



**Peekskill Business Improvement District**  
**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, July 13, 2021 @ 6pm**  
**Via ZOOM**

**Present:** Vice President Cynthia Del Rosario, Secretary LaFern Joseph, Board Members Ivy Fairchild, Matt Rudikoff, Frank Vasquez, Larry D'Amico, Exec. Dir. Bill Powers. Board Members Drew Claxton, Monique Michaels, and Treasurer Matt Alexander joined the meeting in progress. **Absent:** President Brian Fassett, Board Member Vanessa Agudelo.

**Guest Presenters:** Jean Friedman, Director, Planning & Development, Peekskill; Jann Mirchandani, Chairperson of the Equity & Diversity Committee of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce

**Call July 13, 2021 Board of Directors meeting to order** – With Pres. Fassett's absence, Vice President Cynthia Del Rosario called the zoom meeting to order at 6pm

**BID Member Public Comment –**

- BID Member Mary Foster noted that the BID had worked very hard on the proposed changes to the bylaws and was hoping to have a quorum tonight so they could be approved by the Board.
- Vice Pres. Del Rosario noted the board cannot vote on the changes tonight because the BID is required to notify BID Members ten days in advance of such a vote, and we did not have enough time to do that from last Thursday's meeting at which there was no quorum.
- BID Member Mary Foster stated that she hopes the new bylaws can be adopted because they are an improvement over what the BID has now.

**Presentation: New York State Cannabis Laws** – Jean Friedman, Director, Planning & Development, Peekskill

- Recreational marijuana is now legalized in all New York State communities.
- There are two kinds of retail establishments: dispensaries will package and sell marijuana and consumption sites will allow selling and smoking of marijuana on premise (alcohol not permitted at same location).
- Automatically permitted in any community by the state: nurseries which grow immature plants, cultivators which grow mature plants, processors who convert raw product into usable form, distributors who transport between processors and retailers, delivery operators who can deliver from retailers to a private address, microbusinesses that are small, but all in one facility. The state does not want to permit big companies to do this, only small businesses.
- If the city wants to opt out of having dispensaries/consumption sites in Peekskill, it would have to do so by December 31, 2021 by holding a public hearing and adopt a local law prohibiting dispensaries and consumption sites.
- If Peekskill opts out the community can push for a referendum to opt back in at the next general election or if the council wants to opt in, it can do so on its own at any time. Communities cannot opt out after December 31, 2021.

- If the city opts in, it can regulate the locations and hours of operation, but it can't make it difficult for the business to operate.
- There will be a state Cannabis Control Board that will issue regulations.
- As of now, the Council has not made a final decision.
- Dispensaries and consumption sites will be allowed in all commercial zones, that would be downtown, Washington Street, Beach Shopping Center, etc. and some zones along the riverfront and up Central Ave.
- Licenses to operate are going to be extremely limited and extremely competitive.
- License applicants have to notify the municipality in which they want to locate.
- First application approvals are not expected until at least six months from now.
- The City Council has discussed the issue a few times, and the city put out an informal survey. As of July 8, 70% supported dispensaries, 30% opposed; 64% supported consumption sites, 36% opposed.
- The issue of smoking in public parks came up, and the city can prohibit all smoking, or allow all smoking; the city cannot prohibit one type of smoking like smoking marijuana. Council would have to hold a public hearing on this.
- There are financial benefits to the city; the city would get 3% of retail sales; there are additional taxes on distributors. The state wants to reinvest 40% of taxes generated by sales of marijuana into communities that had been adversely effected by the war on drugs; 40% of revenue would go to public education; 20% would go towards drug treatment, prevention, and education.
- Council is not held to a December 31 deadline if they want to change what zones they will allow dispensaries or consumption sites; they can do that at any time.
- There is no guidelines on how many dispensaries/lounges there can be in any one community.
- Vice Pres. Del Rosario stated that the licenses cost \$200,000.
- Exec. Dir. Powers noted that there needs to be some action by the federal government to allow cannabis cash to be deposited in the federal reserve system of banks.

**Presentation: HV Gateway Chamber of Commerce Equity & Diversity Committee** – Jann Mirchandani, Chairperson of the Equity & Diversity Committee of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce.

- Committee's mission is to support minority enterprises and to improve access to programs, business education, networking and marketing opportunities.
- Actively engaged in creating programs to bridge some of the gaps listed above.
- Open to suggestions, feedback, and participation from the BID.
- The committee and its events are open to anyone, you do not need to be a chamber member.
- Visit [www.hvgatewaychamber.com](http://www.hvgatewaychamber.com) and look under Committees, find Equity & Diversity Committee. Jann's contact information: (914) 806-7720 or email:

[jann@westchestermarketingcafe.com](mailto:jann@westchestermarketingcafe.com).

- Exec. Dir. Powers noted that Guest Mirchandani was invited to join us tonight so that we could start working together on cooperative programs.

**Request Approval of June 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – Sec. Joseph noted the draft minutes for June will be reviewed and considered at our next meeting.

