



**Peekskill Business Improvement District Minutes**  
**Tuesday, November 6, 2018**  
**Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce**  
**One South Division Street, Peekskill, NY**

**Call meeting to order**

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

**Present:** Brian Fassett, Frank Pugliese, Jeff Tracy, Larry D'Amico, Sean Kearney, Brendon Fitzgerald and Vanessa Agudelo. Executive Director Bill Powers.

**Absent:** Jim Pinto, Ann Scaglione, Jeorgia Shea, John Sharp.

**BID members present:** Mary Foster, Evelyn Lee, Arne Paglia, Sue Sheridan.

President Fassett opened the floor to any BID member for comment on agenda items. None made.

Motion was made by Mr. Pugliese to accept minutes of October 2, 2018 meeting as presented, seconded by Mr. Kearney. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Pugliese to accept the 2019 meeting dates as presented, seconded by Mr. Tracy. Motion carried, unanimously.

President Fassett opened the floor to any BID member for comment. None made.

**The Peekskill Conservation Advisory Council and 2030 Sustainability Presentation** – Presenters were Kay Barthelmes, Marie Annera and Elaine Coccoma. Ms. Barthelmes thanked the BID for hosting the Harvest Festival. The CAC is an nine member Committee that serves in an advisory role to the city on issues of sustainability and environmental issues and serves in the role of educating the community on conservation issues. Ms. Barthelmes passed out some informational materials about the CAC and some of its recent initiatives like an informational flyer on drinking water, storm water, and water shed that was mailed along with the city's water bills. Ms. Barthelmes also noted that the group had recently saved some trees at the waterfront along with the trees in front of the library from being cut down. One CAC member constantly monitors the weather in Peekskill and she noted that trees are a necessity in the downtown because they can keep the city cooler, since the city acts as a heat island. She reported annual rain fall is typically 44 inches and we are currently at 52 inches. She also discussed the group's involvement with Solarize Peekskill, their objection to barges in the Hudson River, and storm barriers at the mouth of the Hudson River and their release of a recent report about the measurement of air quality in Peekskill, which was "pretty good".

The CAC would like to work with the BID to create a campaign about being environmentally sensitive and open up a discussion on decreasing use of plastic bags, increasing use of solar panels, and

generally how the business community can adopt environmentally sound practices, actions that are doable and practical, all in an effort to get Peekskill to what we want it to be in 20 years. Ms. Barthelmes offered to have her group design a logo to promote the fact that a particular business is working toward being environmentally sensitive, such as removal of plastic straws, elimination of Styrofoam containers, or offering more vegan options on menus. The logo could be placed in the window of a store or on their menu.

Mr. Powers inquired about the status of the tree inventory grant that the CAC had applied for that was supported by the BID. Ms. Barthelmes noted that they did not receive the grant last year, but are waiting word on this year's grant. She stated that no one species should make up more than 20% of the total trees. It was noted that the city does not have a plan to water trees. President Fassett suggested it might be difficult for the BID to get behind something like a "no straw" initiative unless it proved to be a better way to sustain that immediate business. He suggested it might be easier for the BID to get behind a trash, recycling or tree initiative. Additionally, identifying an issue that is currently troubling the downtown would be something the BID could support. Mr. Fitzgerald did feel offering a "straw free" would be helpful to businesses as it may also help their bottom line. He also felt that incentives would be helpful to bring to our attention that we could help to roll out to businesses.

Ms. Barthelmes asked for clarification of the BID district and how we communicate with our members. It was explained that the best way is digital through email.

Ms. Agudelo mentioned that businesses could ask for paper pebbles instead of the Styrofoam peanuts for shipping—it's easy to do without any additional cost. President Fassett suggested producing a flyer to be sent to businesses suggesting easy actions that would not cost a business money to do, to help save money as well as the environment and to encourage businesses to go in a greener direction. He felt this would begin to open the door to discussion with our businesses. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that if businesses can save money and be green, they will adopt changes.

