



**Peekskill Business Improvement District**  
**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, November 5, 2019 @ 6pm**  
**Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce**

**Call meeting to order:** Meeting called to order by President Brian Fassett at 6:05pm.

**Board Members Present:** Brian Fassett, Brendon Fitzgerald, LaFern Joseph, David Kaminsky, Councilperson Vanessa Agudelo, Larry D'Amico, Executive Director Bill Powers.

**Board Members Absent:** Ivy Fairchild, Ann Scaglione, Mike Hagerty, Monique Michaels.

**BID Members Present:** Mary Foster, Cynthia Del Rosario, John Sharp, Nancy Wareham-Gordon, Arne Paglia, et al.

**Moment of Silence for Former Peekskill Mayor Frances Gibbs** – Pres. Fassett opened the meeting with a moment of silence in honor of Former Mayor Fran Gibbs who passed away. Pres. Fassett noted that “none of us would be here” were it not for Fran Gibbs, who started the BID under her administration. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that he worked with Mayor Gibbs and considered her a mentor and explained how the BID came into being. He noted that it was important to remember the history of how the BID got started.

**Request to go into Executive Session to discuss the appointment of new board member to fill Class A (property owner) vacancy** – Pres. Fassett advised the members in attendance that the Board would go right into executive session to appoint a new board member to fill the vacancy by Frank Pugliese who resigned since he was no longer a property owner in the BID. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald made a motion to go into Executive Session, Sec. Joseph seconded, all in favor. Non-board members were asked to leave the room and Pres. Fassett said the board would make a decision quickly and resume the regular meeting.

**Call meeting back to order** – Pres. Fassett called the Board meeting back into order, and the meeting resumed at 6:13 pm.

Pres. Fassett announced that Cynthia Del Rosario, the new owner of the property that housed McDonald and Peacock was selected unanimously to fill the open property owner seat.

**BID Member Public Comment:** Pres. Fassett opened the floor for BID member comments on agenda items. Mr. Paglia stated that BID meetings are opened to the public and anyone can

attend. Pres. Fassett stated that the BID had looked into that previously and was advised otherwise and the policies were approved by the city. Pres. Fassett stated that we will check again.

**Request Approval of November 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes** – Sec. Joseph made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 5, 2019 Board Meeting, as written, seconded by Vice Pres. Fitzgerald, all in favor.

**Harvest Festival Review** – Pres. Fassett noted that the Harvest Festival is needed and that it brings people into downtown. He noted that if the BID is going to continue to do events, we need to raise \$10K to cover expenses for each event. He referenced a prepared chart comparing the last three events managed by the BID. He said the Harvest Festival was successful in terms of the Family Fun Zone—that area managed by Mary Foster and Christopher Kennedy was a huge success and draw. He further noted, however, that the festival was “dead” by 7 pm. Mr. Sharp noted that the act that went on before the finale was good, but didn't amp up the crowd. Such low energy music cleared out the festival. It was noted that programming is very important to the success of these kinds of events and music choices and placement in the lineup are very important. It was noted that the band before the main act should have played earlier in the day. There was some discussion about opening the festival at 12noon and ending at 7pm or 8pm. It was noted that there seemed to be more people at last year's Harvest Festival even with the drizzle and rain. It was suggested that since we moved the festival one week later to coincide with other downtown fall events which didn't happen, that the crowd was smaller because it was a holiday weekend. Board Member D'Amico suggested that people might have come the first year because it was a novelty. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald noted the financial losses and Pres. Fassett is going to appoint Board Members Fairchild and Del Rosario to solicit sponsorships for the Summer event, Fall event and the Holiday Tree lighting to cover expenses. Pres. Fassett asked that a calendar be established at the next meeting so that Board Members Fairchild and Del Rosario can solicit sponsors in advance. Board Member Kaminsky asked if any thought had been given to creating coupon books for the downtown to sell at events or give them away to attract more people into the downtown, or maybe provide discount cards, also as a way to raise funds.

**Holiday Lights/Banners** – Pres. Fassett noted that he had met with Mary Foster and Drew Claxton about the BID purchasing overhead skylines (lighted garland that stretches from pole to pole over the street), as had been rented a long time ago. Pres. Fassett distributed samples and pricing (ranging from about \$2K to \$5K each) and upon review the board liked the snowflake themed skyline the best since it coordinated well with the existing lighted pole snowflakes. Pres. Fassett suggested the BID could by one or two now and add one or two each year. The

