



**Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 1, 2020 @ 6pm
Via ZOOM**

Board Members Present: Brian Fassett, LaFern Joseph, Larry D'Amico, Ann Scaglione, David Kaminsky and Executive Director Bill Powers. Matt Rudikoff and Vanessa Agudelo joined the meeting in progress. BID Board Member absent: Brendon Fitzgerald, Cynthia Del Rosario, Ivy Fairchild and Monique Michaels.

Call meeting to order - President Fassett called the meeting to order at 6:03pm and noted it was being held via ZOOM, and reminded participants that the BID had canceled the August meeting due to internet problems resulting from the storm.

BID Member Public Comment – There were no comments.

Request Approval of July 7, 2020 meeting - Delayed until later in the meeting when a quorum is present.

We Are Peekskill Campaign – Pres. Fassett updated the board on the We Are Peekskill campaign, hoping the board had the chance to see LaFern Joseph's beautiful face on some of our beautiful buildings. The campaign he noted was launched and is in the windows at Fords Piano, Paramount, Evening Star, and busy corner with large format banners.

Board Members Rudikoff and Agudelo joined the meeting.

The banner for the city hall was delivered today and will be put up on the steps shortly. He noted the BID printed 16" x 20" poster boards to support the campaign and they will be distributed by Juana Pinyol, and will be picked up by Mr. Powers tomorrow.

The BID also printed two standing pull up banners for use at the farmers market. Three over the street banners are also ordered and will be placed around the city. Exec. Dir. Powers advised the board that he had put a request in to the city to waive the \$100 per banner permit fees charged to put up the banners by DPW. The city council will review the request. Mr. Powers noted that there may be an opportunity to extend the campaign by the city since all the creative has been done. Pres. Fassett noted that there was some creative that still is in reserve and could be used. Board member Rudikoff suggested he, Pres. Fassett and Exec. Dir. Powers meet to discuss options. Pres. Fassett stated that people who have commented on the campaign think it's great; they are excited to see it. Pres. Fassett said, "Excellent job, all." Board Member D'Amico stated he had been approached by the architect who is redesigning Crossroads about doing public art and suggested perhaps we could locate a few of our We Are Peekskill banners there to improve the site visually. Pres. Fassett asked Board member D'Amico to follow up, and he offered to print a few more for that area. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that where ever the banners go, they have a dramatic positive impact like on Busy Corner. He further noted that people came out of Peekskill Coffee House to snap pictures of the campaign event before it was fully installed at the Paramount. He thanked Pres. Fassett and PAK Creative/The Shop for their work on the project, specifically Kelly and Peter McKinley and Wayne Treptow. Both Pres. Fassett and Board Member D'Amico said "Bravo!" Pres. Fassett thanked Exec. Dir. Powers for moving the project forward.

Request from City of Peekskill – Trash Can Signs – Pres. Fassett indicated that he had had a

conversation with City Manager Stewart about updating the look of the trash cans. He stated that since we are likely not to repaint them this year as had been planned, at least we could take the old signage off of them because it is not friendly it looks terrible, and replace them with vibrant color signs that could even be from the We Are Peekskill campaign. He stated the city is looking to have 75 signs printed on plastic corrugated for about \$300. Sec. Joseph put a motion forward to spend \$300 on new trash can signs with We Are Peekskill adjusted graphics, seconded by Board Member D'Amico, all in favor.

2020 Event Planning – Vice Pres. Fitzgerald and Board Member Del Rosario are not present, so Pres. Fassett reminded the board that the board had approved to start the music grant campaign; he is concerned that summer is almost over, but remains optimistic that ideas may be forthcoming. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that the Flea Market has been canceled for 2020 noting that we could not ensure that the BID could not guarantee the items at the flea market are properly sanitized and further noting that the vendors do not insure the BID or the City like they do at the farmers market. Pres. Fassett also noted that flea market attendees may expect the same precautions we take at the farmers market and we are unable to do that level of safety with the flea market. Exec. Dir. Powers also noted that the city council would have to review and approve the permit and he said that could take 30 days, which would push the opening into October.

Racial Equality Initiatives – Pres. Fassett noted that he had not heard back from any board members about any new initiatives. Exec. Dir. Powers noted he had met via Zoom with the NAACP about several topics, including the request from the NAACP for possible office space in Peekskill for the organization. There was some confusion over whether the BID would share its office space with the NAACP, but Mr. Powers noted the BID office is too small and is on the third floor (not ADA accessible.) The NAACP will get back to Mr. Powers about office space. He also shared the group's enthusiasm for bringing the Harriett Tubman statue to Peekskill and that the group may be interested in attending the farmers market to boost voter registration as they have done in the past. Pres. Fassett also noted that the Police Task Force is in the process of starting in response to Gov. Cuomo's executive order. He also stated that he did not know if anyone from the BID had asked to be in the task force, but he thought it would be a good idea. If interested, one may email policetaskforce10566@gmail.com.