Other ideas included attacking the garbage issues in the downtown with solar trash can compactors, encouraging businesses to adopt a tree and take care of it. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that he had brought up the big belly trash compactors to the board previously and will bring the information back to the board for review.

Ms. Foster suggested adding a bi-lingual member to the CAC and reaching out through the Chamber of Commerce Latino business group.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the CAC has a grant writer. The CAC representatives noted that a new member of theirs is well versed in writing grants.

It seemed that trees and trash would be the focus of the BIDs efforts in conjunction with the CAC and Mr. Fassett thanked the CAC members for this discussion. Contact information will be shared and future agendas will contain further discussion.

**Winter Farmers Market Plans & Review of Summer Market** – Farmer's Market Manager Corinna

Makris presented an update on the Peekskill Farmers Market and plans for the Winter Farmers Market. Ms. Makris stated the summer market attendance was down a bit as it is across the state at other markets. She stated that 800-900 market goers are recorded on average each week and at its height the attendance is around 1200. She stated this is an ongoing and more prevalent issue for all farmers markets currently. She is working with other Hudson Valley Market Managers to help coordinate better share information and talk about how to deal with too many markets. She is working on guidelines to begin to give “credibility” to certain markets. She cited an over saturation of farmers markets in our area which dilutes the customer base for all. She specifically noted that Pleasantville and Muscoot are the biggest competitors to our market; Ossining and Beacon also have markets. Cold Spring Market at Boscobel and Hudson Valley Hospital Center have both cut back the days and operations of their markets. It also rained many weekends and it is difficult for some vendors to vend during rain. We have more rotating vendors than normal and some bigger name vendors are now coming. She is planning to add more prepared foods like “Anthis Greek” (who was at the Harvest Festival as well), more entertainment, and more rotating vendors for the 2019 season; she indicated that she will do more online advertising next year. Additionally, she is thinking about launching a kids' vegetable explorer club where the farmers will educate kids on plants, fruits and vegetable. She noted that Peekskill's name in the Farmers Markets world is well received. Ms. Makris is also planning on an earlier start date in May 2019, and is encouraging vendors to sell nursery products before the vegetables and fruits become available.

Ms. Makris announced that the Winter Market will return to 925 South Street. President Fassett requested explanation of how the finances work for the winter market. Ms. Makris explained the space is rented for a small fee of \$80/week with approximately 15 vendors at (last year \$40 each) \$30 per week per vendor. Outdoor market averages 17 to 25 vendors. The market will start Saturday January 19, 2019 and run through April and will provide children's entertainment, free coffee, free knitting demos, etc. Ms. Foster asked if there was a better way to provide signage outside. Ms. Makris will seek to hang a banner outside the building to attract customers. The Winter Market is a break-even proposition, she noted, but it does bring people into the downtown. Mr. Fassett asked if events like having live artists painting bring in more people and indeed it does. So he suggested we need more events within the market perhaps. Ms. Makris is also looking to add some additional seating for people to enjoy prepared food. Mr. Powers suggested contacting Ginsburg Development at The Abbey to have them incorporate a stop at the Farmers Market with their shuttle.

**Request Approval of \$1,500 for New Years Eve Ball Drop** – Mr. Fitzgerald explained the plans for the New Year's Eve Ball Drop: there will be a band and fireworks. President Fassett explained the City will be contributing \$10K towards the event and Mr. Kenny Lewis requested \$1,500 from the BID to help underwrite the \$16,000 costs. Mr. Fassett noted we produced Harvest Festival for \$23,000. Mr. Fitzgerald explained the main expense is the fireworks. Mr. Pugliese noted that he was opposed to the use of fireworks in the downtown area, citing the age of the buildings and the possibility of a fire due to sparks from flying embers; he requested a more pronounced Fire Dept presence if the fireworks go forward. Ms. Agudelo also is against fire works, and mentioned looking into alternatives for future. Ms. Sheridan also explained when she was working as volunteer during previous years fireworks, it is indeed a concern. Mr. Fassett offered to write a letter to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager and Fire Chief regarding the BID's support, but to also express the Board's concern about the

