



Peekskill Business Improvement District

Minutes for Board Of Directors Meeting, April 3, 2018

Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Conference Room

One South Division Street, Peekskill, NY 10566

Present: John Sharp, Jim Pinto, Frank Pugliese, Brian Fassett, Ann Scaglione, Deputy Mayor Kathie Talbot, Brendon Fitzgerald, Jeorgia Shea, Jeff Tracy and Executive Director William Powers. **Absent:** Sean Kearney. There were a number of BID members present. Mayor Andre Rainey and Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo were also present, though not members of the BID.

Call meeting to order: Meeting called to order @ 6:00PM by President John Sharp.

March Minutes: Motion was made by Mr. Pinto, second by Mr. Pugliese to accept the minutes from the March 2018 meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Opening Remarks by Mr. Sharp:

President Sharp led a discussion and explained there are concerns from some BID members as to the election process and election committee's decision to exclude write-in candidates. In an effort to make sure we are taking the correct steps forward, bylaws state empty seats on the board are filled by an appointment by the board. Mr. Fassett noted that there are other paths that can be discussed.

Appointment of Property Owner to Fill Vacant Board Position:

A discussion was held on the appointment of a new Board member to fill the vacant property owner's seat. Mr. Powers reported a total of three applications were submitted by the deadline, Erik Contzius from the Flatz; Larry Damico, owner of the old field library and local artist; David Kaminsky who owns the former Ed Doyle building.

Mr. Fassett stated that there should not be a rush to fill the 11th seat and the board should make sure it has all the information regarding the concerns and to make sure the board is proceeding with diligence in the decision. Mr. Fassett suggested the board form a new election committee immediately.

Mr. Powers reminded the board that a deadline was issued for submission of interest and that would need to be addressed and the applicants advised.

Mr. Pugliese stated he did not feel the board was rushing a decision and believes there was plenty of time to gather interest for the newly open seat, and that three people of interest stepped forward. Pugliese stated he felt there was plenty of notification.

Mr. Fassett and Mr. Tracy stated that they would like to hold off on the appointment of the final Board member. Mr. Pugliese asked for the appointment to be done at the meeting.

BID Member Mike Mercer, 36 North Division St, stated that he had not received any notice of the special election and wanted to know how the members were notified.

Mr. Powers indicated the members were notified by direct first-class mail.

Mr. Tracy stated he agrees to not rushing to fill the vacant board seat. Mr. Tracy had discussions with some building owners, specifically the owner of 12 Grapes, which were not aware of the BID or BID election. Mr. Tracy is concerned the optics won't look good if the board rushes into seating the 11th member and he stated that the board should take time to review and move forward in a transparent way. It was pointed out that the Credidios do not own the building in which their restaurant is located.

Mr. Pugliese noted, in his opinion, that there were lies, innuendos, misinformation and borderline slander relayed to the Common Council at their last meeting and that this type of behavior was unwarranted by some people in the room. Further in response to Mr. Mercer, Mr. Pugliese explained some of the issues involving some of the election ballots. Mr. Pugliese explained he felt a certain individual who claimed to be a building owner had misrepresented herself in the write-in portion of the election. Mr. Mercer said he had not heard of the issues, but stated that the issues as described sounded to him like possible voter fraud.

President Sharp stated that the board is really trying to find the best path forward and not necessarily looking back at the concerns.

BID Member Mary Foster asked if the mailing for the annual meeting notice was sent to member's homes or business addresses. Mr. Powers stated he relies on the assessor's office for the addresses.

President Sharp explained there has always been concern about communication from the BID, and mail that is misaddressed. Mr. Sharp feels the BID needs to do a better job getting the information out to members. He suggested that perhaps the BID needs to go door to door.

Mr. Tracy stated that some people that receive the information from BID might not even know what they are receiving.

Mr. Paglia explained his tax bill says "parking district two" and wants to understand if a building not paying BID tax, although in the district, can come and speak at BID meetings.

Ms. Scaglione stated list comes from assessor's office, and that is where the list is generated. She stated that the tax bills should all say "BID", but behind the scenes, it is called "Parking District Two". Ms. Foster stated her tax bill calls it "BID", Mr. Fassett and Mr. Paglia indicated their bills call it "Parking District Two". Ms. Scaglione will look into it.

Ms. Scaglione noted that the mailings were sent out based on the addresses on the deeds to the property. She added that the city is careful about returned mail and do try to track down correct information. Ms. Foster asked for the list to see building owners vs. mailing address. Mr. Powers had some concerns about whether the BID should decide which address to send correspondence to, and said he would look into this further; Ms. Scaglione offered to assist Mr.

Powers in clarifying the city property owner's addresses which are received from the Assessor's Office.

A discussion was held on how to notify BID members going forward; USPS mailings, emails, sending to home addresses and notice boards were all suggested.

There was some additional discussion, including the possibility of holding a special election to fill the vacant seat. Mr. Pinto asked what the board was trying to investigate in causing the delay. Mr. Fassett and Mr. Sharp explained that the board is just looking to move forward with transparency and collective understanding. The Board cannot have a special election as per current by-laws, so it needs further study.

