

Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 3, 2022 @ 6:00pm
Via ZOOM

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

BID Members present: Mary Foster, Scarlett Antonia; Arne Paglia joined the call in progress.

Guests: Marie Inserra, Conservation Advisory Board; Talia Crawford (Tri-State Transportation Campaign) and David Perlmutter (VIA), Naomi Klein, (Westchester County Transportation-Bee Line Bus) Michel Delafontaine (Sustainable Westchester).

Call May 3, 2022 Board of Directors meeting to order – Board Pres. Del Rosario called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

● **BID Member Public Comment** – There were none.

● **Conservation Advisory Board** – Marie Inserra introduced herself and noted that the CAC was reaching out to other organizations and boards and that she is the CAC's liaison to the BID.

● **Electric On-Demand Transit Service Presentation** - Talia Crawford, Tri-State Transportation Campaign introduced her team, David Perlmutter (VIA), Naomi Klein, (Westchester County Transportation-Bee Line Bus) Michel Delafontaine (Sustainable Westchester), and presented their plans to apply for a NYSEDA Clean Transportation Prize grant to introduce an all electric on demand transportation service with flexible stops in Peekskill. They have already received a phase 1 grant, and they are now working on a phase 2 grant which, if they get the grant, it would be about \$7 million over three years. There are some Bee Lines lines in the Peekskill area, but there isn't the population densities seen in other cities and in Southern Westchester. There is however, enough criteria in place to have an on-demand service. Service would cover most of Peekskill, Cortlandt and Montrose, Verplank and Buchanan. Would link destinations like downtown, the hospital, public recreation spots, train stations and grocery stores. All the vehicles used in the fleet will all be all electric, which will be one of the first on the country. There will be lower emissions and the charging stations when not being used to charge the fleet would be publicly available. Submission is due in June, announced in the fall, and if awarded, the service would start in early 2023. A planned video overview failed to play, but a link will be provided after the meeting. There will be a smart phone app and call in option to speak to a dispatcher. Currently doing a lot of community engagement in Peekskill. Request for BID to help distribute information about the community survey. Exec. Dir. Powers will distribute and post to the BID's Facebook page. Hours of operation have not been finalized but generally 6am to 8pm is what VIA does elsewhere in the world. May need to be adjusted to accommodate diners at restaurants and Paramount shows. Does not want to displace taxi rides. The service communications are bi-lingual with Spanish language. There is a third party contractor in mind for drivers. There would be four or five vehicles. The BID agreed to have Exec. Dir. Powers send a letter support. The city approved the purchase of a new 24 person bus for seniors, but would like to use it for other things; with this grant, the city has put off that purchase until they see if the grant is approved.

● **Request Approval of April 5, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes** – Drew Claxton made a motion to accept the April 5, 2022 meeting minutes, seconded by Board Member Fassett, all in favor, except Sec. Claxton

and Board Member Vasquez who abstained because they were not present for the meeting.

● **Update of 2022 Election Run Off** – Pres. Del Rosario indicated that the board had asked for information from both individuals who were tied in the election for the last property owner seat; she stated that she had sent a letter out to both candidates requesting biographical information. She had not heard back from either candidate; she sent a second email requesting same and did not hear from either one. Board Member Kaminsky stated that we should reach out again and if we do not hear from them, their candidacies will be void and neither will be allowed to serve. Board Member Vasquez agreed. Pres. Del Rosario asked if the BID were to give each candidate another week to respond and then if one or both did not supply the information, then those who did not respond will have their candidacy voided. Sec. Claxton asked if the BID could reach out by phone to each one to make sure they are getting the BID email requests. Pres. Del Rosario said she would call and email each. She also stated that the BID should have a plan B should neither candidate submit any information, to which Councilman Fassett stated the BID has a plan B and that would be for the board to appoint some one to fill the vacant seat. BID Member Paglia asked to speak and he was granted time to address the board. He asked what had happened to the election committee, and he stated that the email request which he acknowledged receiving from the Board President, requested he provide a resume, which he stated he doesn't have to provide. He also questioned why he was being asked to determine which property address was running to represent when he stated that he ran for 26 North Division Street. He asked if the city advised the board of their compliance with city standards as related to the state comptrollers office. He stated that there is an election committee, there was a tie, and the election committee should continue. He claims the president took over the process and doesn't understand why members of the board have been asked to opine on the next steps. There should be no requirement for a resume, no requirement to select an address. He stated that he, Rob Johnson were tied, along with Peter Tuite, who withdrew his name; he questioned why Tina Bongar was disqualified. Pres. Del Rosario stated that the BID is still looking into those requirements. She stated that there is no mechanism in the bylaws for determining processes for a runoff election and that the board wanted to find away to move forward. Sec. Claxton stated that it's not unusual for candidates for office to supply a bio or resume, Mr. Paglia disagreed.

● **Art Projects for 2022 @ Former Tubman Statue Site** – Board Member Michaels asked to delay her report until later in the meeting.

● **July Music Festival/October Harvest Festival** – Pres. Del Rosario announced that the permits for both events (Saturday July 23, 2022 and October 22, 2022 respectively) have been submitted to the city council; they were discussed at last night's council meeting, and will be voted upon at next week's council meeting. Exec. Dir. Powers will be sending out the updated sponsor and vendor forms based on the approved dates and will post to the BID website.

● **Cinco De Mayo Update** – Pres. Del Rosario stated that the city approved the event and that Mr. Alvarez has been planning and booking musical performers. The event is moving forward.

● **Pugsley Park Concerts** – Sec. Claxton stated that the Dulcetones will appear in June and the July date is Ray Blue. She is waiting to hear back from other performers for August and September.

