



**Peekskill Business Improvement District**  
**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, April 2, 2019 @ 6pm**  
**Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce**

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

**Present:** Brian Fassett, Frank Pugliese, Brendon Fitzgerald, LaFern Joseph, Ann Scaglione, Jim Pinto, David Kaminsky, Larry D'Amico, Monique Michaels, Vanessa Agudelo. Executive Director Bill Powers. **Absent:** Jeff Tracy

**BID Members present:** Evelyn Lee, Sue Sheridan, Paul Magliari, Arne Paglia, Matt Labozza, Paul DeCoursey, Brian Conigilaro, Barbara Connie, Dan Scannell, Chris Barczynski, Nancy Wareham-Gordon, Amy Lipton, Eileen Sullivan, John Sharp. Mayor Andre Rainey arrived after the meeting was in progress.

**BID Member comment:** President Fassett opened the floor for BID Member comment on agenda items.

Mr. Chris Barczynski introduced himself stating he recently moved to Peekskill and he is a singer songwriter and is interested in events involving music. Pres. Fassett encouraged him to leave his contact info with Secretary Joseph or Executive Director Powers.

Mr. Paul Magliari, invited by Ms. Michaels, is a musician and graphic designer with a business in the downtown.

Mr. Paglia stated that many of these folks attending tonight are interested in the downtown Division Street music series and confirmed that was on the agenda. Pres. Fassett confirmed.

**Request Approval of March 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes** - Secretary Joseph requested approval of the minutes for March 5, 2019. Jim Pinto seconded. All in favor.

**PAA Open Studio Plans and Request for Support** – Larry D'Amico requested \$150 for 500 post cards to promote the PAA Open Studios in June, would like place an ad in the Brooklyn Rail for \$550, and have the BID use \$600 to promote OS through the BID Facebook page. After some

discussion, it was decided that the remaining funds of the \$2,500 BID sponsorship would go towards radio ads. Vice President Fitzgerald made a motion to expend up to \$2,500 to promote Open Studios as outlined above, Secretary Joseph seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**AIM Update** – Pres. Fassett stated this is the third year Arts Industry and Media (AIM), sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, will be held April 13 and 14, 2019. Pres. Fassett asked Mr. Powers to see that the BID logo was placed on the sponsorship page of the AIM website, and noted that we have a full page ad in their booklet for that weekend as a sponsor. During that time the plan is for the BID to encourage downtown venues to host music on that Saturday evening after the AIM schedule of activities. The BID will be asking the local restaurants to play videos on their AV systems produced in conjunction with AIM. There will also be a headliner at the HVMOCA at 1701 Main Street, film director Paul Schrader, (*Taxi Driver, Raging Bull, Last Temp. of Christ*). He will be doing a 3 hour presentation. The BID will include AIM in the radio ads. AIM is an initiative of the Chamber of Commerce which is a 501c4 or 501c6 and Ben Green heads it up. There was some discussion about whether AIM is a 501c3. Mr. Powers will check.

**First Friday** – Evelyn Lee stated that the BID had full color post cards, designed and produced by Pres. Fassett and Emily Woods, printed to promote the initiative for the whole year and that she has been distributing them to downtown businesses. If people want some to distribute, she has them at her shop. Plus First Fridays has its own Facebook page so that participating businesses can post their own specials; businesses are interested and posting. She is hoping for a bigger turnout as the weather gets better and warmer.

Pres. Fassett stated that First Fridays is done in many other towns and that it helps promote business; participating businesses will stay open later from 5pm to 9pm and gives folks time to come into the downtown and meet their neighbors. The BID is the driving force behind the initiative. Artists can be paired up with businesses as to benefit both. As the weather improves there might be more on-street music or activities; the group is looking at offering child care so that parents can enjoy the evening.

**Downtown Music Series** – Sue Sheridan made a presentation on the Downtown Music Series; starts on May 25, 2019 and runs to October 13, 2019. Division Street from Park to Main is closed Saturdays and Sundays from 3pm to 11pm. In the past, restaurants on the block paid for the entertainment on their own. She stated she has booked seven major bands thus far, from the tri-state area all with followings. Cost for those bands is \$3,500. She explained she was possibly looking for the BID to sponsor some of the costs, of these seven bands because there

has been consolidation on the block and one of the restaurants closed. The rest of the series would be booked by the funding of the businesses or other partners.