**Resolution to rescind previous resolution instructing the Executive Director to contact the NYS Attorney General's Office –**

- Board Member Fairchild made a motion to rescind previous resolution instructing the Executive Director to contact the NYS Attorney General's Office, seconded by Sec. Joseph, and Board Members Vasquez, Rudikoff, Pres. Del Rosario, D'Amico voted yes, Board Member Michaels voted no. Board Member Claxton joined the call before the final vote and stated that she voted yes. Matt Alexander voted yes as well.
- Board Member Michaels asked why this is being done. Vice Pres. Del Rosario answered that the BID had contacted our attorney following the resolution, and he had advised us not to contact the AG's Office. In addition there was no budget allocation to expend BID funds on legal counsel to aid Exec. Dir. Powers in contacting the AG's office. Additionally, Vice Pres. Del Rosario noted that Board Member Agudelo also contacted the AG's Office, and was told it was not in their purview.

**Division Street Closure –**

- Vice Pres. Del Rosario noted that the music series is underway Thursday through Sunday; they have had some rain outs.
- Scarlett Antonia has a standing open mic night as part of the Division Street series on the first Thursday of the month.

**Harvest Festival –**

- Vice Pres. Del Rosario stated that the committee is working on a budget to present to the Board. Board Member Fairchild will work on sponsor and vendor pages. Sec. Joseph is looking at performers and booking acts for the event on October 23, 2021.
- Looking to modify the hours of the festival before submitting street closure permit to city; will send to Exec. Dir. Powers for review before submission.

**Executive Director's Report – Bill Powers**

- Flea Market Update – Flea market street closure permit request has been submitted to the City Council for approval and we are hopeful to open the Flea Market on Sunday, August 1, 2021 on Bank Street. BID will monitor reports of uptick in positive COVID cases, mostly in NYC and LI, and a slight uptick in Westchester County.
- Farmers Market Update - There was a water main break on Saturday of July Fourth weekend on Bank Street and at 5:15am we made the decision to move the market to the parking lot behind the diner. It worked out well.

- Brighter Travel Update – Soft launch of the app was done on Friday, and we are meeting with the tech team on Thursday to address any minor issues. Hoping to send a press release out as soon as next week.
- Public Art Tours – The City Manager has a volunteer photographer and volunteer writer who will help gather all the information on all of the public art displays so that we can put it together in a self guided public art tour and place it on our app. Hope to have that project completed by end of August and ready for the fall. Also looking to add City-owned parks and tourist locations like trails, MOCA and the Lincoln Depot Museum.
- BID Renewal Schedule/ByLaws – Exec. Dir. Powers advised the Board that he appeared in front of the City Council to advocate for the renewal of the BID, which expires in September. All of our renewal paper work has been submitted to the Council. The issue about the bylaws was brought up by Council Member Agudelo; we did not have a quorum last week to approve the changes to be included in time in the renewal documents. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that we thought we had two options, but we were advised by the city's Corporation Counsel today that we only have one: submit the existing bylaws for this renewal cycle and commit to come back to the council with the final bylaws changes after the renewal is granted, if the council sees fit to extend the BID.
- BID Office – Exec. Dir. Powers advised the board that we have been notified by our current landlord that they do not plan to renew our lease above the Peekskill Coffee House; the landlord wants to rent our office to another artist; rent is now \$300 a month. At this late date, we have two choices: David Kaminsky has an office available at 1010 park Street on the second floor for \$500 or we can rent a storage unit and place our files and furniture into storage. Exec. Dir. Powers was directed to ask if Mr. Kaminsky would reduce the rent to \$300 and that we would rent the office if he agreed; if not, we should store our files/furniture.
- BID Meetings for rest of 2021 – Exec. Dir. Powers asked the board if they wanted to resume meeting in person. He advised the board that the chamber office would not be big enough to conduct BID Board meetings in person with guests, noting that there are no windows and no ventilation system beyond HVAC. BID Member Foster noted that the library is now renting the former BOCES space in the library complex, and that may be an option. The board did not seem interested in meeting in the chamber for the foreseeable future out of concerns for COVID. We could talk to Library Director Jennifer Brown about the library space.

#### **BID Member Public Comment -**

- BID Member Scarlett Antonia gave an update on her Oz Festival planned for September 18, 2021.
- BID Member Arne Paglia asked who is on the Executive Committee and if minutes are kept; Exec. Dir Powers stated the Executive Committee consists of the President, the Vice Pres., Treasurer and Secretary and that he does not keep minutes.
- BID Member Arne Paglia made unsubstantiated claims the BID does not follow proper meeting notifications and that the executive committee is making decisions for the full board. Board Member Claxton stated “that is not correct” and noted that the entire board, except for one board member, voted to rescind the resolution passed by the full board in March—the same board that approved the March resolution voted to rescind its decision.

**Adjournment -**

Sec. Joseph made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approx. 6:58pm; seconded by Board Member Claxton; all in favor.