



Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 6, 2020 @ 6pm
Via ZOOM

Board Members Present: Brian Fassett, LaFern Joseph, Larry D'Amico, Brendon Fitzgerald, David Kaminsky, Cynthia Del Rosario, Ivy Fairchild, Vanessa Agudelo, Monique Michaels, and Executive Director Bill Powers. BID Board Member(s) absent: Matthew Rudikoff.

***Note:** Initial meeting was suspended due to being hacked. The meeting was restarted.*

Call meeting to order – President Fassett recalled the meeting to order at 6:09pm and noted it was being held via ZOOM.

BID Member Public Comment – There were no comments. Two BID Members John Sharp and Drew Claxton were on the previous start of the meeting, but have not rejoined yet. Pres. Fassett indicated that he will give them a chance to speak if they come back on. BID Member Eileen Sullivan said she was present just to listen.

Request Approval of September 2020 meeting - Pres. Fassett mentioned he will table the minutes from last month at this point because they got out late, so we will add it to the next agenda, giving the board time to review them.

Ann Scaglione Departure from Board/City Hall - Pres. Fassett stated that he received an email from Ann Scaglione resigning from the board because she has resigned from the City and is no longer the Comptroller for the City of Peekskill. Pres. Fassett stated that we will certainly miss her, and thanked her for all of her years of service.

Pres. Fassett stated there is currently an opening as BID Treasurer, if anybody would like to step up to the Treasurer's position that would be great. Pres. Fassett noted that Exec. Dir. Powers has been handling the financials and budgets and we can table it for now, until we have another appointee from City Hall. Board Member Del Rosario stated that she thought that Board Member Kaminsky was the treasurer. Pres. Fassett clarified stating that Mr. Kaminsky was the treasurer for a while until Ms. Scaglione was appointed treasurer.

Exec. Dir. Powers suggests we talk to the City Manager as to who are they going to appoint, as it makes more sense, for the Comptroller to be the treasurer as it streamlines the process for us; we can hold off for another month; he stated that Jesse Boyd is the acting comptroller until they appoint someone; Exec. Dir. Powers stated he is currently working with him directly, and that we are in good hands.

Division Street Closure and Parklets - Board Member Del Rosario stated that the closures worked well, it helped the businesses especially Rubens and Whiskey River on North Division Street. She stated that they are looking to extend the street closure permits which end on October 11. Mr. Lanza, she said, indicated that things are going well over on Railroad Avenue

and that Mr. Sharp stated that the parklets were really helpful. She indicated that she did not discuss with Mr. Sharp whether he plans to extend the parklet. She said there was an expansion of activities on Esther Street, including a movie night which was somewhat controversial about which businesses were involved and which were not and who received permits. Mr. Fassett asked that that issue be tabled until we get to agenda item # 10, expressing optimism that Drew Claxton, the owner of the Bean Runner will join us again.

Board Member Del Rosario indicated that the BID issued a letter in support of the Division Street closure as well as allowing heating lamps. City Manager Stewart sent us the ordinances for street lamps in terms of rules of what you can and can't do and she is looking to put together guidelines if you are going to use heating lamps outside what you can and can't do.

Pres. Fassett asked if the North Division closures are going to be Thursday through Sunday. Board Member Del Rosario said yes, but noted that some businesses are not in favor of the Thursday through Sunday closure, indicating that she would support Friday through Sunday closure (not Thursday if it was important to other businesses to keep the street open) and she noted that they have been closing the street later than planned to help the other businesses.

Board member Del Rosario stated that Ruben is looking into creating a parklet in front of his business, there are three spots between him and Division Street Grill, and with Arne not open, he's not sure what he's going to do, he's going to put a permit for two spots.

Board Member Kaminsky stated that Annabella's is concerned about people stopping and picking up orders from them when the street is closed, they say that the customers can't find a place to park; they can't pull around the corner; he said he was not sure what can be done, but if there could be a dedicated place for people to stop to pick up for their take out orders that would be fantastic.

Board Member Del Rosario said she spoke to the owners there, so did Pres. Fassett, who also spoke to the Police, but maybe a sign can be put up along the bollards, "Pizza pick up only." She mentioned the suggestions to the owners of Annabella's on how they can potentially make it work for them.

