



Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 7, 2022 @ 6:00pm
Via ZOOM

Present: President Cynthia Del Rosario, Board Members Ivy Fairchild, Monique Brideau, Drew Claxton, Larry D'Amico, Frank Vasquez, Brian Fassett, Matthew Rudikoff, LaFern Joseph and Matthew Alexander and Executive Director Bill Powers. **Absent:** David Kaminsky, Monique Michaels

BID Members present: Mary Foster, Scarlett Antonia.

Guests: Marie Inserra, CAC

- **Call June 7, 2022 Board of Directors meeting to order** – Pres. Del Rosario called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.
- **BID Member Public Comment** – There were no comments.
- **Presentation – Peekskill Herald** – Regina Clarkin, Editor/Publisher Peekskill Herald and Katrina Mullaney, Digital Media Manager. They are no longer printing the paper, but presenting it digitally, launched in 2019. It was run as a blog and used a kick starter campaign to fund it and became a non-profit about a year ago. Ms. Clarkin said she cares deeply about Peekskill and wants to see the city grow and thrive. Board Members: Kathy Daley, Eric Johansen, Sol Miranda, John Smith, Joe Squillante, Annie Strong. There is no subscriber fee. The paper survives on revenue from a membership component fee, sponsorship opportunities, and grants from foundations. “Viewership” is growing 5-6% per month, month over month. Engagement rates are high. They have exclusive stories. Proposal is to have a small business of the week feature, across all channels. Would give the BID high visibility across all their platforms. 11Am on Monday is a sweet spot for distribution. There would also be a monthly recap email for top stories. They have a 70% open rate. They are asking for a \$1,000 a month sponsorship level. Ms. Clarkin indicated that she had had some preliminary conversations with Exec. Dir. Powers and he suggested the Herald find a corporate sponsor to work with the BID. Their membership is at 300 with a 70% open; they get an email when ever the Herald sends or posts something. Lowest membership is \$25 per year. Sustaining members pay between \$25 to \$1,200. Need a minimum of a 3 month commitment and the BID would determine which 12 businesses are profiled. Exec. Dir. Powers suggested the BID Board not be the ones to select those businesses. Question asked about highlighting artists, and Ms. Clarkin said she wants to highlight artists as well. Exec. Dir. Powers stated that there could be some synergy with Brighter Travel, per Councilman Fassett's suggestion. Ms. Clarkin would like to see some video component in the future. He added that he thought the \$12,000 year-long request was a little too much for a BID with \$100,000 budget, which is why he suggested the BID would need to partner with the Herald to find a corporate sponsor. Ms. Clarkin said she would get back in touch with the BID as soon as she can secure a sponsor. Pres. Del Rosario will ask Ms. Clarkin to send her presentation so it can be shared with the board again.
- **Streetsweeper Proposal** – City Manager Alexander explained that the streetsweeper proposal is to share resources between the BID and the City to help keep the streets free of pedestrian litter and he also noted that there are some issues with residents/businesses using the city trash cans for their own trash and that landscaping maintenance can be improved. The plan would have one city worker shared to take care of key areas in the downtown with the city paying for half the persons salary and the BID the other half. He also hopes the person can re-educate downtown residents and businesses on the use of the pitching cans. He would also like to put the person in a T shirt or other uniform so that visitors can ask general information