question was raised as to where would they be placed. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald suggested near Main Street at Division and South Street at Division would be good locations. Pres. Fassett asked for board input. Board Member Kaminsky asked whether the old wreaths could be refurbished and used. Pres. Fassett said no because it would take between one and two hours each to test and change bulbs and fluff the garland. He noted the wreaths are past their life cycle. It was suggested that maybe if we plan in advance that the school children of Peekskill could design and fix one wreath each with their own special touch and design. Pres. Fassett noted that there wasn't time this year. The discussion turned back to the skyline garlands. Pres. Fassett noted the skylines are 40 feet long, lighted and that during the daytime they would have color to them. Board Member Del Rosario suggested the BID set up a decoration fund for next year and start next year saying that only buying two seemed "cheesy." If the BID purchased four with white, blue and silver garland along with written instructions, the DPW could put them up. Pres. Fassett wanted cool white lights, the cost would be \$1700 each with shipping extra. He suggested we could buy some this year and set up a fund for next year to purchase more. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald made a motion to purchase four skylines, up to \$8,000, and contract with the city to put them up. Sec. Joseph seconded the motion and all were in favor. Pres. Fassett also noted that he would provide DPW with a map to show where the existing lighted snowflakes and banners should be placed by December 7 (tree lighting). Pres. Fassett also would like to get a price to put winter greens into the flower barrels, clean them up as well. We can purchase additional lights and bows for the boxwoods. Exec. Dir. Powers was asked to get a price quote from Green Pro to do the work, which was budgeted for already and should be in the \$1,200 to \$1,500 range total.

**DRI Update** – Pres. Fassett informed the board that he was appointed to the DRI Review Committee as the representative from the BID. There are 21 people on the committee. Pres. Fassett stated that there have been two community meetings on DRI projects, that information is available at [www.peakskilldri.com](http://www.peakskilldri.com) and that there is an open call for projects. The deadline is December 6, 2019. Exec. Dir. Powers asked Pres. Fassett if there could be a special meeting for BID businesses since the grant is geared towards downtown. The next meeting will be at the Neighborhood Center on November 20 and the one in December will be at the Central Firehouse. Pres. Fassett stated that the BID should get behind a solid project. It was suggested to set up a conference call so that the Board can discuss possible proposals prior to the next DRI meeting on 11/20/19.

**Restaurant Week February 2020** – Restaurant owner John Sharp alerted the Board to Peekskill Restaurant Week which is being planned for Feb. 3, 2020, to Feb. 9, 2020; they already have a logo. Participating restaurants would be asked to contribute \$200 each and pay Enormous

Creative directly since they are putting it all together. Mr. Sharp noted it would be a city-wide effort and would reinforce Peekskill as a culinary destination. Mr. Sharp asked for the BID's help in: 1. attach Restaurant Week web page to BID web site, 2. put some money in to pool resources, 3. encourage retail involvement. Participating restaurants would offer a prefixed menu at a fixed price. There was some discussion about including Cortlandt restaurants, but Pres. Fassett reminded the board that we always get into trouble when we promote outside the BID. Mr. Sharp would also like to reach out to the Latino restaurants to participate. From the start, he said he was helping to get the elements together, and that between his businesses and others, he has six participating restaurants. Ms. Foster asked how the meals would be packaged, noting that even at \$29.95 per person, a dinner for four would be in excess of \$150.00 with tax and tip. Board member Del Rosario stated she would help Mr. Sharp. Pres. Fassett committed to including information on the BID website.

**Peekskill Art Center Proposal** – Board Member D'Amico presented plans to create the Peekskill Arts Center, a not for profit art center, with two small theaters, of about 90 to 115 seats each, to show films and live performances; there would be two studios for art classes as well as a gallery of about 800 s.f. Ben Green has a building in the BID district that would be an ideal location and would support the basic set up but would need DRI funding to make the project a reality. The proposal is being presented as a viable proposal for DRI consideration. Board Member D'Amico said he had been in the artist district for 30 years and this is something that has been needed and that it would put Peekskill in an entirely new position as an artist community.

**Public Art Exploratory Committee** – Board Member D'Amico noted that there has also been a meeting to brainstorm about creating a public art committee to consider public murals and materials used ie. painting vs. banners, sculpture installations, etc., for an ongoing effort to increase public art that reflects the region's natural beauty, new technologies. Board Member D'Amico cited new technologies to enhance the experience around McGreggor Brook on Central Avenue by amplifying the brook sounds. That would also enhance the walk to and from the train station and tie in the renewed interest in Peekskill's walkability. Perhaps a quilting project, too. He stated the city should have a public arts commission—Peekskill has 21 pieces of public art, while Philadelphia has 400 murals alone, which it uses to attract tourists. Pres. Fassett said the BID is supportive and Ms. Foster asked that maybe the BID could support the projects.