Pres. Fassett noted that the police have put in two more 15 minutes parking spaces on the west side of Park; those were put by the Chief after Pres. Fassett spoke to them, adding Pres. Fassett invited the owners of Annabella's to this meeting so we can talk about ideas and help them but they did not respond. The BID is trying to do all we can said Pres. Fassett and is not sure what more we can do. Board Member Kaminsky said he would relay the information to the owners.

Harriett Tubman Statue Programming Plans & Budget Review – That Statue by Wesley Wofford is currently in Maryland, which is the birthplace of Harriet Tubman. They recently had an unveiling event with dancers; the sculptor came to give a speech; there was singing, African drumming, stilt walkers, etc. Pres. Fassett turned the floor over to Sec. Joseph to talk about what she is planning; he added he would like her to put a budget together and asked if she needed a committee to help.

Sec. Joseph said she is planning a presentation with the sculptor Wesley Wilford, who has agreed to come for an opening presentation at the statue and go to a venue to have a conference or panel which will include presenters, short videos of the Underground Railroad tour. She wants to have Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, John Ranken, and Harley Green descendants and the sculptor himself. She is suggesting a budget of \$10K plus, if we invite them all to come to Peekskill on February 20 or February 27, 2021, but she said she is concerned about the COVID 19 virus. Pres. Fassett suggested looking at doing a live-streamed event because of COVID, so we don't have to have a big influx of people. Pres. Fassett asked Exec. Dir. About his thoughts on how to do this kind of event; he stated the leading company in Westchester is Corporate AV and that he will reach out to them; they are not inexpensive, he said, so we have to plan to incorporate that into the budget.

Pres. Fassett wants to identify funding sources to cover costs and asked Sec. Joseph for a budget breakdown. The board approves to move forward.

Board Member Agudelo said she was completely in support of this event and thanked Sec. Joseph for her hard work. But she said she is concerned about the pandemic and given that February is still in the wintertime and flu season, and suggested we plan accordingly and cautiously. Board Member Del Rosario suggested a virtual event and suggested we try to get sponsorships. Pres. Fassett agreed saying we could put funding towards a virtual event if we don't bring guests here in person. He suggested doing some sort of unveiling of the statue in person in December with limits on who attends. And the rest virtually. Board Member Del Rosario also suggested selling tickets through Eventbrite.

Board Member D'Amico says this is a great opportunity for the town and posting this on YouTube will make it go viral, so we need to put on some kind of a performance piece to go with this, we got to see how things are with the virus. Board Member Del Rosario asked Sec. Joseph that she make sure those guests are OK with doing a virtual event that's being recorded and replayed later.

Pres. Fassett asked Sec. Joseph needs help, she said yes. Board Member D'Amico said he would help; Board Member Del Rosario says she doesn't have a lot of time but she can help with write stuff. Board Member Fairchild also volunteered. BID Member Sullivan wanted to make sure that if done in person that we budget for all the COVID preventative precautions and suggested coordinating the event with the PAA.

Pres. Fassett thanked Sec. Joseph for her leadership on this project and she thanked the board for their support.

Outdoor Holiday Market Discussion – Pres. Fassett opened the floor to discussion from the board with regards to doing a Holiday market, which had been brought up in previous years, but he is cognitive of the COVID issues with running this kind of event. It would be an outdoor event, not covered by a tent or heated.

Exec. Dir. Powers noted that there is a direct request into NY State from the coalition of NYS BIDs and DMAs to issue some sort of guidelines for all of the communities to be able to do holiday events. The CDC put information up about Halloween but the state has not issued guidelines for the holidays, and we're just concerned that we are not going to get guidelines in time to plan the market and promote an event like this; he noted that there are still restrictions on the numbers of people that can come to an event. Pres. Fassett decided to table the discussion.

We Are Peekskill Campaign - Exec. Dir. Powers reported the We are Peekskill Campaign is still going strong, that the BID distributed all of the posters, and that Pres. Fassett just re-printed another 100 posters, so they will be distributed to all of the businesses that did not receive them; we are going to start to stretch that out to Welcher Ave and the Beach Shopping Center and the Waterfront; everyone he said is very pleased with the campaign thus far and it's been getting good reviews on social media. He said he thinks universally everybody is very happy to see smiling faces in a really difficult time for all of us; he said it brightens people's days when they see those smiling faces on the storefronts.

