



Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 10, 2019 @ 6pm
Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce

Call meeting to order: Meeting called to order by President Brian Fassett at 6:00pm.

Present: Brian Fassett, LaFern Joseph, Frank Pugliese, David Kaminsky, Ivy Fairchild. Executive Director Bill Powers. Larry D'Amico, Councilperson Vanessa Agudelo, and Brendon Fitzgerald arrived later and at different times. Ms. Scaglione sent her representative, Alisha Sinclair.

Absent: Monique Michaels.

BID Members Present: Michael Safe Baker, Nancy Warham-Gordon, Scarlett Antonia, Drew Claxton, Eileen Sullivan, Cynthia Neville, Sue Sheridan, Brian Conigliaro.

BID Member Public Comment: Pres. Fassett opened the floor for BID member comment on agenda items. Mr. Skinner asked about Harvest Fest performers, but he is not a member of the BID. Pres. Fassett advised him that the BID meetings are only open to BID members. It was decided to ask Mr. Skinner to leave until the discussion about the Harvest Fest commenced. There were no comments from BID members.

Request Approval of August 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes – Secretary Joseph made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 6, 2019 Meeting, seconded by Treasurer Frank Pugliese. All in favor.

Extension of Executive Director Contract – Pres. Fassett announced that Mr. Powers' contract was extended for one year, with a 5% raise as a result of last month's executive session. He stated that the board has established goals including those involving digital communications, engagement of more BID members, creating a quarterly newsletter, and expanding social media presence. In addition, the board plans to hire a part-time person to assist.

Introduction of Michael Haggerty, City Manager Appointee – Pres. Fassett welcomed Mike Haggerty, who works in the planning department, as Jim Pinto's replacement as the City Manager's representative on the BID Board. He has focused on grant projects, infrastructure improvements like the Hollowbrook Pump Station and Oakwood Drive. Mr. Powers noted that Mr. Haggerty was also involved in the \$10 million DRI grant application process. Mr. Haggerty said he was looking forward to working with the BID.

DRI Grant Award – Pres. Fassett announced that the city had received the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant. He stated that the next steps were to form a committee with state planners, create and review goals, hire consultants, and develop a strategic investment plan. Pres. Fassett stated that there is a lot of state oversight and that there are a lot of strings attached to getting the funds. He stated that the BID will have an active role. The city is expected to form the committee soon.

Mr. D'Amico arrived.

Taste of Peekskill Canceled – Mr. Fassett reminded the board that the BID had voted to provide \$2,500 in overall support of the event, but since it has been canceled, the funds are now available for other projects. Ms. Sheridan announced that they have canceled the Taste of Peekskill and will re-introduce it next year. She stated that the timing was too short notice and that they did not have enough participating restaurants. Cynthia Neville, from the former McDonald and Peacock, stated that she had created and registered a logo that can be used in the future.

Harvest Festival – Pres. Fassett opened the discussion of the Harvest Festival in the absence of Vice Pres./Harvest Fest Committee Chair Brendon Fitzgerald and Music Chair Monique Michaels. He stated that they have selected some bands.

Councilperson Agudelo arrived.

Pres. Fassett said that the committee will have six bands playing on the main stage and that Charlie Saban will be doing sound work again. They still are looking for a headliner. Ms. Claxton asked if she could get a copy of the contract for the performers on Esther Street to sign. The acts booked for Esther Street are awesome, she said. Pres. Fassett stated that 15-20 vendors have signed up and he expects to be at about 40, deadline is September 30, but we will take paying vendors up until the last minute. He stated that Rev. Jan will be doing the blessing of the animals at the Farmers Market that day and that we will have a big pumpkin again.

Vice Pres. Fitzgerald arrived.

Pres. Fassett asked that the Farmers Market activities be included in the advertising. He reminded BID members that they can have a free booth space. Pres. Fassett stressed the need for volunteers since Vice Pres. Fitzgerald will not be here on the day of the event. The BID needs 15 to 20 volunteers to cover all the needs that day. He will have a spreadsheet again and people can sign up. He asked Secretary Joseph to manage the volunteers and she agreed. Ms. Fairchild and Mr. Pugliese are not going to be here. Pres. Fassett said that means he expects other board members to step in. Alisha Sinclair asked if the BID wanted Ms. Scaglione to reach out to city hall staff to see if they can volunteer.