Executive Director's Report –

Peekskill Farmers Market Update - Exec. Dir. Powers stated that 99.9% of market shoppers are abiding by the mask requirements, and staying six feet apart. He noted the market is going well. Attendance has been on the rise. He further noted that all of the vendors' spots have been sold out. He said there may be an opportunity to expand the market next year into the lot behind HRHC. He noted we are getting almost 1,000 people per week.

Food Drive-CHHOP and Peekskill Farmers Market - He stated that we were able to do a food drive for CHHOP the weekend after the hurricane, but despite the challenges faced by local residents with no power or internet, we were still able to fill the CHHOP van with food. The effort was successful, and he had spoken to Cynthia Knox and he indicated that the market plans to do another food drive in late fall. All of the farmers participated.

Harriett Tubman Statue Update – Exec. Dir. Powers noted that he and Pres. Fassett had met with the city DPW to review the planned site of the statue, which is scheduled in mid-December. Sec. Joseph who is planning to program around the statue's stay in Peekskill. She noted that she had spoken to Odysee Wofford, the wife of the artist and that the artist may be willing to come to Peekskill and do a

workshop talking about his sculpture on a Saturday in February. Sec. Joseph has been speaking to the descendants of Harriett Tubman who would be willing to come to Peekskill; they just need a date. She also has been in touch with John Rankin and Hawley Green. She has not been able to contact Frederick Douglass' descendants yet. She is excited about the opportunity to have the artist meet the descendants of Harriett Tubman for the first time. Pres. Fassett stated that we should start thinking about community sponsors to cover costs. He also said we should look at developing a budget. Sec. Fern also stated that Sisters in Support is creating a virtual tour.

BID's Take It Out On Us campaign – Exec. Dir. Powers noted that the BID's take It Out On Us Campaign was selected by NYCOM as Best Practices and was highlighted in NYCOM's summer newsletter.

Peekskill Community Farming proposal – Exec. Dir. Powers noted that the BID issued a letter of support for a proposal to use some of LePore Park as a community garden/farm, the project is up for consideration by the City Council and is being spearheaded by Jason Angell, former Exec. Dir of the BID. Mr. Angell's plan calls for working with the Peekskill Farmers Market to bring some of the fruits and vegetables to the market and demonstrate that as a business model. Exec. Dir. Powers and Pres. Fassett thought that the concept was a good one since it connected to the farmers market and that we could teach kids that farming can be a business opportunity. Board Member Rudikoff stated that the community garden/farm is slated for consideration by the council on Sept. 8, 2020.

ASAP Mortgage/Agape Closet/The Quiet Mann – Exec. Dir. Powers reported that ASAP Mortgage purchased the former Hersch building and that Pres. Fassett attended their Grand Opening. Also Agape Closet, a dress manufacturer, held a ribbon-cutting, attended by Exec. Dir. Powers. He also noted that ASAP Mortgage is sponsoring farmers market bags for shopper and vendor appreciation day. The Quiet Man - He noted that he was sad to see it go, noting that Pres. Fassett and the Mayor intervened but to no avail. He stated that the property owner was not interested in renewing Chuck's lease; he further noted that TQM supported so many non-profit fundraisers and groups. Pres. Fassett stated that there is hope the Quiet Man may come back, it may not be Peekskill, though. He expressed concern that only three restaurants are operating on restaurant row now. He is hopeful that the vacancies can be filled. Exec. Dir. Powers indicated that he had received a request from the Rotary Club to sponsor a Sing for Hope initiative that would bring three pianos to Peekskill that would be painted by local artists and then placed around town; at the Youth Bureau, Oakside School, and Esther Street, but they had not yet received permission for Esther. The original idea (pre-COVID) was to have them placed outdoors so people could play them, but they have pivoted and will be placed indoors. The ask for is for \$1,000 to cover paint and supplies. He noted that two of the three locations are not visible to the public and that had the original plan still been feasible, he would be more supportive. Pres. Fassett also noted that the BID is not bringing in any additional revenue this year. He stated that he was concerned about spending \$1,000 here and there if it is not directly supporting our downtown businesses. Sec. Joseph asked if we could support the project with \$500 or some other amount instead of \$1,000 since we COVID will not be with us forever, we can't let COVID stagnate the downtown. Exec. Dir. Powers expressed concern that if the project does not focus enough on visibility in the downtown. Board Member D'Amico likes the idea but questioned the timing because of COVID. Pres. Fassett suggested we get more information about the timing, other sponsors, and future plans before dedicating any funds. Exec Dir Powers stated again that he thought the timing was off for the project. Sec. Joseph upon hearing the comments agreed, and that we should wait until next year. The board agreed to hold off on any funding until we get a better plan for next year.

