



Peekskill Business Improvement District Statement on Racism, Race Relations and Equality

Dear Community,

We are proud of our residents, leaders, and organizations. Peekskill, as it has done historically, is demonstrating how to express grief, anger, and frustration, while continuing to instill hope and demand change. We are proud of our community for bringing people together for peaceful rallies and gatherings--and for opening up conversations about race.

We fully recognize that our BID Members, friends, neighbors, and business owners of color continue to hurt. We see the anguish in their eyes, but we also see their composure and resolve. While our words can console, our actions will create change. The deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor outraged and sickened all of us. The additional high profile police-involved shootings have furthered our resolve for meaningful action

We cannot judge all police officers by the heinous actions of a few. We support our Peekskill Police Department and applaud the service they provide our community. We await proposed policy and procedural changes from our elected leaders to see how the department and the City of Peekskill will better serve the people of color in our community, and by extension, all of us. We ask our community members to stay actively engaged and make their voices heard during this process, whether with concerns or solutions.

Our business community and our downtown property owners are just emerging from the greatest economic breakdown since the 1920s. Livelihoods, families, and businesses were brought to the brink of collapse because of the pandemic, and now, social injustice is at the forefront of our collective conscience. It has been overwhelming at times and difficult to process, but we are resilient and we will move forward together.

The BID has always offered a voice to people of color by having representation on the board and by supporting initiatives like bringing the nationally-touring Harriet Tubman Statue to Peekskill from December 2020 through Black History Month in February 2021. Approved by the BID Board earlier this year, this will be a more meaningful celebration to commemorate black history and the Abolitionist Movement that Peekskill played a very big part in.

The Business Improvement District Board of Directors and its Executive Director are working individually and in small groups, to bring forth policy changes and initiatives that will replace racism in our daily lives and level the playing field for people of color. With strength in numbers and open hearts, we will build systemic change toward justice and equality for all people.

We Are Peekskill

Sincerely,

Peekskill BID Board of Directors:

Brian Fassett, President
Brendon Fitzgerald, Vice President
Ann Scaglione, Treasurer
LaFern Joseph, Secretary

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