Pres. Fassett thanked Ms. Sinclair for the offer and asked her to invite anyone from the city who wanted to volunteer.

BID Extension – Pres. Fassett stated that there was a public hearing on the extension of the BID being held on Monday 9/9/19. He stated that Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Paglia expressed some concerns. Pres. Fassett stated that Ms. Sullivan's statement to the council was inaccurate. She stated that there were inconsistencies in dates, that she had not received updated bylaws, and that she was opposed to having the BID renewed in perpetuity. Pres. Fassett explained that the local law and DMA agreement are two different items and that they both contain legacy documents; he further stated the BID was seeking to align the extension of the BID local law and the extension of the District Management Agreement, not in perpetuity. Mr. Powers said, once aligned, the hope is to have both extended for 5 years at a time and that the BID will use the time before the next expiration to update the DMA agreement and its accompanying documents. Ms. Sullivan stated that she wants to make sure that everything is done properly. Pres. Fassett said the renewal will be done properly. Mr. Pugliese stated that the informational letter sent out to property owners citing the BID's accomplishments and announcing the public hearing was informative. As a property owner he said that the BID has done good things over the past ten years and that it should continue. Ms. Neville asked about board seats and terms. Pres. Fassett said that the BID conducts elections every year and that those elected to the board serve for two years and can be re-elected to another two-year term, but then they have to step down for at least a year.

Riley Building Removal of Architectural Design Elements – Pres. Fassett raised and expressed concern over the destruction of the architectural elements of the Riley building. He stated that the city did follow the procedures and that the Historic & Landmarks Preservation Board did, in fact, approve the changes to the exterior of the building. Mr. Haggerty asked to read a statement from Planning Director Jean Friedman on this agenda item. It read:

Renovations to the Riley Building at 104 S. Division Street:

Renovations to the exterior of this building were approved by the Historic and Landmarks Preservation Board at a public meeting. The center portion of the building (with first floor arches) was constructed with only three floors, and the remainder of the building has four floors. In order to construct apartments, the floors in the center portion need to be reconfigured. The new floors will run directly across the arched windows which makes it infeasible to keep the windows in their current configuration. Therefore it was determined by the HLPB and the applicant that the best course of action would be to make the center portion consistent with the remainder of the building. New second floor windows will be added to match the remaining windows, and the windows and doors that are being replaced will match the existing doors and windows. The decision was to make the center section of the building visually consistent with the other sections. This allows the building to be occupied with a new use that is in high demand rather than the building remaining vacant with uneven interior floors that are not handicapped accessible.

The HLPB approval was conditioned on the applicant providing several brick and grout samples to review on-site before installation. Staff and Board members reviewed numerous brick samples and chose a weathered brick with the best color match. Salvaging existing brick was determined to be infeasible. The color of the grout was professionally matched to existing grout. Limestone/stucco samples will be reviewed prior to installation.

Pres. Fassett said he watched the meeting on delay because he was unable to attend the meeting; he tries to attend the review board meetings whenever possible in person. He said no one came to speak out against the changes at that meeting and no one caught the fact that historic details would be destroyed in the approval process. Pres. Fassett stated that the BID and those in the downtown have to be more aware and that the city is not great at getting this kind of information out. Ms. Neville told of her experiences in going in front of the historic board. Pres. Fassett asked Mr. Haggerty to alert the BID about proposed building changes in the BID District and that we could alert those in the district who are interested in attending the historic board meetings. Ms. Claxton said the review process was designed to protect the historic character of the remaining architecture and relayed her experience with her building, noting that it cost her more because her building was separate buildings at one time, like the Riley Building, but that the process made her building look better. She said the legislation from 20 years ago was designed to preserve the architecture of the downtown, not destroy it and they could have allowed the outside to remain intact. A number of concerns raised about notification and how to find out about the historic review board meetings which is made up of volunteers; it was noted that the meetings are noticed in the official newspaper, which got a laugh since no one reads newspapers anymore. There was an additional discussion about whether the bricks and mortar are matching and if that could be a reason to ask for a stop-work order. Mr. Haggerty showed plans for the Riley which were presented to the HLPB. The idea of creating a petition to stop the work was brought up, but since the changes are well underway and they were approved, there may not be sufficient time to start a petition drive. The focus turned back to see if the BID could find a liaison who could attend the meetings. It was noted the HLPB has “teeth” and the Historic Advisory Board has “no teeth.” Pres. Fassett noted that there are openings on other volunteer boards, but not on the HLPB and encouraged others to get involved.