Mr. Paglia stated that he and the restaurants used to present the music series and now they need more help. White Plains Linen has agreed to donate \$2,500 dollars as a sponsorship. There are more community based musicians and they want to find a way to include them to perform. He explained he is trying to open this up for as much participation as possible. Marlene Ball spoke, and gave history of her time in Peekskill explained has never joined the Chamber of Commerce. She continued with more history of this Division Street entertainment series. Mr. Paglia attempted to focus Ms. Ball back to the financial support issue. Ms. Sheridan discussed the diversity of the acts she chose. Ms. Ball stated when she did the series in the past it was funded by the BID. Ms. Ball had hired clowns as well in the past. Mr. Paglia stated that he feels the BID should match up to \$5,000 to underwrite the music series, to match their contribution, making it a \$15,000 total budget. Ms. Sheridan stated that music lasts from around 6pm to 10pm on Saturdays and 5pm to 8pm on Sundays, weather permitting, with a stage area and chairs.

Pres. Fassett halted the discussion, explained that he would like for all interested parties involved in this music series to get together and discuss and come up with a common plan before the BID would look at funding. He also explained there is no current line-item in the budget for this event, as this is the first it is being brought to the BID for discussion. He is looking for a targeted ask from those involved, before the BID could get involved.

Vice Pres. Fitzgerald suggested we attempt to get more of the restaurants and business involved in the series and not just the one block of Division Street. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald stated that the BID can help with advertising to start.

Mr. Sharp expressed he was happy to see people here speaking in favor, but this needs to be discussed further as to how this can truly be a community effort. He agrees that any activity in the downtown is good for the downtown as a whole, but there needs to be a unilateral consensus to make it successful. He suggests a larger meeting with all parties, perhaps even make a webpage and that we need to bring everybody to the table and come up with ideas and make Peekskill a music destination. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested getting a larger sponsor for the series like Bertoline.

Mr. Kaminisky asked if delaying the funding would impact the music series.

Mr. Paglia would like a commitment so he could work out the budget for talent, stage, chairs

and labor to set it up. Mr. Paglia suggested maybe the BID would commit to Ms. Sheridan's original ask of \$3,500.

Ms. Sheridan stated that she has bands that she is ready to book the bands and they are major bands from out of town. Ms. Sheridan was requesting \$3,500. She explained she understood what Pres. Fassett is asking, but also wanted to make sure people understood this ask was specific to this group of bands. Saturday bands generally cost \$500 and Sunday bands are less. She explained there was 16-17 weekends to book. There are two less because of July festival and the Harvest festival.

Mr. Sharp continued with concerns of putting BID funds where it only benefits a specific block. Ms. Ball explained it's up to the individual business to create their own vibe or scene to drive business. Mr. Sharp explained the BID moved away from supporting events that support only a few businesses to events that support the entire downtown or city.

Pres. Fassett tabled further discussion and again reiterated he would like a collective decision from all interested parties before the BID will continue discussion on funding.

Vice Pres Fitzgerald stated that the BID is already committed to two major festivals already. The July music festival and the Fall Harvest Festival.

**Flower Barrel/Removal of LED Lights/Plans for Spring** - Vice Pres. Fitzgerald asked the board and those attending to save the date of April 20, 2019 to help plant the Spring Flower Barrels. This is a tentative date, based on availability of flowers.

The last time this was done by the board, one group turned the dirt, second group planted the flowers and third group cleaned up; all was done between 10am to 12noon. BID needs volunteers to make this happen and Vice pres. Fitzgerald looked around the room at the many new faces and potential volunteers. The City is expected to do the watering again according to Exec. Dir. Powers.

Pres. Fassett stated that the BID board decided to reduce the number of barrels last year from 100 to 50, the BID Board took on the planting tasks, saving about \$15K a year and now costs about \$6K a year for the program. The extra monies were reallocated towards the festivals instead. The City charges \$5,000 to water the plants for the season.

Mr. Pugliese stated that he will remove the LED lights in advance and clean out the barrels. He will place lights in BID office. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald asked for up to \$1,500 allocation to purchase

flowers and soil if needed. Mr. Pinto made a motion to allocate \$1,500 for the flower barrel project, Mr. Pugliese seconded, all in favor.

**July Music Festival** – Vice Pres. Fitzgerald stated that the July Music Festival is going to be held July 27, 2019. There will be at least 50 vendors with tents, the Showmobile and between 5 to 10 music acts. Pres. Fassett said that the event is based on the success of the Harvest Fest and that all the BID needs to do is “copy and paste.” Mr. Fitzgerald is chair. Potential meeting for the event will be at the chamber next Tuesday. The BID will engage the same consultant to secure the beer licensing, confirmed by Exec. Dir. Powers.