● **City of Peekskill Update** – Councilman Fassett reported that Mayor McKenzie gave her State of the City Address on April 11, 2022; the DPW blue collar contract has been negotiated and approved and it will take the city through 2026; NYS gave Peekskill a \$3million grant for water system improvements which includes replacing the old 1922 storage tank and valves; the city awarded the Fleishman's Pier bid and it will be ADA accessible along with a larger parking lot and bathrooms; a new senior bus is being purchased; Depew Park is closed on Sunday mornings for bikes; city installed a new bridge over McGreggor Brook at the dog park; the city

awarded Franklin Park resurfacing and repairs bid; Michael Hartman has been appointed the new Assistant Corporation Counsel; Fire and Safety Property Maintenance public hearing to be set which will allow DPW and Fire Dept to do proper building inspections. Councilman Fassett turned it over to City Manager Matt Alexander to discuss parkettes and he stated that there are a lot of regulations that need to be in place for parkettes to continue or new ones added. Parkettes need to be looked at for safety, aesthetics, and economic development and based on best practices.

- **Artist District Update** – Board member Brideau reported that the PAA had its quarterly meeting at Birdsall and it was a good turnout; she promoted BID membership, but some artists were hesitant to list their phone number, or their apt. number. Artists encouraged to bring ideas forward, and some one suggested a gallery space. She suggested a pop up art gallery in vacant spaces. She stated that she was part of a promo video to promote Open Studios weekend and banners are up. Painting, Poetry and Music event had a nice crowd. Second PPM event is scheduled for June 11, 2022. City Manager asked Matt Rudikoff to look into whether DRI funds could be used for setting up a pop up gallery, or if other funds could be used.

- **Economic development Update** – Board Member Rudikoff stated his priorities are retention of existing businesses, attraction of new business, organizing the city's response to economic opportunities as well as planning the DRI activities starting with RFPs for Branding and marketing strategy and way-finding markers and getting in touch with businesses to let them know “we” are here. How do we talk to existing businesses? City Manager Alexander is interested in hearing from the BID and he'll be meeting with Events to Remember to get their input. Pres. Del Rosario stated that she wants to get the BID Board out to meet businesses. City Manager Alexander stated that he would be interested in having some trash collection information in any leave behind. Exec. Powers stated that he has prototypes of a leave behind and an electronic newsletter for the communications committee to review once it's appointed and the meeting scheduled.

- **2022 Audit Report of BID Finances** – City Manager Alexander asked to put off the review of the audit report until next month, but Exec. Dir. Powers noted that the BID is audited every year, the audit for last year has been completed and all documents have been posted to the BID website, and they were distributed to the full board two meetings ago. He added that there were no issues raised in the audit.

- **Request for Funding – Oz Land Event-August 2022** – Scarlett Antonia stated that she plans on having the Oz Land Festival on August 6, 2022 and want to call Peekskill the Emerald City of Hope. Will have vendors, show films, will plan on closing South Street. Wants to encourage people to go into restaurants and stores. Wants to make it an annual event. Scarlett stated that the city fees are totaling \$1,850. A motion was made by Vice Pres. Joseph, seconded by Board Member Kaminsky, all in favor to provide up to \$2,000 in funding to cover city fees.

- **Art Projects for 2022 @ Former Tubman Statue Site** – Board Member Michaels reported that she, Board Members Brideau, D'Amico, Kaminsky, Pres. Del Rosario and Joann Brody. There were a lot of ideas discussed, but we have to work out the insurance options. Decided to do 3 artists a year in a rotation, from a call to Westchester and Putnam County artists; offer funds of up to \$250 for installation and about the same for a stipend. Artwork should be respectful of family values; holding an artist reception; put out some press about the installation; possible commission back to the BID if the artwork is for sale; asked about doing a small submission fee to help cover costs. Exec. Dir. Powers provided an update on insurance, noting that the BID can cover the city through its insurance for the site, but that the artist would need to have insurance if the artwork is damaged and name the city and the BID as co-insureds. Does the BID want to reimburse the artists if they do not have insurance in order for them to get proper insurance? Board Member D'Amico stated that many artists don't have their own insurance. It was suggested Exec. Dir. Powers speak with other BIDs who have done public art and speak with Livia Strauss from MOCA. It was also suggested the BID speak with the city to find out how the current artwork is insured. Pres. Del Rosario asked Board Member D'Amico to reach out to Ms. Strauss and

keep Monique Michaels in the loop. Can artists add insurance to their renters insurance?

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

1. Miss New York Competition 2022 will be coming to Peekskill at the end of May, Memorial Day weekend; they bring about 700 people into the downtown.
2. Farmers Market/Flea Market – Farmers Market starts first Saturday in June; there was a huge crowd at this past weekend's Flea Market. There are still spots available.
3. Solicit 2022 We Are Peekskill/Somos Peekskill participants – Bill asked for guidance on how to proceed.
4. Schedule Communications Committee Meeting - need to schedule a meeting.
5. Request for funding for Executive Director Bill Powers to attend NYCOM and BID Directors Conference in June, not to exceed \$950 for travel, accommodations, conference registration. Board Member Kaminsky made a motion to approve the request for Exec. Dir. Powers to attend the NYCOM Conference, covering up to \$950 for registration, hotel, travel and meals, seconded by Matt Rudikoff, all in favor.

• **BID Member Public Comment** – BID Member Mary Foster was interested in hearing that the BID Board will be reaching out to the business community, noting that the business community is very diverse. BID Member Scarlett Antonia suggested a clear mission statement from the BID would be helpful, and invite new businesses to an upcoming meeting.

• **Adjournment** Vice Pres. Joseph made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Fassett, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.