Peekskill Farmers Market Update – The Peekskill Farmers Market hosted its first-ever shopper appreciation and farmer appreciation day a couple of weeks ago. He thanked the board members who supported the initiative; he said Pres. Fassett and he went around and thanked all the individual vendors, approximately 24 vendors, most of them are there every week; he noted that we pretty much sold all of the spots, and the great news is, and acknowledged that this was a concern for the board when we were interviewing candidates for the Farmers Market Manager's position; Chereese Jervis Hill completed her certification as a Certified NY State Farmers Market Manager, a process that normally takes six months, in four months; she passed all of her modules, and we just found out the other day that she has been invited by the NY State Farmers Market Association to join a panel discussion early next year to discuss what it is to be the new Farmers Market Manager in the face of having to deal with the Coronavirus as well; Chereese has become an expert in the industry so we appreciate all of her efforts. The Deputy Mayor was at the Shopper Appreciation Day along with Senator Harckham, and County Legislator Smith; they each brought proclamations for Healthway Farms, which has been in the market for thirty years; unfortunately the parents of the current farmer (their son) are in Florida and were unable to come to NY because of COVID. Pres. Fassett said it was a great effort on behalf of the BID, and behalf of Chereese and her team; it was well-received from the vendor's point of view. Pres. Fassett and Exec. Dir. Powers thanked Board Member Del Rosario for providing lunch to the vendors.

Winter farmers Market Discussion – Exec. Dir. Powers wanted to open a discussion about the possibilities of doing a Winter Farmers Market. The BID had done a winter farmers market in the past at different locations; the last one was at the Youth Bureau and before that it was held at 925 South St, which is Scarlet's first-floor area; we are being asked by the vendors and market-goers if we are doing a winter market; we can't certainly charge as much as we do during the summer months, and we need to have a space that is big enough for social

distancing and ventilation, so there aren't too many options, but he wanted to get some thoughts from the board. Board Member Del Rosario says she is in favor of it if we can find a place for it. Pres. Fassett expressed concerns about using the Youth Bureau again whether there is enough space for social distancing and ventilated enough so it's safe. Board Member D'Amico says that ventilation is a big issue; the other option is we can just continue it outside. Exec. Dir Powers said that the other option is to start the market earlier next year, around April 1, opportunities, or perhaps we can check with Louie Lanza to see if the Ford Piano Building might be available. Board Member Fitzgerald said he will check with Mr. Lanza. Board Member Del Rosario said that the Union Square Market is outdoors all year round, if they can do it is not impossible.

Ms. Sullivan asked if the Farmers Market vendors would do the market on Sundays as well. Pres. Fassett says we could not afford to do that under our current contract with our current manager.

Exec. Dir. Powers said he is going to ask Chereese and report back at the next meeting.

Board Member Kaminsky asked if we could also ask Chereese her thoughts about doing an outdoor holiday market. Exec. Dir Powers said he would do a dual "ask" on both, adding if the financials make sense, we will be happy to do that.

Pres. Fassett asked Exec. Dir. Powers to discuss the open spots at the farmers market this weekend. He stated that the primary farmer which is Rolling Ridge, will not be in the market this weekend, so there are a bunch of open spaces that we are offering to any other vendors that can quickly put together a booth, so if anyone is interested, whether prepared food, artists or anything along those lines, we will be happy to take them, we have about 6 spaces that we can put people in and we have one space sold already. This could be an opportunity for some of the restaurants to have prepared food items that they can take home that day.

Holiday Tree Lighting – Exec. Dir. Powers stated that the city is still prepared to do a Tree Lighting, we just don't know how that is going to look like, clearly, it will not be as complete production as it has been in past, and we are looking to potentially doing some single performers, under the Gazebo; we won't be bringing up the showmobile this year; we just need to figure out how to get Santa there under COVID restrictions; we might be doing Santa remotely from the North Pole, we may have some technical challenges to do that; we certainly don't want to go without the Tree Lighting ceremony of some sort; we are waiting for some guidance from NY State as to what is doable and what isn't.

2021 Budget Plans – Exec. Dir. Powers said he is planning to put together two budgets, one is a COVID budget and one is our regular budget; our budget has to be submitted to the city by the end of November.

Pres. Fassett asked about the status of the survey. Exec. Dir. Powers said the survey has to be edited down. Board Member Del Rosario said we had received only one response. Exec. Dir. Powers said he would edit down and send it to the board for review.

