

Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 12, 2021 @ 6pm
Via ZOOM

Present: Brian Fassett, David Kaminsky, Matt Rudikoff, Larry D'Amico, Cynthia Del Rosario, Ivy Fairchild, LaFern Joseph, Matthew Alexander, Vanessa Agudelo, Monique Michaels, Exec. Dir. Bill Powers. Guest: Girl Scout Ella Birenkrant

Call meeting to order – Pres. Fassett called the meeting to order at 6:01pm and noted the meeting is being conducted via Zoom.

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

Storm Drain Stenciling Project – Girl Scout Ella Birenkrant introduced herself, thanked the Board for the opportunity to present her project, and noted that she is a junior at Walter Panas HS and is in the West Lakeland Girl Scouts, Heart of the Hudson. She is working on her gold award project, an 80-hour service project, and she is hoping to collaborate with the BID to increase the impact of her project. She has a slide presentation and Pres. Fassett allowed her to share her screen. Her project is called pollution prevention with storm drain stenciling. She noted that stormwater runoff is a major contributor to Hudson River pollution and that untreated stormwater carries the water directly into the Hudson River and carries pet waste, litter, oil, and other contaminants that pollute the river. Ms. Birenkrant showed photos of storm drains downtown that she took, showing trash and litter ready to flow into the drains. She aims to improve education about stormwater runoff, which in turn will improve water quality. One way to do this, she said, is to paint messages on storm drains. She showed two drains that she stenciled near the Peekskill Train Station. They are in both Spanish and English. Her project goal is to prevent litter from flowing through the storm drains and into the river. Her project activities are: learn to stencil, teach others how to stencil, teach others about pollution, give stencil demonstration to Peekskill Water Dept., stencil Peekskill waterfront drains, and perform a street clean up and do the same downtown. She accomplished all but the downtown activities. The Ossining Dept. of Public Works lent her their stencils and gave her a tutorial on stenciling and she stenciled six drains by the Ossining Train Station. She presented her project to other Girl Scouts at their annual meeting and taught others how to prevent pollution from getting into the river. She also gave them a stenciling demonstration. She has already met with the Peekskill Water Dept. stenciled two drains there, and has received permission from City Manager Andy Stewart to proceed with her project. She and her volunteer crew, have to date stenciled 11 drains by the waterfront and the train station and picked up trash there as well. Many people stopped to ask what she was doing and thanked her for her efforts. She wants to work with the Conservation Advisory Council, Youth Bureau, and BID to involve the community in stenciling about 60 drains downtown. She showed a map of all the storm drains downtown and stated that she would plan on stenciling about 40 drains instead of all of them because some are close together. She plans on doing three stenciling/cleanup days in the spring. She already presented to the CAC and they suggested contacting the New ERA Creative space for volunteers. She also plans to contact Peekskill Girl Scouts to get more Peekskill residents involved. She opened the floor to questions; Vice Pres. Del Rosario praised Ms. Birenkrant for her presentation and asked how long does it take to stencil one drain, and is there a drying time where the area has to be blocked off. Answer: it only takes a few minutes for the paint to dry and it took her about 5 to 6

hours to do 11 of them in one day. Vice Pres. Del Rosario asked if she would consider doing new stencils since the ones she is using are from Ossining. Ms. Birenkrant said she had not thought about that and was planning on using the ones from Ossining. Vice Pres. Del Rosario noted that Peekskill has a lot of artists and personalizing the stencils may make it more impactful to the Peekskill community. Board Member Fairchild echoed Vice Pres. Del Rosario's interest in involving the artists and praised Ms. Birenkrant for her project. Pres. Fassett asked what the measurements of the stencil and Ms. Birenkrant stated she was not sure. Pres. Fassett indicated that he had a concern about the stencils and wants to run the project by the Historic Landmarks Board. BID Member Foster asked how long the paint lasts and suggested not "skipping" any of them, and also suggested substituting the word trash for pollutants since it resonates better. Ms. Birenkrant stated the paint lasts a couple of years and that she would consider creating her message. Board Member Agudelo thanked Ms. Birenkrant for presenting her project to the BID and for all of her hard work. She suggested having Board Members Fairchild or Del Rosario contact Ms. Birenkrant and provide her with contacts in the artist community. Vice Pres. Del Rosario suggested Board Members D'Amico and Michaels would be better suited to refer artists. Board Member D'Amico will bring the topic up at tonight's Peekskill Arts Alliance meeting. Board Member Kaminsky praised Ms. Birenkrant and asked if she could find time to create an even larger anti-litter campaign and she said she would look into that. Pres. Fassett thanked Ms. Birenkrant and said the BID has a little work to do and will get back to her.

Request Approval of November 10, 2020, and December 1, 2020, Meeting Minutes – LaFern Joseph made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 10, 2020, and December 1, 2020 Meetings, seconded by Board Member Fairchild, all in favor.