use of fireworks and suggest the organizers find an alternative to fireworks next year. Ms. Agudelo suggested a laser light show instead of fireworks. Mr. Fitzgerald was impressed with the laser light show held during last year's Expo at the riverfront. Mr. Fassett suggested that the fire department and EMS be fully briefed. As a separate note, Mr. Pugliese asked that the railroad ties near the Gazebo be repaired since it causes a safety concern for pedestrians. Motion was made by Mr. Pugliese and seconded by Mr. Kearney to contribute \$1500 towards the NYE event. Motion carried, all in favor.

**Peekskill Harvest Festival Wrap Up** – President Fassett thanked all involved with the festival for making it a great success and offered that he has only received good and positive feedback. He explained that we did not lose money, we made about \$2K He went on to say that he felt it was a great success for the first time that the Board had executed a festival at this level. He stated that the biggest benefit moving forward is that the Board now understands how to budget for future. Mr. Fitzgerald stated the event was “awesome” and that we sold a lot of beer. Given the weather of the day, the event was still deemed a success. A critique of the event will be at a later date. Ms. Foster noted that the family fun zone was a success, and “sold out “ by 3pm, as parents brought their children earlier than the 2 PM start time; she suggested that the events be spread out through different times of the day to accommodate later arrivals. The “free” aspect of all the kids activities was well received, Ms. Foster noted. Additionally, the BASF booth was packed all day, she noted. Mr. Kearney expected that the Fest would lose money, but even with the weather, he was impressed that the even made money. Mr. Powers noted we had about 2,500 entries into “guess the weight of the pumpkin” – and now we should get an intern or volunteers to help enter those names into a database for future advertising.

**Peekskill Holiday Stroll** – Sue Sheridan and Evelyn Lee presented plans for the stroll which will be held Saturday December 1, 2018 to coincide with the Holiday Tree Lighting and PAA event. Both requested that businesses be open for a meet and greet to usher in the Holiday season. Mr. Fassett suggested pairing an artist with a business to accent both the business and artist community. Ms. Lee will contact PAA for participation. Ms. Sheridan suggested closing the 10 Block of North Division Street and bring in vendors as with the Harvest Festival; this idea was tabled to next year as it was felt it would infringe on sales of downtown merchants and that it was late to coordinate. President Fassett wanted to make sure that this event did not bring vendors for outside the BID that would dilute the potential for our BID members to benefit. He also felt that most vendors are already booked for their holiday markets. Mr. Fassett suggested that a punch card and map be created to get people to visit more places, and then be entered into a contest. Mr. Fassett said it could be successful with just 10 locations. A drawing would be prepared for a winner. Ms. Lee and Ms. Sheridan will move this forward. Mr. Fassett asked to make sure that this is included in the radio advertising.

**Peekskill Makes Me Merry** – Mr. Powers noted that all plans are in place for the tree lighting ceremony on Saturday, December 1, 2018 at 4pm including live performances with Arts10566, Peekskill City Singers and invites are out to professional performers. Kathleen's Tea Room will be giving out free hot chocolate at the Gazebo. Mr. Powers noted there will be no toy give away this year. It was requested that the show mobile be moved further up Park Street and that the streets be closed later. Mr. Powers noted that there are some safety issues if the roads are closed later.

**Holiday Plans for Flower Barrels and Street Lights** – President Fassett showed a sample of a solar light set that he suggested be put in the flower barrel to decorate and light up the existing boxwoods; the cost is approximately \$8/string of lights. He suggested we simply light the boxwoods, clean out the base, and install simple greens. Motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr. Pugliese to spend up to \$1K to purchase solar powered lights. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Fitzgerald agreed to head-up removal the begonias and clean out the barrels and replace them with holiday greens on Saturday 11/17, starting at 11 AM, help is needed. Ms. Lee said she would check With Emily Woods on pricing for the greens.