**Appointment of 2020 Election Committee** – Pres. Fassett appointed Vice Pres. Fitzgerald, Board Members Hagerty, Michaels, and Kaminsky and Sec. Joseph to the election committee to oversee the 2020 BID elections. Pres. Fassett noted that he, Board Members D'Amico, Fairchild,

and Del Rosario are all up for re-election. Sec. Joseph made a motion to accept the appointments to the Election Committee, Vice Pres. Fitzgerald seconded the motion, all in favor.

**Executive Director's Report** – Exec. Dir. Powers alerted the board to the fact that Pres. Fassett has been selected Volunteer of the Year by the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce and will be honored at their annual dinner next February. Everyone congratulated Brian.

**Peekskill makes Me Merry** – Exec. Dir. Powers updated the board on the Peekskill Makes Me Merry campaign and the Holiday Tree Lighting which will be on Saturday, December 7, 2019, at 4 pm. There will be a number of live performances including Arts 10566, Cross Cultural Connection and others. He noted that the city is going to provide free four-hour parking in the Nelson Avenue and James Street garages.

**2020 Board of Directors Meeting Dates** – Exec. Dir. Powers distributed the proposed 2020 Board of Directors Meeting dates. All would be on the first Tuesday of the month, but he asked for guidance on whether the board wanted to meet on Election Day, November 3, 2020 or hold the meeting on November 10, 2020 instead. Board members asked to move the meeting to 11/10/20. The other meeting dates were approved.

**Administrative Support Plans** – Exec. Dir. Powers distributed a brief job description regarding the hiring of part-time administrative support staff. Pres. Fassett also noted that Exec. Dir. Powers had asked him and Board Member Fairchild to assist in the interview and selection process. The position will be posted in a variety of locations, and in an email blast, etc.

**Proposed 2020 Budget** – Exec. Dir. Powers presented the board with the 2020 proposed budget, which is reflective of this year's budget, but with some minor changes. Exec. Dir. Powers reminded the board that they can re-allocate monies as needed during the year. The budget includes the two signature (Fall and Summer) BID events again. In accordance with the BID bylaws, the BID is required to provide the city with its annual budget by the end of November for the following year. Sec. LaFern Joseph made a motion to accept the budget as presented, VP. Brendon Fitzgerald seconded it, all were in favor.

**BID Member Public Comment** – **Nelson Avenue Garage:** Nancy Wareham-Gordon stated that her daughter had parked her car in the Nelson Avenue garage and that part of the ceiling collapsed on it. She sent an email to the City of Peekskill, City Manager, and DPW, but had not heard back. She then contacted Exec. Dir. Powers and Pres. Fassett, both of whom intervened and contact the City Manager on Ms. Wareham-Gordon's behalf. She stated that she had heard back from the city manager, essentially reprimanding her for contacting the BID. Pres. Fassett

stated that she had every right to contact the BID. She stated that when she called the city dispatcher, the dispatcher said it happens all the time and that she was advised to file a claim with the city. Pres. Fassett said that in 2015 there was a \$2.4 million bid awarded to fix the garage and that some of the work does not appear to have been done. He listed a number of items that were not done. Councilmember Agudelo said she would bring the concerns back to the city and that the city takes these concerns seriously. Ms. Foster noted that there should be a checklist of repairs to review to see if they were done. Signage in the garage is still not clear and that some people are getting tickets because of the poor signage and that a homeless person is living in Nelson Ave. garage.

**Gazebo Temporary Lights:** Pres. Fassett stated that the BID had left the lights up from the Harvest Fest on the Gazebo because it made the gazebo look nicer at night and he suggested the City leave them up, but because people were using the access to the electrical outlet to charge their cell phones, the city shut off the power. Pres. Fassett offered to purchase the proper GFI and lockbox cover for the outlet so the lights could be left on.

**Gazebo:** Board Member Kaminsky said he met with Ms. Foster and others regarding the gazebo. He suggested conducting a survey to find out what the majority of people would like to see happen to the gazebo. He thinks the BID should send a letter to the city manager to let him know what the position of the BID is on the gazebo.

**Valet Parking:** Vice Pres. Fitzgerald stated that the Paramount had a very successful comedy night and that there was “zero parking available.” He suggested the BID look at piloting the valet parking again.

**Paramount:** Councilmember Agudelo was asked if she had an update on the Paramount. She stated that the city was looking to move forward with one entity and that the city was looking to get a commitment as soon as possible.

**DRI:** There was an additional discussion about the DRI regarding job training and tourism and what the BID could get behind.

**June 2020 Event:** Scarlett Antonia stated she will have a proposal for the BID to consider for a June event in 2020.

**Adjournment:** Pres. Fassett requested a motion be made to adjourn, he requested that we adjourn in honor and memory of Mr. Powers’ Mother, Agnes Powers, who recently passed. Councilperson Agudelo offered the motion and Ms. Joseph seconded. All in favor. Meeting ended at 8:05pm.