questions. He stated that it would cost the BID between \$40-45K to participate and noted that it is a large sum of money, but he thought the BID could generate sponsors to help cover the costs. Pres. Del Rosario corrected the dollar amounts, saying that the BID was originally asked for \$20-25K. Exec. Dir Powers stated that the downtown always had a streetsweeper program going back 30 years, originally under the chamber; the city gave the chamber funds to staff and manage the program with one or two people picking up street litter. The chamber dropped the program and the BID picked it up, using the KEON center and the expenses were covered by funds from the BID, the city and Wheelabrator. Exec. Dir. Powers would like to see the program on a pilot basis for the next 3 to 4 months while we try to secure additional funding from WinWaste or other sponsors. Pres. Del Rosario also asked if the PIDA could pitch in some funds. Councilman Fassett stated that he liked the idea of a cleaner-ambassador but that it's a large outlay of BID funds without a corporate sponsor. Board Member Rudikoff stated that the ambassador component would make it more supportable by the IDA because that's an economic development function. Marie Inserra asked if the city could produce educational PSAs about littering and share that with the school children. Board Member Fairchild asked if it's reasonable to expect the person to do both cleaning and be an ambassador and she asked where does the \$20-\$25K fit into the BID budget. City Manager Alexander has one in mind and he thinks the person could handle both roles and that the person should meet with the BID; Exec. Dir. Powers asked the Board to approve a \$5K contribution to the program to get it started for the summer. Motion was made by Sec. Claxton, seconded by Vice Pres. Joseph, to contribute \$5K from the BID's reserve fund of \$65,000 for the next three months to the streetsweeping program. All in favor except City Manager Alexander who abstained.

- **Presentation – Conservation Advisory Committee** – Marie Inserra gave an overview of the CAC's mission and outlined its goals and accomplishments. The CAC is moving food scrap recycling and composting to a top priority and they may be able to accomplish this at the farmers market, which we will help coordinate, among other spots in the city. If CAC gets the program started it could reduce the waste stream by about 24%. The CAC is also hoping to get a ban on all plastics at events at the riverfront and place more trees in the downtown. The CAC will be attending the farmers market over the next few months to educate the public on the CAC-focused issues.
- **Approval of May 3, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes** – This was postponed to next month.
- **Cinco De Mayo Update** – Pres. Del Rosario reported that Cinco De Mayo was rained out and has been moved to June 11, 2022.
- **July Music Festival/October Harvest Festival** – Pres. Del Rosario reported that the Peekskill Music Festival is scheduled for Saturday, July 23, 2022 and the Harvest Festival for Saturday, October 22, 2022. Added that she wants the artists from the PAA to be involved; her assistant has sent out the invitations to vend to prospective vendors. Sec. Claxton organized a terrific lineup, with five bands on the Main Stage and two on Esther Street for the July event including rock/funk to Latin jazz. There was a lengthy discussion about getting event cancellation insurance. Exec. Dir. Powers will check into event cancellation insurance and if it's under \$2K we should get it, but he warned that it's easy to get, but not easy to collect if the event is canceled. Some of the bands don't want to play here if the event is canceled because of rain. Sec. Joseph made a motion to purchase event cancellation for up to \$2,000 and to remove the rain cancellation clause in the performer contracts, seconded by Sec. Claxton, all in favor.

- **Pugsley Park Concerts** – Sec. Claxton reported that the Pugsley Park entertainment is lined up, starting with Todd Lanagan in June and Ray Blue in July.
- **Art Projects for 2022 @ Former Tubman Statue Site** – Monique Michaels was absent but she communicated with Exec. Dir. Powers to discuss insurance; he stated that he spoke with the insurance carrier and they suggested the artists get their own insurance and that the BID board could help cover that cost up to a certain point.
- **City of Peekskill Update** –
 1. Councilman Fassett wished everyone a happy pride month.
 2. He announced the the \$630,000 DRI revitalization fund applications are open and businesses and property owners are eligible within the DRI area for capital improvements that must remain with the property. He mentioned some of the guidelines that have to be followed. Deadline is July 20, 2022 at 3pm.
 3. The city adopted the Fire Safety and Property Maintenance law, which is a huge update to the city code. Property owners should read the code.
 4. The city hired a team to oversee the Depew Park renovations through SAM Grant money.
 5. The City has asked two developers to host public information sessions, one for railroad Avenue aka the Ginsburg Development Project and 1070 Lower South Street, a 3 building property to allow CHHOP to move into one of them; the second is a storage facility; the third building is open to discussion.
 6. The city has introduced a Military Tribute Banner Program, you can purchase a banner to honor a family member's military service for about \$250.00, probably starting on Washington Street.
 7. Fees for renting the neighborhood center (in the library) have been adjusted to make it more affordable for civic and non-profit groups to use the room.
 8. The city is upgrading the software for permit parking.
 9. The city is looking to start sidewalk upgrades on Main Street on the north side.
 10. Events: Cinco De Mayo approved to move to this weekend; June 18 is Juneteenth at Depew Park; Peekskill Pride event is June 25 in Pugsley Park. The Fourth of July Parade will be held on July 1, 2022, ending at the riverfront with a laser light show. Fireworks are on July 3, concert on July 4.
- **Artist District Update** – Board Member Brideau gave an update on Open Studios, which was successful. The signage was great, the brochure was great. Board member D'Amico said there were less people but the flow was steady and those on the tour were very interested and came from Connecticut, Upstate NY, NYC and elsewhere. Artists reported sales. He said Open Studios was a really successful event. Sec. Claxton said it was extremely successful and stated the Open Studios is one of the Beanrunner's best days for business. Annabella's did well. The PAA did a lot of work to make the event successful. Sec. Claxton suggested Board Member Brideau should do a PSA on how to open their live/work spaces to the public. The Poetry and Music event is scheduled for this weekend. The Parks permit does not allow for a rain date and Sec. Claxton suggested the BID could advocate for a rain date as part of the permit. Exec. Dir.