Winter Snow Removal from Sidewalks – Board Member Agudelo noted that in the last snowstorm, there were several issues with property owners not shoveling snow from in front of their properties in a timely manner. The code requires that the snow be removed within four hours. There was code enforcement but that does not remove the snow any faster. She said she had a big idea to have the BID manage snow removal and pay for it with the BID taxes, or with additional fees to contract out with snow removal vendors. She had approached one vendor who wanted to know what kind of budget we would be working with, and without clear parameters, the vendor gave an estimate of \$50,000. She stated that it costs \$44 an hour for city workers to remove snow. She also suggested that maybe the BID could facilitate on a block by block basis to contract out and work with businesses and property owners to have snow removed. Maybe the BID starts an inventory of workers willing to do snow removal. Vice Pres. Del Rosario reminded the board that property owners are responsible already for snow removal and stated that she did not think the use of BID funds was a good use of the BID's funds. She stated that the property owners should be fined if they do not shovel their sidewalks per the city code. Pres. Fassett stated he thought 85% of property owners in the BID do remove the snow, but that he would like to see if there is a way for the BID to help those who don't. Vice Pres. Del Rosario suggested providing a list of snow removal companies in different languages. She added that she would be 100% against using BID money for snow removal. Pres. Fassett stated that property owners who do remove their snow, later find that the city has plowed the snow back onto their sidewalks and they have to remove it again and again. Several Board Members agreed. He also noted that after the snow stops, the crosswalks become impassable as the snowplows continually plow the snow back onto the crosswalks and sidewalks. He said he would be interested in having a team take care of those issues and would be willing to put some BID funds for that purpose; Vice Pres. Del Rosario agreed. BID Member Mary Foster noted that the crosswalks are the city's responsibility and

the city needs to step up and take care of that; she noted that the way the snow is plowed you cannot open a passenger door. She made it clear that she is against using BID funds to do snow removal. Vice Pres. Del Rosario said she has been in other communities that close down streets, plow and remove the snow to another location. Pres. Fassett said the city does remove large piles of snow a few days later, but questioned why remove snow from in front of Ford Piano where there is no parking; removal of snow piles he said should be done along streets with parking. Vice Pres. Del Rosario suggested adding the topic to our biweekly call with the City Manager, and Exec. Dir. Powers noted that he is working with the city to update and the Stash the Trash campaign, a section of which covers snow removal. He suggested he could highlight that section more when it is sent out to the property owner. Pres. Fassett tasked Board Member Agudelo with finding out how much it would cost for a private vendor to remove the snow from the crosswalks and the corners since that would benefit the entire downtown, not just a single property owner. Board Member Agudelo said the city is also looking at its protocols. There was additional discussion about fines, fees, etc. Board Member Fairchild thought the process of clearing snow and having the city collect fines and reimburse the Bid is a cumbersome process. BID Member Foster questioned whether clearing snow from delinquent property owners is really the mission of the BID and she further stated that there are a lot of logistics that have to be looked at, including management, liability, etc. Board Member Fairchild stated that some BIDs do offer snow removal, but questioned why we would offer that service now.

2021 Election Committee – Pres. Fassett stated that the committee had not met yet, but that he has been working with Exec. Dir. Powers on getting a letter out to solicit candidates for the board. Mr. Powers indicated that the letter will be sent out as soon as the committee selects a date for the annual meeting. Three A-Class (property owner) seats are up and one commercial tenant seat is up. Board Members Kaminsky and Joseph have indicated that they plan to run for re-election and the seat held by former Board Member Brendon Fitzgerald must be filled. Board Member Michaels has not indicated her intent to run again. Pres. Fassett stated he and Exec. Dir. Powers are reviewing options on how to present the annual meeting, virtually, possibly by record our annual report and showing it via zoom.

Harriet Tubman Statue/Virtual Events – Sec. Joseph reported that the planning of virtual events surrounding the statue is going very well; meetings with the library, youth bureau, the NAACP, Ocean Morriset, the Peekskill School District, and the Peekskill AME Zion Church have been ongoing. The events start on January 16. Sisters In Support and the BID are putting together a virtual event featuring the descendants of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Hawley and Harriett Green, and John Rankin. Keynote Speaker will be Vincent DeForest, the Former Special Assistant, National Parks Services, Underground Railroad and the panel will be moderated by William W. Sales, Jr., Professor. Sec. Joseph noted that she was working with Exec. Dir. Powers to put together a great poster and start getting the info out to the radio and other media. Sec. Joseph noted that when people come to see the statue, they are also shopping and stopping into her store. She says when they stop in, she directs them to our restaurants. She said she had a customer from Harlem, Newburgh, Katonah, and other places. Board Member Fairchild asked if the schools are doing a project around the statue because she is seeing students taking photos and notes by the statue. Sec. Joseph said that the school district and the Youth Bureau are part of the projects. She noted that the dates and times of each of the participating groups are presenting their own events, and she highlighted that the Peekskill Youth Bureau will be doing poetry readings. Pres. Fassett noted that the school district is doing a variety of projects and that they are dedicating an entire Saturday Academy