A motion was made by Mr. Fassett and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to delay the appointment of the final Board member for 60 days until the board could review what process would be most fair. Motion carried with 5 yea, 2 nay, 2 abstentions.

Mr. Pugliese asked to delay the election of officers until the new seat is filled. Mr. Fassett stated he thought the board could revisit the officer elections whence the 11th seat is filled. Mr. Pugliese declined to put forward a motion in delaying the officer elections.

Mr. Paglia stated he felt all board members should see the election ballots. He stated also there was a concern that the board was not following bylaws for election of officers. Mr. Powers stated the bylaws can be amended at any board meeting with a majority vote.

Election of Officers:

President: Motion was made by Mr. Sharp to nominate Mr. Fassett for President. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion/nomination. 9 yea, motion carried and Mr. Fassett was elected President.

Vice President: Motion was made by Mr. Fassett to nominate Brendon Fitzgerald for Vice President. Mr. Pinto seconded the motion/nomination. 9 yea, motion carried and Mr. Fitzgerald was elected Vice President.

Treasurer: Motion was made by Ms. Shea to nominate Jeff Tracy for Treasurer. Mr. Fassett seconded the motion/nomination. 9 yea, motion carried and Mr. Tracy was elected Treasurer.

Secretary: Motion was made by Ms. Shea to nominate Frank Pugliese as Secretary for another term. Mr. Fassett seconded the motion/nomination. 9 yea, the motion carried and Mr. Pugliese was elected Secretary.

Outgoing President Sharp thanked all for their work and support during his term and congratulated the incoming Officers for 2018. Mr. Sharp stated he loves all the people in the room and hopes people continue to come to meetings and stay involved in good times or bad and stay active in the BID. Mr. Fassett and Mr. Powers thanked Mr. Sharp for serving as President.

Newly elected President Brian Fassett takes over meeting.

Go Peekskill Shuttle:

Mr. Powers stated the update on the Go Peekskill Van would not be happening as Stephen Zwick was unable to make for family reasons.

BID Office:

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the BID spends approximately \$10,000/year for the BID office and suggested those funds could be better spent on other projects. Mr. Fitzgerald was offered free office space for the BID, 2nd floor above the Hudson Room, on Brown Street. The BID Office current lease is month-to-month. Mr. Fassett requested a six month or one year lease. Mr. Fitzgerald will look into Mr. Fassett's request. If this offer is accepted, the BID would receive free electric and WiFi but have to pay for a phone line. Ms. Talbot is concerned about the accessibility of a second-floor office; Mr. Powers explained he/the board can continue to use chamber ground floor conference room if concerned about stairs.

Motion was made by Mr. Sharp and seconded by Mr. Tracy to accept the offer of the 2nd-floor office space at 1006 Brown Street. The term of lease TBD and Mr. Fitzgerald will report back at next monthly meeting. 9 yea, motion carried.

Flower Barrels:

Mr. Powers noted that only one bid had been received and not yet opened. Ms. Talbot noted the plan will be to have 50 barrels, at key locations TBD. Mr. Pugliese asked if the barrels could be sponsored by individual members for a set fee. Ms. Talbot will get back to all to see if this is feasible.

Mr. Fitzgerald suggested moving out of the flower barrel business, noting they are garbage containers, and just do not look good. He understood from the February meeting that Mr. Powers was supposed to ask the city what it would cost to replace our sector with hanging baskets.

Mr. Fitzgerald wanted to know the status of the hanging baskets. The City opted not to combine the bids for the barrels and hanging baskets as first thought. Instead, the City will put 40 hanging flower baskets up; the RFP for the flower barrels stipulates that the barrels must compliment the hanging baskets and vice versa. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested using the funds previously used for the barrels to re-ignite festivals, shows, etc. Much discussion was held on this issue. Mr. Sharp stated the board continues to have this conversation over flower barrels. He would suggest getting rid of the barrels all together and take the money and use it for something more effective downtown.

Ms. Foster feels the BID has moved away from beautification and all that the BID has done new is the shuttle. She's concerned we are moving further away from doing any festivals or flowers in the downtown. She asked specifically what the BID would spend the funds on if not barrels.

BID Member Arne Paglia requested the budgeted amount for the barrels; \$15,000 was allocated; the lone bid for the plantings was opened in front of the board and there was a question about the math which seemed to be about \$13,000 for 50 barrels. Mr. Powers was asked to clarify the math with the vendor. The City will water the hanging baskets using DPW personnel, with the price for each pole bracket approximately \$200. The PEP Committee will also be consulted to as to the type of plantings and locations.

Mr. Paglia requested to see a copy of the budget, and the budget should be shared with the new board members. Mr. Sharp explained the board needs to make sure the BID has the funds to support what the BID does and it is always a concern. Ms. Talbot shared she thinks there are people trying to bring back the Jazz and Blues festival in the fall. Mr. Sharp stated the BID should not give money to events that don't support the whole BID.

Mr. Tracy suggested forming a beautification committee. Mr. Fassett stated that the BID has the PEP (People Enhancing Peekskill) Committee and hopes to regroup and grow that committee, add some artists and community members to that committee to suggest what we do moving forward with beautification. Mr. Fassett requested if anyone is interested in joining the PEP committee, please reach out to him.

