portland and LearningWorks allows us to clean up graffiti vandalism, while providing restorative justice opportunities to youth. Yes, we not only 'talk the talk', but we 'walk the walk' – and it is reflected in our annual budget.

Always seeking to improve, we entered into a strategic partnership for FY18 with Visit Portland (formerly the Greater Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau), to co-manage our Visitor Information Booth in Tommy's Park, which welcomes thousands of visitors each year. In July, at the start of our fiscal year, we will officially 'cut the ribbon' on this exciting new project and anticipate that it will provide visitors to Portland with a more rich and engaging experience and that Visit Portland will also benefit from another location to showcase their talented volunteers and staff.

Another partnership that has returned tremendous ROI for our organization has been our partnership with the University of Southern Maine. Portland Downtown worked with graduate students in the Planning & Public Policy Program on a cost-benefit analysis of growing our footprint. The result of their study has sparked a conversation that will take shape in a new ad-hoc committee that will explore how Portland Downtown might grow its revenue streams and/or its geographic footprint. Bachelor's students at USM, in the Tourism & Hospitality Program, designed custom walking tours, for which Portland Downtown received a PEDPIP (Portland's Economic Development Plan Implementation Program) grant, which will enable us to enlist the skills of a professional graphic designer. The brochures will be rolled out in time for the summer tourism season and digital versions will be available for free download from portlandmaine.com.

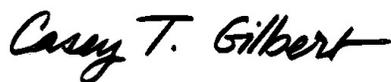
Connecting partnerships, parking, and PEDPIP grants, Portland Downtown was delighted to receive a matching PEDPIP grant for the parking study of Portland's downtown and waterfront. Working closely with City staff and Fort Hill Associates, a list of strategies should be forthcoming from the consultant before the end of FY17. Portland Downtown is committed to working alongside the City to help implement those strategies to ensure healthy parking and transportation management and infrastructure for the future.

Suffice to say, we feel incredibly fortunate to have had such a stellar FY17. We use every dollar in our budget thoughtfully and amplify its impact as far and wide as we can, knowing that our mission remains focused on the heart of Portland, our downtown. With a new fiscal year a little more than a month away, our board eagerly anticipates another year of opportunities and possibilities to make downtown even more vibrant – through continued partnerships, collaborations, and conversations.

We look forward to working with the City of Portland and wish you success in your endeavors.



Kim Volk, Chair
Portland Downtown Board of Directors



Casey T. Gilbert
Executive Director