In terms of Halloween, the BID is doing the Halloween Pumpkin Decorating at Pugsley Park on Saturday, October 24, in connection with the Farmers Market and the City Parks & Rec Dept. He reminded the board that we did something similar last year at the Harvest Festival; it was successful. He said that we are also doing a guess the weight of the big pumpkin at the market, that too was big a draw at the Harvest festival. Board Member Del Rosario said she is working with The Bean Runner and Kathleen's Tea Room do some sort of Halloween Parade where kids while it is still light out during a specific time frame, and can still get candy from employees based outside of the business; she is developing a flyer for other businesses to participate. Pres. Fassett said we can help promote that when we get the flyer.

Board Member Fitzgerald asked how the Farmers Market is doing financially. He said he thought the farmers market is “killing it.” Exec. Dir. Powers said the farmers market is going exceptionally well, noting that we will be bringing in the same amount of revenue as last year, which was the highest amount of revenue we ever brought in. He added that Chereese and her team have been out there to fill those vacant spots that we had early on, but the market itself has such a reputation, we get at least one or two requests a week, through our website asking about being in the market, or can you tell me more about the market; he said he thinks there is tremendous upside potential to expand it noting that Chereese and her team have done an amazing job; we are up to 800 plus likes on our FB page. He said our expenses were up a little bit, in terms of implementing COVID precautions but we are in good shape. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald said, “awesome job Bill and Brian for putting it all together.”

Trash Can Signs – Pres. Fassett reminded the board that it had allocated funds to purchase trash can signage for the City modifying the “We Are Peekskill” Campaign into a “We are Peekskill, Keep it Clean” Campaign; he said he had sent new adaptive artwork to the city to review and they loved it, so we should get them printed soon; the bigger concern is that the trash cans look horrible, so just putting a fresh sign is not going to solve anything, so Dave Rambo is concerned about just doing that; we sent an email to him to discuss painting the trash cans less expensively or if the city can absorb some of the expense since the BID only kept enough funding for 10 cans in our 2020 budget; painting all of the 75 cans will be over \$26K, so this is something we can not do this year on our own. Vice Pres. Fitzgerald asked if the city will be adding more cans, the answer was no. BID Member Sullivan offered an idea to have students at BOCES (in the automotive classes) paint the trash cans like they do cars.

Esther Street Update – Pres. Fassett reported that the closing of Esther St. has been extended through December 31, 2021, by the city council. He noted that it is going very well, but there are some concerns on the street which Board Member Del Rosario started to bring up earlier; the day time uses are fine, and the permits are great for the restaurants that are currently permitted to use it; there seems to be a concern outside of the permitted time or for other people to use the street; the specific concern is that they are doing movie night there every Thursday night and the businesses on the street weren't asked to be involved in the activity and that a vendor who is not on that street, brought in food and beverage. He said it's up to the council and city manager to figure out the rules. There is a concern that everyone should

cooperate and work together. Del Rosario said that the concern was more about the business that came onto the street, where they had a table where they were taking orders and delivering food and drinks, whereas the business that is located on the block was just utilized for its bathroom, and did not benefit from the people attending movie night.

Pres. Fassett said he spoke with the City Manager today and the corporation counsel; it comes down to a decision that needs to be made with the city council to implement some guidelines for the use of that space.

The Bean Runner's Drew Claxton stated that she does have concerns. She said Esther Street is not a park, it is a public street with active businesses, similar to South Street and Division Street and any of those streets can be closed for some period of time. The issue is whether any business can obtain a permit to operate in front of another business. She stated that she has been on Esther Street for 13 years and has just recently put some significant money into beautifying it, and understands why others want to be on the street. She said there need to be guidelines and some considerations for businesses that are located on the street. Gleason's John Sharp wanted to respond and noted that he paid for the insurance coverage and was a sponsor of the movie night and that all he was trying to do was generate a buzz in downtown and get some activity downtown. After a lengthy discussion, it was determined that Pres. Fassett will set up a call with the interested parties to find a solution so that everyone can work together including Peekskill Walks, who presented the movie night. Pres. Fassett thanked BID members Claxton and Sharp and both agreed to participate in a zoom call.

City of Peekskill Campaign to Attract New Residents/Businesses – Pres. Fassett said he will table this discussion until next month since Board Member Rudikoff did not call in after the first attempted call.

BID Member Public Comment – There were no BID member comments.

Adjournment to Executive Session – Pres. Fassett announced that he was going to adjourn the meeting and enter into Executive Session to discuss the employment contract of BID personnel; motion by Sec. Joseph, seconded by Board Member Del Rosario, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.