One of the other suggestions was to have more benches. Ms. Talbot mentioned there are homeless and adults with mental health issues hanging out on benches, and that perhaps it would not be a good idea to add benches at this time.

Mr. Powers asked for clarification on the barrels stating that some are looking distressed currently. Mr. Fassett asked if the Bid has identified the 50 best barrels. Mr. Powers stated that by end of the week we should have that information. Mr. Fassett stated that perhaps then the other 50 should be picked up off the street. Mr. Paglia wondered if we would allow businesses to keep their barrels. Mr. Fassett will report back to Mr. Powers on that.

Motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr. Pinto NOT go forward with the flower barrel bid at this time. Motion carried.

Executive Director's report:

Mr. Powers spoke on the Westchester Business Council Expo held recently in Rye. He and Mr. Pinto attended and got a lot of positive feedback about Peekskill and some leads on prospective businesses coming to Peekskill.

Mr. Powers stated the city had asked for a letter of support for Electric Vehicle charging stations. There was no objection, but Mr. Fassett asked that the letter be forwarded to him.

The Farmer's Market will start on Saturday, 4/21, with Flea Market starting the next day, 4/22 assuming approval by the City. Mr. Fassett asked if a BID member was able to have a booth at the Flea Market. Mr. Powers said no one had ever asked. Mr. Fassett asked if a BID member would get a reduced rate. Mr. Powers said downtown restaurants had been asked to participate in the Farmers Market but that Saturday's are restaurants' busiest days and no one had taken the Farmers Market up on the offer but they had been offered a reduced vendor

rate. Mr. Powers will check with the Flea Market Manager on a reduced rate for downtown businesses and report back, but didn't see any issue.

Open Studios/Cinco de Mayo:

Discussion held on parking lot closures and advertising for each event.

A motion was made by Mr. Pugliese and seconded by Ms. Talbot to approve up to \$2,500 for radio advertising of Open Studios and reimbursement of street closure fees. 8 yea, motion carried. Ms. Shea left the meeting early.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if any other restaurants have been invited to participate in the Cinco de Mayo celebration. Mr. Paglia responded that all were advised and that he was in favor of the event as it benefits the entire area. Reuben's owner (event sponsor) does not charge anyone to participate in the festivities and puts much of his own money into the event.

Motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr. Pugliese to approve up to \$3000 for all associated expenses of the event (approximately \$2500 for radio advertising and reimbursement for street closure permit and showmobile). 8 yea motion carried.

Mr. Fassett asked that notices of the BID's event policies go out to all BID members so that others might take advantage of the support.

Councilwoman Agudelo, thanked us for allowing her to visit, she asked if there is some word that gets out to all the business that this event is happening, allowing other shops and restaurants to join in on the theme; then the advertising should then be about the entire downtown.

Mr. Sharp explained that the radio copy is designed to be inclusive of all the downtown, and only uses the event to promote the whole downtown.

New Business:

Mr. Paglia asked that the BID formally request lower parking fees from the City in the parking garages (to 50 cents per hour). The new Kearney development on the 900 block of Main Street is going to add to the parking congestion. Mr. Fassett spoke to the fact that the draft report of the parking study had just recently been reported to the city council and that there were good ideas that seemed to be in line with Mr. Paglia's concerns

Mr. Paglia also requested that the "open studio" Truck Stop Gallery be moved from the K-parking lot (Central Ave) to another location, citing the impact the current location has on parking and foot traffic in the core area. Mr. Powers will forward Mr. Paglia's request to the event organizers, specifically Ocean Morisette.

Mr. Paglia and Mr. Sharp will form the basis for a Parking Committee to advise on Parking issues in the Downtown. Mr. Pinto noted that the city undertook a parking study and the results are about to be released. Mr. Fassett will write a letter to the City regarding Mr. Paglia's request.

Ms. Foster asked if the parking study was available, and could we send it to our members. Mr. Pinto explained it is only in draft form and should be ready in a couple weeks. Mr. Powers indicated they are having stakeholder meetings and we should stay involved, as they've not been scheduled yet.

Ms. Foster asked if there has been any garbage/trash task force report. Mr. Powers noted that a draft report had been forwarded to the City Council for input before being finalized. Mr. Powers was asked to follow-up on the report. Ms. Foster also stated that the garbage cans are disappearing from the city streets or are being removed by the city.

Mr. Pugliese asked if the City could purchase and distribute more garbage cans in the downtown area; he cited numerous occasions wherein building residential tenants were seen placing household trash in the public receptacles, resulting in overflowing cans. Mr. Fassett requested that Mr. Pugliese do a study of the downtown area, and note specific locations where trash cans may be warranted; Pugliese will report back at next meeting. Mr. Powers indicated that he had an intern surveying the flower barrels this week, and will add that she simultaneously inventory existing trash cans in downtown.

Mr. Fassett appointed Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Tracy to the Executive Committee, charging them with a review of all pertinent BID organizational documents.

Motion for adjournment at 7:35pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Pugliese

Secretary