



Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 5, 2021 @ 6pm
Via ZOOM

Present: President Brian Fassett, Secretary LaFern Joseph, Board Members Frank Vasquez, Drew Claxton, Larry D'Amico, Executive Director Bill Powers. Vice President Cynthia Del Rosario and Board Member Matt Rudikoff joined the meeting in progress.

Guest: Peekskill City Manager Andy Stewart

Absent: Board Members Ivy Fairchild, Vanessa Agudelo, Monique Michaels, and Treasurer Matt Alexander.

Call October 5, 2021 Board of Directors meeting to order –

- Pres. Fassett called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. We will be adding one agenda item from Matt Rudikoff regarding the C-2 zoning amendment that may impact the BID District.

BID Member Public Comment –

- BID Member Mary Foster encouraged the BID to be favorable to a request from the Field Library to support the creation of a dedicated teen space and STEM lab in the lower levels of the library, noting that community support is important. This is the former site of BOCES.

Presentation by City Manager Andy Stewart – Tree Replanting Plan

- City manager Andy Stewart thanked the BID for its partnership in keeping him informed through bi-weekly meetings of what is happening downtown.
- City has started a tree replanting plan because there are so many tree pits without trees.
- He noted trees are important for beauty and aesthetics, providing shade during hot days, and adding to the streetscape, quality of life and adding to property values.
- He stated that the city has to invest in trees and manage their maintenance properly.
- He shared a map of the city and noted all the tree wells and locations where trees could be placed; he pointed to the 11 trees just planted by Chappy Manzer about 10 days earlier on Division Street towards the monument. He's received support for the CAC. Focused on removing tree stumps and working with Chris Gross, new DPW head, on a game plan for replanting and maintenance since new trees require frequent watering (every other day).
- Next new plantings to occur in the K lot. Interested in identifying blocks where there is a lack of tree canopy. Also working on a permit for tree removal that would set some regulations to allow for tree removal, especially on private property. Under review and should be available for a public hearing soon. Includes a provision for a tree replenishment fund.
- Interested in promotion to home owners to ask for a tree in front of their homes on city properties. Interested in having a consistent treatment for the tree wells since we currently have a rubbery mat substance in some, stone blocks in some, and just dirt in others. Interested in having an arborist on retainer to advise on tree removal and a possible committee that could advise as well. There may be some funds in the DRI grant for plantings/trees.

- Executive Director Powers asked how many vacant tree wells were in the downtown and what the city's bandwidth is to water more trees. Mr. Stewart stated there are about 50 locations in the downtown where trees can be planted and that the concern is more about how many the city can water every year.
- Pres. Fassett asked if a business could adopt a tree, and the answer was yes and that some sort of acknowledgment could be placed near the tree.
- Mr. Stewart also stated that he is working with Sen. Harkham's office to fund some new crosswalks in downtown to replace the ones that are broken eyesores.
- Board Member Claxton asked the city manager to look into whether there can be a change in preventing left turns from Main Street to go up Division Street. It's negatively impacting the businesses in that area by having the No Left Turn signal. Mr. Stewart stated that city is looking to see if the daytime truck traffic can be allowed on the Bear Mountain parkway to alleviate some Main Street truck traffic.

C-2 Zoning Amendment – Matthew Rudikoff

- There is a proposed amendment to the C-2 Zoning as issued by the Planning Dept. mostly in the Broad Street and Howard Street area which is up for redevelopment.
- There is a Planning Board Meeting on October 13 to review the change and issue their recommendations to the City Council and then there will be a public hearing in November on the topic.
- For certain streets not fronting on Main Street, South Street or Brown Street, ground floor residential is going to be permitted and those areas will be transitioning into more of a residential neighborhood. Mr. Rudikoff shared a map. Also allowed are artist live/work spaces.
- Exec. Dir. Powers was asked to email text of ordinance changes to the board.
- There was some confusion about certain areas highlighted on the map, so Mr. Rudikoff will ask for clarification.

Funding request from Field Library to Support new STEM Lab –

- Exec. Dir. Referenced a letter of request from the Field Library to support the new STEM Lab and Teen Center at the library and outlined some of the items that need funding including a 3D printer.
- It was suggested that Bre Pettis be contacted to see if he could donate the 3D Printer.
- Board Member Claxton suggested the BID sponsor the overhead projector for \$2,000, stating that the concept is a good economic development project.
- Board Member Joseph made a motion to sponsor the overhead projector on behalf of the BID for \$2,000, seconded by Board Member Claxton, all in favor.
- Library Board Member Mary Foster thanked the BID and stated that the library is excited to have a place for teens that is technology driven.

Project updates – Matthew Rudikoff

- Mr. Rudikoff suggested he provide quarterly updates in writing on the development projects around the city, but will give a verbal overview tonight.

- He stated that there are 25 projects with seven mixed use projects that contain 423 residential units and 12 new retail spaces underway.
- 433 additional units of housing are under review.
- Solo project contains 50,000 to 100,000 of light industrial space on lower South Street.
- 216 South Division Street, 645 Main Street (82 units), One Park Place (191 residential and five retail spaces), and other numerous smaller projects.
- The DRI grant monies are beginning to get going and among them the first ones are the art projects.
- There are other grants in process or progress.
- Mr. Rudikoff was asked to find out when One Park Place was going to start renting.