Powers said he would add the rain date discussion to the BID's meeting with the city manager and suggested the PAA speak with Cathy Montaldo in the meantime to see if it can get a rain date. Lastly, Board Member Brideau stated that she had not yet been included on the website as a board member. Exec. Dir. Powers said he would take care of the listing. Board Member Brideau also stated that the intersection between Nelson and Main is very dangerous and maybe street art could help slow traffic. City Manager Alexander stated that he had taken a walk with Peekskill Walks and the police and DPW to see how they could improve pedestrian safety at some of the downtown intersections. He mentioned that the city is trying to get the state DOT to allow trucks on the Bear Mountain State Parkway and keep them out of downtown.

- **Economic Development Update** – Board Member Rudikoff stated several of the RFPs and the public arts projects are progressing including a video on the project. Construction is ready to start on Fleishman's Pier and the city is getting strong interest from cruise operators with 240 long vessels. Planned opening in Fall of 2023. Also working on eco development content for the city website. Also working with businesses looking to open in Peekskill and others want to expand. Also proceeding with changing the DPW location that will help open lower South Street locations. He is writing the RFPs for the marketing, branding, wayfinding and social media components.
- **Executive Director's Report** – Bill Powers
 1. Farmers Market Opened on Saturday, he thanked the board members who attended. Great turnout, bunch of new vendors. Library collected several hundred signature for their budget, and it was noted that more than half the people who attend the market are not from Peekskill.
 2. Exec. Dir. Powers gathered up dated quotes to re-do the banners downtown and noted that there increased costs and supply chain issues, but the board had approved up to \$7,500; he noted that he has received price quotes ranging from \$6,600 to \$8,500. Enormous Creative donated their creative time. As such, we will be awarding the banner replacement program to the vendor who came in at \$6,600. We should have the banners in three weeks and Exec. Dir. Powers will coordinate installation with the DPW. He is also participating in a panel discussion on how communities are coming out the pandemic.
 3. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that he is in Syracuse at the NYCOM conference and Statewide BID Directors' Conference and that he will be joining a tour of Downtown Syracuse to see how the DRI grant Syracuse received a few years back is progressing. He was asked to host a rapid table round table on events after COVID.
- **BID Member Public Comment** – BID Member Mary Foster reminded the board on a public hearing concerning 823 South Street, the empty lot next to Wesley Hall. Board Member D'Amico said the project is 24 to 27 units of residential plus commercial storefronts. The developers are looking for a variance for parking. She said she appreciates the BID's past support, and may come back to the BID for funding to replace books that are being stolen out of the childrens' library. They are looking at grants to install proper security and metal strips into books.
- **Adjournment** – Board Member Rudikoff made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Fassett, all in favor at 8:21pm.