Esther Street/Request for Barrels – Pres. Fassett stated that the Esther Street closure is going very

well and he alerted the board that he had given the go-ahead to move 20 of our former flower barrels to Esther Street based on a letter of request from Conor Green. The city will move the barrels. Pres. Fassett asked to formalize the request and authorize the move. Sec. Joseph made a motion to allow the city to move 20 planters to Esther Street. Seconded by Ann Scaglione, all in favor. It was noted that flowers will be planted in them, by the supporters of the Esther Street project.

Downtown Business Survey – Exec. Dir. Powers reported that the survey had been sent out, but did not get a response. He thought it might have been because it was initially sent out on a Sunday, and then the following week we had the hurricane with internet and power outages. We are going to regroup and send it out again and probably shorten it as well. Pres. Fassett said he wants to send it out from a BID email address and that it needs more internal structure to make sure it is clearly from the BID.

City of Peekskill Campaign to Attract New Residents/Businesses – Board Member Rudikoff stated that he has formed a working group on this topic looking at the development of content, social media, for resident and business attraction, promoting Peekskill as a very special place to do business and to live with its urban vibe. Development is at the staff level at City Hall, with some discussions with the IDA, and others about funding. The IDA is very interested in this type of economic development campaign and wants to be briefed again. There is also interest from the private sector. He wants to systematize the process, self-generating the content and is looking at working with the likes of Frank Camino and Jeff Cobelli about their experiences and what they have done. He will continue to report on this as the program of work becomes clearer and the resources better identified. Pres. Fassett thanked Mr. Rudikoff for reaching out and getting the discussion started, he said he was on the initial call and thought there were great ideas. He especially appreciated the effort to reach out to the talent we have here in Peekskill.

Request Approval of July 7, 2020 meeting – Board Member Scaglione made a motion, now that a quorum is present, seconded by Board Member Kaminsky, all in favor.

DRI Update – Pres. Fassett stated that he was pleased to have an update and that the local planning committee met last month and the projects were finalized, and they will be sent to the state for consideration. About \$15 million worth of projects (19 projects in all) were sent up for consideration and then the state will review and give its final approval for about \$10 million in funding. Pres. Fassett congratulated Board Member D'Amico since one of his projects that he put a lot of effort into was one of the 19. For more information, people can go to peekskillDRI.com.

BID Member Public Comment – There were no comments from BID members.

Board Member Kaminsky asked for any information on the issues surrounding the park Street development since he was seeing reports of legal problems. He stated that it would be a bad thing to have that building construction stopped in the middle of construction. Treasurer Scaglione stated that a new construction company has started working on the project. The construction had been halted for about three weeks, and the new contractor had to get a new permit, and that was approved, and construction has resumed.

Pres. Fassett also wanted to find a way to help Annabella's since the Division Street closure is negatively impacting their takeout business since parking is limited, and he suggested he and Exec. Dir Powers might find a way to help them by speaking to the police chief, possibly setting aside designated parking for them. Exec. Dir. Powers stated that he had spoken with the owners and that the BID had installed the 15-minute free parking signage.

Board Member Agudelo raised the issue of construction noise which the BID sent to the Council on behalf of Paul Magliari. She noted that if the construction is going on within the permitted time frames, the BID would have to propose something different. Pres. Fassett stated that it is difficult for the BID to advocate for different times since it is somewhat subjective. Board Member Agudelo stated that Peekskill's ordinance is in line with other communities. Exec. Dir. Powers stated that the BID had addressed this matter at a previous meeting, but that Mr. Magliari's quality of life is being impacted and he wants to pursue some changes. Board Member Agudelo stated that it is within the BID's purview to advocate for one of its members, but just because it is a subjective issue, it should not be tossed to the city for resolution. Pres. Fassett stated that just because it is in the BID district, it is not just a BID issue. Exec. Dir. Powers made the analogy that our forwarding Mr. Magliari's concerns was similar to his attending a city council meeting in person and bringing the issue up in citizens to be heard, but because there are no in-person meetings he has not been able to do that, so we helped him out by forwarding his concerns. Treas. Scaglione said the issue to be sent to the city manager. Exec. Dir. Powers said he advised Mr. Magliari to send a letter to the city with a specific request of how he would like to change the ordinance.

Adjournment – Treas. Scaglione made a motion to adjourn seconded by Sec. Joseph, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:46pm.