**Valet Parking Update** – Vice Pres. Fitzgerald gave a quick history behind the valet parking initiative, stating that visitors to Peekskill have a problem finding close parking. Valet parking should help all businesses. He stated that the BID is partnering with a valet company. This is a pilot program only on Saturday nights with plans to start the first weekend in June, with the drop off location located in the parking lot across from the DMV; cars will then be parked by the valet in the James Street garage; this location was selected because it is so underutilized. Cost to be covered by the Bid (\$3,200). It will be advertised on Radio and Facebook. The first month the valet service would be free to drivers, and could be validated by sponsoring businesses in the second and third months or have the participants pay half of the cost and then see how it works. There will be an App available to make retrieving cars safe and accessible and people can pay by cash or by smart phone. There will be between six and seven valet attendants. More attendants would be needed if the drop off were in a different location like the Gazebo. BID will meet with City Manager and Corp Counsel and with the valet vendor and does a walk through and field survey. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald indicated that we will have to change the mind set of people, that the valet parking is within a minute of all downtown locations. Mr. Paglia stated he does not see the benefits. Pres. Fassett stated that this is a pilot program and that we should try this and if it does not work, the BID will end it. He also stated that Mr. Paglia can be on the committee if he would like. In regards to security, Vice Pres. Fitzgerald stated that the city will be adding more lighting in the garages, and Mr. Pinto stated that more cameras are being put up in that garage. Mr. Kaminsky asked how many cars are needed to make economic sense and the initiative viable. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald stated that 80 cars are needed and that the BID is planning on doing a survey via Survey Monkey to gauge interest. If the valet parking is successful, it could be expanded, if not, it could be ended. Mr. Pinto said it would take a little time to gauge interest and get the word out.

**Element46** – Mr. Pinto stated that the county has a new initiative to support startup businesses. The County Economic Development is offering 4 hours a week of free consulting to

new businesses to put together a business plan, marketing, legal, accounting, and offer advice on a number of issues. The county is also looking for mentors to help. Mr. Pinto noted additional information is available on the county website and that the deadline is April 19.

**OED Westchester County Loans** – Mr. Pinto stated that Westchester County specifically, does not have any loan programs for small business or startups. Mr. Pinto also reported that Community Capital loans are available to small business and start-ups based on need and there are no restrictions. More information is available on the county's website. Pres. Fassett stressed if anyone has questions to please get in touch with Jim in the City's Economic Development office.

**Community Outreach Publication Ad/Reallocation of Funds** – Exec. Dir. Powers stated that the Community Outreach Publication ad for the Peekskill Police department (for which the board had allocated \$1,000) has no deadline and may not be done for a few months. In addition only a portion of the \$1,000 goes to the police dept. according to Pres. Fassett. In light of this, Pres. Fassett stated that those funds will be reallocated to something else like sponsoring Coffee with a Cop and businesses.

Mr. Paglia expressed concerns that the publication was not legitimate, but Pres. Fassett stated that the police chief wrote letter of endorsement and that he had spoken to the chief personally.

**Business Council of Westchester WEXPO/Metro North Get Out & Go** – Exec. Dir. Powers stated that he and Mr. Pinto had attended the Business Council of Westchester Business WEXPO and distributed information about things to do and places to go in Peekskill. Those who stopped by the booth were hearing great things about Peekskill, or had visited Peekskill. Exec. Dir. Powers also said he was going to attend the Metro North Get Out and Go on April 13 at the Palisades Mall. Any BID member who wants to have promo materials distributed at the BID booth can give them to Mr. Powers.

**Paramount Update** – Councilwoman Agudelo stated that the RFP proposal to manage the Paramount must be in by April 12, 2019 followed by an interview process. She stated she did discuss with Corporation Counsel the BID's concern about possibly underwriting acts and what the legality of that would be for the BID. She also let the council know the BID is very interested in having a representative in the interview process – there was no decision made on that as of yet – she advised that we as individuals mention to the council members that the BID should have a seat in that discussion. Honeywell still is working on the reports to make energy improvements to the Paramount. There were no questions about the Paramount.