Executive Director's Report – Exec. Dir. Powers gave his report:

Holiday Tree Lighting will be on Saturday, December 7, 2019 and will feature performances by Arts10566, Peekskill City Singers and others. He announced that the Miss NY Competition is coming back to Peekskill at the end of May next year. He announced that we are gathering information on trolley services to see if we can reactivate the trolley service next year. There is a new trolley/shuttle service in New Rochelle and we will be speaking with them next week. We already have information on the Beacon shuttle. He also announced that the Travel Stories audio app will be accessible on smartphones with audio designed to get people to stop and explore Peekskill from Route 9. This is through Historic Hudson River Towns and a grant from the New York State. It is expected to launch soon.

Lastly, Jim Witt, renowned weather forecaster will be at the Peekskill Farmers Market on Saturday.

Holiday Decorations – Pres. Fassett said that he had not had a meeting yet on this topic. Ms. Claxton and Ms. Neville expressed interest in serving on the holiday lights committee to see if the BID wants to add anything to its holiday lights/banners program like over the street lighted decorations.

Art Projects – Mr. D'Amico had nothing new to report about doing large scale murals (which are expensive) or large scale vinyl banners like at the parking lot of the train station, in the downtown. Ms. Neville noted that it would be great to have more art around the city to attract more people to Downtown. Mr. D'Amico will meet with interested parties to determine funding streams, it was suggested that perhaps some of the DRI monies could be used for an art project.

Paramount Update – Councilperson Agudelo had no new information to share on the Paramount. She was asked if the Honeywell recommendations were proceeding and she indicated that she thought they were.

Gazebo Update – Mr. Kaminsky stated that the committee had received a new estimate for the replacement of the Gazebo plexiglass which is \$15,000, as compared to \$35,000 and that would include a better paint job. He suggested we send a letter of support to the City Manager and copy the Mayor and Council. He said the City Manager asked why bother doing refurbishment now, why not knock it down and start all over again. A survey of hands by Mr. Kaminsky showed that the majority of people supported keeping the Gazebo. He added the city painted the gazebo and replanted the plants and flowers and that it looks better than it did. It was suggested that the brickwork be redone to make it safer. It was further noted that the light fixture is not working.

The gazebo, which was built around 1975, should be an attraction, not a blight and that it adds character; it was also suggested that the gazebo be more of an information location.

BID Members to be heard: Pres. Fassett opened the floor to BID members to be heard.

Email Address Policy - Ms. Sullivan asked if the BID had an email policy, noting that someone used her email for non-BID related communications. Pres. Fassett noted that was a global issue, and that the BID does not have an email address policy.

Apartments/Artist Lofts - A question was raised about the planned conversion of artist lofts at 916 Main Street to residential. It was explained that the conversion can happen if the landlord is unable to find an artist/renter for an extended period of time. Ms. Sullivan noted she had

lived there and the apartments were not suitable for artists. There was a discussion about whether there are any requirements or minimum artist apartments required. Mr. Haggerty will check and report back.

Artist Spot - Ms. Antonia is branding her location at 925 South Street as the Artist Spot.

Parking - Ms. Neville stated that there was a big issue with parking. Mr. Fassett said there will always be issues with parking and trash. It was noted that the staff from the restaurants park on Division Street in front of the businesses and that the signage for parking is terrible.

New Code Enforcement Officer – Mr. Fassett announced that a new code enforcement officer was just hired and that it has been 8 to 9 years since the city had one.

Garbage cans – Councilperson Agudelo said that the city had located 20 additional garbage cans in storage that can be placed around downtown. She said to let her or Dave Rambo know of possible locations for consideration of placement of additional cans. It was suggested that the cans be painted a brighter color. The original cans were made by Highland Welding and are considered of superior quality and should be refurbished. Mr. Powers reported on this at an earlier meeting and will be following up with the City Manager. It was suggested that we look into having BOCES students in the welding class refurbish them. Mr. Powers will check. He also stated that the city is exploring some legal issues involving the cigarette butt containers and adhering them to poles. It was also noted that the BID could consider doing a trash campaign again and send a letter to business and property owners regarding keeping their sidewalks clear as per city code. Pres. Fassett said the BID should educate property owners about trash collection. It was suggested that the new code enforcement officer be invited to attend a future BID meeting.

Treasurer Pugliese made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Secretary Joseph, all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.