Request Approval of September 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes –

- Secretary Joseph made a motion to approve the September 14, 2020 Board of Directors Minutes, seconded by Vice Pres. Del Rosario, all in favor, except Board Member Claxton who abstained because she was not in attendance.

Temporary Art/Tree of Life –

- Board Member D'Amico stated that he has a few questions into Wilfred Morel who is the artist of the Tree of Life sculpture such as how to secure the sculpture to the ground. Once we hear back, the BID can go before the Common Council for review and approval. The sculpture is 12 feet high and 11 feet wide, which will fit in the spot.

Art Installations at Jan Peek Square 2022 –

- Monique Michaels was absent from the meeting due to work requirements and we do not have a report. Board Member D'Amico noted that there is funding through the DRI grants for a light sculpture project and banners and murals.
- This might overlap, but he would like to hear what Ms. Michaels proposal since it might fit within the DRI grant.
- Board Member Claxton inquired about the Harriet Tubman replacement statue and Pres. Fassett stated that he has not recently spoken to the artist; will try to get an update soon, as that would be a permanent replacement in the spot, but Pres. Fassett said he likes the idea of a location where rotating artwork can be displayed. Others agreed.

Overflowing Trash Cans –

- Exec. Dir. Powers informed the board that a letter reminding commercial tenants and property owners that they cannot use the city's public trash cans for their trash.
- The letter has been finalized and approved by the city, and the BID is going to mail it out to all property owners and known commercial tenants in the BID.
- The city is still considering putting some sort of sticker or stencil on the tops of the cans reminding folks that the city trash receptacles are for pedestrian litter, not commercial or residential trash.

- Mr. Powers noted that after speaking with the Farmers and Flea Market managers, we are going to ask the city to remove the dumpster at mid-block on Bank Street entirely, and the vendors have agreed to take out everything they bring in; additionally, we are asking the city to move the two trash cans at mid-block, one to the corner of bank and Main, the other the Bank and Park, so that the DPW can access them on Saturdays. That should help the issue with the overflowing trash cans.
- The city is still looking at costs for a Sunday morning pickup in the downtown to remove the trash from the city receptacles, but it is a large dollar amount.
- Vice Pres. Del Rosario stated that they have a video clip of some one taking the trash and throwing it around Division Street. No similar reports. Advised to turn the clip over to the police dept.

Executive Director's Report – Bill Powers

- Exec Dir. Powers noted that the Peekskill Farmers Market will have the Guess the Weight of the Giant Pumpkin again on Saturday, October 30 along with Pumpkin Decorating at Pugsley Park in coordination with the City Parks Dept. Because of our sponsorship, the event is free.
- Additionally, at the Farmers Market we will have Vendor Appreciation Day on Saturday, October 10, 2021 and will be supplying all the vendors with free ice cream from the new ice cream shop on Bank Street.
- Exec. Dir. Powers met with Cathy Montaldo this week and we are planning a full scale tree lighting as we had done prior to COVID with live performances on the showmobile and Santa on stage on Saturday, December 4, 2021 at 4pm.
- Working on 2021 Peekskill Makes Me Merry campaign/graphics. Board asked that we do face masks again.
- Exec. Dir. Powers noted that he will be meeting with the budget committee in preparation of presenting a proposed 2022 budget at the November meeting. He asked the Board to forward any new budget ideas/requests to him as soon as possible.
- Exec. Dir. Powers stated that he was going to place funds in the budget to replace the fading banners; Pres. Fassett suggested that we run a competition among the artists to present new artwork for the banners.
- Mr. Powers was asked about any additional investment in social media for the BID and he stated that he expects to have a more robust presence with the Brighter Travel app next year. They have added a new section for events.

BID Member Public Comment –

- There were no BID Member comments.

Other business -

- Pres. Fassett notified the board that the Paramount has invited anyone to attend on October 9, 2021 at 8pm a performance of Motherland, free tickets.
- The I2HeartU Music Festival by Brian Orsi has been moved to Ether Street from Division Street and is down to one day from two days—on October 9 as well.

- There is special board meeting on October 19, 2021 at 6pm to vote on the changes to the BID By-Laws.
- Board Member D'Amico stated that word has gotten out that his place is not a place to hang out, but he noted that there are still issues on South Street. He stated that on Saturday, there was man sleeping in Chuck Newman's doorway, he called the police and they came and moved him along. Pres. Fassett said that the PD is aware and that there are plans to improve the situation. Mr. D'Amico stated he has noticed more of a police presence.
- Vice Pres. Del Rosario reported a person by M&T Bank asking for money.
- Vice Pres. Del Rosario asked if the October 19 2021 meeting could be sent out an in invitation.
- Owners of Ramanesque are starting to move in furniture into a new space on Division Street which will be an American BBQ restaurant and they should be opening soon. She also stated that there is activity at the Brazilian restaurant (old Ruben's location). There is no activity at the Kurzhal's location. She also stated that she spoke with a consultant hired by Mr. Paglia to help reopen the Division Street Grill and that a baker is renting the rear section of the building. The consultant also stated the he's helping to open up the bank Street building and Hugo's.
- Board Member Claxton received an email from a guitar builder friend from Ossining who is looking for space; he was referred to Mr. Rudikoff.

Adjournment – Motion by Sec. Joseph to adjourn, seconded by Vice Pres. Del Rosario, all in favor at 7:15pm.