**Peekskill Community Congress** – As a follow-up to last month's presentation, Mr. Fassett reminded the board that there will be a launch meeting on Thursday, November 15, 2018 at Westchester Community College, starting 6:30 PM. He encouraged all to attend and to bring community leaders to this launch event.

**By Laws Review Update** – President Fassett noted that the Executive Committee has been working on the final draft of the bylaws, which was distributed for review. He opened the floor for discussion and would like all concerns addressed before next meeting so we can adopt. He noted that the main changes were designed to clean up the language and confusion, most notable changes involve the voting process and membership process sections. Additionally, the art lofts are now included specifically in the process for voting, tenants of co-ops will vote as B-class and building will vote as owner in A-class. Each taxed parcel of property will have one vote per property, voting will be by a double envelope system which will make voting more secure.

**2019 Board Elections** – President Fassett noted that for the 2019 Election of Officers, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Sharp and Mr. Kearney are up for re-election; Mr. Kearney citing the fact that he will become a father early next year, and Ms. Shea are not running for reelection; there are three “A” and one “B” board positions open, but Mr. Fitzgerald plans to run for reelection.

**Art Sculptures** – President Fassett reported that the donation of the Eric Jacobs art sculpture piece in front of Division Street Guitars was accepted by the City; it has already been refurbished and waiting on DPW to move to the new location in front of Wells Fargo Bank on South Street. The BID will be requesting that the City film the re-dedication for the Government Channel and that the BID may host a re-dedication ceremony and a reception at Gleason's.

**2019 Budget Request for Approval** – Mr. Tracy presented the 2019 BID budget anticipating increased revenue in 2019 due to tentatively hosting two festivals. Mr. Powers noted that the BID has about \$31,000 in reserves. Mr. Tracy made a motion to accept the budget as presented, seconded by Mr. Kearney, approved unanimously.

**Other issues** – Mr. Tracy presented the PHS Interact Club and suggested we ask for their help with data entry to update our files, membership lists. Mr. Powers will act as liaison. Mr. Tracy will provide contact person at the school district to Mr. Powers.

**New Business** – President Fassett noted that Arthur Weeks Jewelers is closing.

He also noted that the Assumption Church has replaced the uppermost windows on the Church, but not they are not historical. He stressed that property owners need to keep an eye on the changes of historic buildings. He also noted that 929-933 South Street buildings are up for review; he stated that the current owner wants to demolish and replace the two buildings with a five story building; the hearing is at City Hall on 12/6 @ 7:30 PM.

He further noted that a new retail shop has opened in the Riley Bldg., W J Zimmer & Co Antiques, and suggested all stop by to say hello; the building is also in front of the Planning Board for residential use.

Mr. Fitzgerald spoke to the idea of having valet parking for downtown businesses. He stated that one business already uses this service in Croton, and it is working quite well for them. He suggested using the Gazebo as a central drop-off area, with James Street and Central Avenue parking garages to be utilized by the valet service. The company assumes 100% liability. He will research and report back in December and suggested that it be something the BID could fund.

Mr. Paglia noted that merchants are feeding the meters throughout the day, thereby taking away spots that shoppers could use; he noted lack of signage, management and enforcement of the parking regulations.

Mr. Pugliese brought up a concern about the planting area directly behind the Gazebo where the railroad ties were falling apart and removed. The monument area is overgrown, the pressure-treated wood is in disrepair, dirt flows out of the area in heavy rains, and spikes from the timbers are exposed, posing a possible trip or injury hazard. Councilwoman Agudelo will bring to the city's attention.

The Holiday banners and the snowflake lights will be put up by the City in time for the holiday season.

Motion was made by Mr. Pugliese and seconded by Mr. Kearney for adjournment. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Pugliese  
Secretary