to their efforts later in February; he noted that the first event is this Saturday presented by the Library. Anyone can register for any of the events at www.harriettubmanpeekskill.com. He further noted that the BID is still accepting sponsorships. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that Enormous Creative produced and edited a video about the statue and that the video is on the microsite. BID Member Foster asked if the Bid was promoting the virtual events and Pres. Fassett stated that the BID has been pushing the info out since last week but noted that he was relying on one each entity to promote their events. Ms. Foster asked if we could ask the chamber to promote the events. Pres. Fassett asked Mr. Powers to have the events posted to the BID's calendar on www.discoverpeekskill.com. Vice Pres. Del Rosario asked if the city would put up our information, and Board Member Agudelo said that we could ask. Pres. Fassett stated that there is a link on the city website to harriettubman.com but stated that he's relying on the individual entities to promote their event and we will share on our social media. The BID is not creating the assets, the participants are creating them and we are sharing them.

City of Peekskill IDA Marketing Plans – Board Member Rudikoff reported that he has been working on an RFP for marketing services for the IDA with Exec. Dir. Powers. He said it's a two-step process by developing a work plan and then issuing an RFP to hire a consulting team. Drafts of the plan and the RFP are being worked on now and that Board Member Rudikoff is working on the next version of those drafts to be presented to the IDA board and the BID. Board Member Rudikoff is excited to get started to get the word out about Peekskill and noted the next IDA meeting is on January 26 and that he is working with an IDA subcommittee consisting of Alan Kravitz and Drew Claxton. He would like to launch this in the first quarter of 2021. Pres. Fassett asked if copies of the drafts could be made available to the BID for input, and Board Member Rudikoff said the documents are still in the development stages.

Executive Director's Report –

BID Renewal: Exec. Dir. Powers reported that the BID is up for renewal in September 2021 and that he had spoken to City Corp Counsel and that Ms. Ferraro will put together a timetable for the review process to accommodate at least one public hearing, sometimes two, and he said we are looking to start the process in March to allow for enough time for two public hearings if necessary and give time to the city council to review the BID plan.

2021 Year End Budget Review: Exec. Dir. Powers reported that the BID expenses were \$133,711 and income was \$133,872, which means we came in under budget by \$161, further noting that it doesn't get any closer than that. He added that the BID received a little under \$29,000 from the Farmers Market, with expenses against the market of \$26,600. He pointed out the market made a profit of \$2,600 in a COVID-stricken year. He thanked and credited Chereese and her team for staying on top of the accounting and he noted that the launch of the online vendor payment app was being utilized by more than half of the vendors. He further thanked Chereese and her team for bringing in 15 new vendors this year which helped to bring in the additional revenue.

Brighter Update: Exec. Dir. Powers stated that he met again with the team from Brighter and that Whiskey River, The Fern Tree, Monique Michaels Photography, and Artist Larry D'Amico are going to test drive the Brighter app and map of Peekskill. He is also reaching out to BeanRunner, PK Blendz, and Division Street Guitars to also test drive the app.

BID Member Public Comment –

COVID Signage: Pres. Fassett reported that the BID did print COVID awareness signage, wear a mask, social distancing signage; it's professionally done and it's free. The signs are available in the lobby of City Hall and in the chamber of commerce kiosk.

Planning Board Agenda: he reported that one item on the agenda is at 3 North Broad @ Park Street where Mid Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union is looking to place a building. If interested, watch the Planning Board Meeting.

BID By Laws In Spanish: Pres. Fassett reported that the BID Bylaws have been translated into Spanish and placed on the BID website. He thanked Exec. Dir. Powers and Juana Pinyol for making that happen.

Face Coverings: BID Member Foster reported that the Rotary Club will be receiving several thousand face coverings and that the Rotary is looking for avenues of distribution. She said if the BID is interested in receiving/distributing some to let her know and she will find out more information.

Art/Performance Space: Board Member Kaminsky asked Board Member D'Amico for an update about the performance space project through the DRI. Board Member D'Amico stated that the DRI monies have not yet been distributed so he does not have an update to share until he hears from the state.

Health Department: Board Member Agudelo asked about the restaurants that were closed or impacted by the recent health department inspections. Exec. Dir. Powers said he filed a complaint with the county and that they were going to look into the matter; they seemed sympathetic to the situation and that he thought the county was going to try to calm the situation down. Vice Pres. Del Rosario said that the situation has been calmed down and that no new places have been inspected, but that the health dept has gone back to the places that were issued violations and that those were given time to correct them.

Executive Session to discuss contract/personnel matters - Vice Pres. Del Rosario made a motion, seconded by Sec. Joseph to adjourn and go into Executive Session to discuss contract/personnel matters. All in favor. Adjournment at 6:59pm.