**Gazebo Update** – Councilwoman Agudelo stated that they need to explore how to improve the gazebo. Some improvement suggestions included repainting it, get it looking better, set up a committee to review options, remove the gazebo entirely. Mr. Kaminsky stated that he likes the gazebo and asked if the area around the gazebo like the bricks and plants could be refurbished. The spikes have been removed by the city. Mr. Pugliese stated that the gazebo glass appears to be dangerous and is cracked and can fall on someone. It was suggested that the BID send a letter with suggestions on what to do with the gazebo. Ms. Sullivan asked if there was a way to incorporate disability access in and around the gazebo. She also said that the bushes on Central Avenue behind Wells Fargo need to be trimmed to allow better handicapped accessibility. Mary Foster stated that she feels that there must be a committee to decide what to do with the gazebo, and that the city should take out the old pavers and remove the glass. The city she said must deal with the safety issues first. After much discussion, there was an idea promoted to utilize artists and create a contest to refurbish the gazebo. Councilwoman Agudelo will relay the comments and concerns and stated that she would ask to put it on the council agenda.

**BID Member Public Comment** – Pres. Fassett opened the floor to BID member public comments.

**Historic Hudson River Towns Grant/Travel Stories** - Mr. Pinto stated that the Mario Cuomo Bridge/NYS Bridge Authority is giving a \$30K grant to help Hudson River Towns to promote themselves through Travel Stories. Each community will have a two three-minute audio spot accessible through a smart phone app to tell all the reasons to come to Peekskill. This will be coming out later in the year, but the deadline for material is later this month. Goal is to encourage people traveling along route 9 to exit off route 9 and come to Peekskill. Businesses will be able to buy a spot on the app.

**Dog Droppings** – Secretary Joseph stated that people are not picking up after their animals. Ms. Sullivan stated that there is a grass space behind Brunos Deli where many people take their dogs and it is not being cleaned up. Others stated that the problem of dog droppings is occurring all over the downtown. Mr. Paglia suggested that there be more trash cans for pet owners who pick up after their dogs to place dog droppings in. Pres. Fassett stated that we are presently counting the trash cans because the city said that there are 70 of them already out. There will be further discussion later.

**Sewer Smell on Division Street** - There was a question about whether the city had cleared the sewer smell on Division Street from last year and it was reported that the city had found and corrected the cause.

**Reports of Drug Activity on Diven Street** - A new resident in the Peekskill Main Street Loft, and others, stated that there is drug activity on Diven Street. Pres. Fassett stated that the empty lot and the building in question is on the north side on Diven and is not a part of the BID. However, the artist lofts on the south side of Diven is a part of the BID. More police presence is wanted and the residents are concerned about their safety and security. Pres. Fassett stated that the property management is aware of the matter. Ms. Foster stated that there is an Ordinance in the City Code that prohibits loitering and drug activity as a drug and safety hazard and suggested the city could act under that ordinance. Pres. Fassett asked if there were cameras on the art loft building. No one knew, but stated that the street is not well lit. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald stated that he owns the building next to problem building. He also stated the he spoke to the landlord of the building in question and the landlord said he had no problem with the issues. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald offered to put up cameras on his building to help. Pres. Fassett stated that the residents' concerns were heard and that the BID will send a letter to the City Manager and Police Chief notifying them of the residents' concerns. He also noted that the mayor and councilwoman were in attendance and heard the residents' concerns directly. Mr. Pinto said he will also discuss it with the City Manager.

Mr. Paglia mentioned he started a sign in sheet as there are 34 people at this meeting, he would like for them to all get on the communication email chain. Pres. Fassett encouraged the artists and new attendees to register as members on the BID website.

**Repair Café** - Councilwoman Agudelo stated the the Repair Café was very successful and wanted to possibly combine an upcoming one with the Farmers Market. Councilwoman Agudelo said she has two dates already May 8<sup>th</sup> or June 15<sup>th</sup> and they would need a generator. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that there is a lack of poles with electricity in that area and space may be limited. He will reach out to the market manager.

**Wrong Way Traffic on Division Street** – Ms. Ball stated that many cars come down Division Street the wrong way. There are signs there saying Do Not Enter, but better signage or signs with lights need to be installed.

**Crossing Signs @ Diven Street** - Ms. Sullivan stated that there needs to crossing lights and crossing signs at the corner of Diven, Paulding and Howard Streets.

**Lights on South Street** – A member was concerned that the green decorative lights still do not work. Pres. Fassett stress that he continues to push to see this get fixed and says that it is actively being worked on – and should be any day now.

Pres. Fassett thanked all who came out, he stressed his appreciation and joked that the BID is going need a bigger room and looks forward to further engagement. He asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Meeting Adjournment** - Secretary Joseph made a motion to adjourn the meeting; with second by Treasurer Pugliese. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.