

Bid Meeting Minutes – October 2, 2012

Call to order: 6:05 PM

In Attendance: Chris Bobolia(left at 7:30), Brian Havranek (arrived at 7:20), Amy Harte, Jeannette Phillips, Andrew Torres (left at 7:05), Charlie Emberger, Jaime Leon, Jason Angell

1) BID Advocacy

Jason presented a proposed policy for changes to the residential zoning in the Downtown BID district. He explained that the Board's vision was to increase pedestrian traffic in the downtown 24/7 which would increase retail business:

- He gave an overview and explained the reasons for the removal of residential zoning and addition of the "artist district" in the downtown in the 1990's.
- Some residential had been grandfathered in – the rest of the residential needed certified artists as defined by city code.
- Jason looked at Lowell, MA's effort to use an "artists districts" and mixed-use zoning efforts to increase residential and economic growth downtown, and it's example as a model which has succeeded.
- Jason expressed the need for more participation from existing artists to come to a reform proposal that was broadly supported

The floor was then opened up for a discussion amongst BID members in attendance.

Margaret Steele (artist live/work resident) – expressed concern about keeping existing live/work lofts in order to have space available for artists. She also explained that among existing artists, she has seen a 40% drop in income due to the recession, which would help explain the temporary difficulty in finding tenants.

Debbie Malone (Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director)- stated that it had taken the Chamber 9 months to rent an existing 2 story loft and they had to decrease the rent by \$175.00 in order to rent it. She stated that grandfathering is important, but opening the requirements will bring more retail business downtown. She also mentioned that there are more young people who would like to live downtown. But, with the current restrictions there is no space available for them to rent.

Derek Reist (artist live/work resident) - an artist living in the district 12 years questioned why there has been a decrease in demand for artists' lofts. Is it a lack of artists or lack of lofts?

Frank Cimino (building owner with artist loft)- stated it is very difficult to rent artist units due to the high cost of constructing them. He supports expanding the definition of an artist in order to get market rent people downtown. He mentioned enhancing the artist's district and also ensuring state laws are recognized.

Ed Marrusich (BID property owner)- He has two artist lofts: both were rented at market value first time, 2nd time he had to decrease the rent to attract tenants. He questions what would happen 3rd time around. We need full buildings.

Howard Copeland (BID property owner)- stated it took from April to October to rent his artist loft. He only had one qualified prospect; the other prospects did not qualify. He also has a third floor existing apartment, which is rented.

Andrew Torres (BID Board member and City Councilman) – stated the need to build a local market of persons who actually buy art, the need to market the existing artists district more effectively, and the fact that the City is currently considering expanding the definition of artist.

Ted Bitter (BID property and business owner)- suggested to approach the housing issue from a proportional strategy, such as allowing a building to have 50% artist live/work units and 50% market-rate units. He also questioned if the BID could do more advertising for the downtown businesses, if the BID budget allowed for it.

Jason finished up discussion with two suggestions:

- The BID will do a survey as to number of the downtown artists' lofts.
- He will try and get more feedback on the proposed policy change from the downtown businesses and other BID members.

2) BID Board Minutes

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the September BID Board meeting minutes with corrections by Jeannette Phillips regarding clarifying Cinco de Mayo finances, seconded by Chris Bobolia.

Vote: **Unanimous**

3) BID Budget

Charlie Emberger discussed the BID budget and a number of inconsistencies in the current financial tracking system. It was decided to form a budget committee (Jason, Charlie and Chris volunteered) to discuss the issue and report back to board.

4) Financial Report from Festa Italiana

Frank Cimino, organizer of the Festa Italiana event, delivered a financial report to the BID Board as agreed upon in the BID's Letter-of-Agreement (LOA). The financial report showed that the bulk of financing for the festival comes from vendor fees, followed by the BID's 2012 financial support. The report also revealed that there was no profit taken from the event by the event organizer, Downtown Festivals, Inc., which is a non-profit organization. Brian Havranek stated that while the event was successful in attracting a significant amount of people to Peekskill, there were a number of complaints by local businesses and not being allowed to vend in the festival. Mr. Havranek also entered a letter of complaint into record. Mr. Cimino responded that only one BID Business had taken advantage of the 30% discount to BID members before the vendor application deadline had passed.

5) Events committee – BID's December Holiday Plans

Due to a lack of time, the BID Board decided to move this agenda item to the next meeting.

6) Update on the Paramount Center for the Arts

Brian Havranek reported that the city was still reviewing the entire situation and waiting to hear details from the Paramount's board. He noted that the City had been approached by three different Paramount board members informally asking for emergency funding (along with the BID and Chamber of Commerce) and that the City was waiting for a formal meeting with the Board before taking action.

7) New BID Office

Jason Angell discussed a proposal from the Peekskill Arts Alliance for a shared office space with the BID. The Board decided that a formal proposal should be made before any proposal for shared space is considered.

Meeting adjourned.