



Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 4, 2022 @ 6:00pm
Via Zoom

Present: Pres. Cynthia Del Rosario, Vice President LaFern Joseph, Sec. Drew Claxton, Board Members David Kaminsky, Brian Fassett, Monique Brideau, Larry D'Amico, and Ivy Fairchild, and Executive Director Bill Powers.

Absent: Board Members Monique Michaels, Frank Vasquez, Matthew Rudikoff, and Treasurer Matthew Alexander.

Guests: Marie Inserra, CAC

BID Members: Mary Foster, Scarlet Antonia

Call October 4, 2022 Board of Directors meeting to order – President Del Rosario called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

BID Member Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Approval of September 13, 2022 Board of Directors Minutes - Exec. Dir. Powers advised that we do not have the September minutes. Pres. Del Rosario noted that she is looking at some technology to have the minutes transcribed to free up Bill's time to focus on more productive initiatives. She asked the board if anyone has used anything like that to let her know.

Appoint 2022-2023 Election Committee – Pres. Del Rosario asked anyone not running for reelection in 2023 if they wanted to be on the committee to contact her.

Harriett Tubman Statue Committee Report – Sec. Claxton stated that she spoke with Odyssey Wofford. The base price for the new Harriett Tubman statue is \$150K plus the cost (about \$25K) for a customized base. One version was recently installed in Massachusetts. She stated that the committee was planning to meet October 10 to discuss options. She stated that the Woffords offered to help us with fundraising or grants. Councilman Fassett noted that the Wofford seem to have created ornaments and other items for fundraising.

Oz Festival Report – Scarlet Antonia said the Oz Fest was a great success, and wanted to thank the BID for its support. Lots of support from vendors, Arts Westchester, sponsors and the BID. She would like to get more people to go into the businesses and has some ideas for next year. She is planning Oz Fest for September 16, 2023. Needs volunteers. Pres. Del Rosario thanked Scarlett for doing the festival, noting that there was a great vibe and a really fun event. Vice Pres. Joseph noted that quite a few of the festival goers came to the Fern Tree and shopped. Scarlett also wanted to put an idea to have an L. Frank Baum celebration month in May, possibly doing something at the Paramount. Lastly, she also offered her time for the historic committee.

City of Peekskill Update –

- Councilman Fassett noted that the city completed its public hearings to allow for the zoning changes that would allow the new Jan Peek House to move forward at 1070 Lower South Street and into the planning commission.
- A large project has been brought forward for 201 North Division with 125 new apartments and ground floor retail at the corner where RAL plumbing is located. It's a five story building and are looking for a zoning amendment. That was passed to the planning commission.
- The Main Street streetscape project is nearing completion. He noted they kept the old locust tree at Main and North Division in hopes of preserving it. Cellar doors and decorative lighting are still to be installed.
- The city drafted an abandoned shopping cart ordinance, in an effort to stop/reduce abandoned shopping carts from being left around the city. There is a public hearing on this matter October 11, 2022.
- Hydrant flushing started and it will continue through November 11, 2022.
- A new code enforcement agent has been hired.
- The building dept. is getting to the backlog of back flow inspections done.
- Applications for cannabis dispensaries will become available as of November 1. Zoning will deal with time, place and manner. Peekskill would receive 3% of tax revenue on those businesses.
- Budget season has started. The 2023 big ticket items: start filling out some of the open positions including two more DPW workers, two more parks workers, another parking agent. There will be a tax levy of about 1.44% which is under the 2% cap. The fund balance in 2019 was about \$500,000, the fund balance as of today is \$8,900,000. The city is looking at using about \$2.5 million of that surplus.

Pres. Del Rosario thanked Councilman Fassett for following up on issues brought to his attention.

Board Member Kaminsky asked why the budget is so flush with money. Councilman Fassett explained that the city received some pandemic funding and that the city did not replace vacant positions during the pandemic, which led to savings.

Halloween Weekend - John Sharp joined the meeting to talk about connecting Peekskill into one city, connecting the train station and the downtown. He has an idea to do a Halloween Festival. Exurbanist is willing to help build a new website to help promote anything happening in the city for Halloween. The bigger plan is to do a bar crawl up Central Avenue and do a trunk or treat up Central. He admitted that he's coming up with idea late in the game. He has no ask, just wants to get people involved and the conversation going. Pres. Del Rosario said we should all plan for 2023. There was lengthy discussion about other possibilities. Marie Inserra advocated for some sort of jitney service. Sec. Claxton suggested to have the pumpkin carvings from the Rotary event placed throughout the city. BID Member Foster stated that the pumpkins would not last until the last weekend in October and that we may need to recruit others to carve pumpkins but noted that that is a heavy lift.

Good Ideas -

- Pres. Del Rosario noted that Frank Vasquez suggested that the BID do a networking event at Dramatic Hall. She said she wants to start meeting in person with a mixer or get together.

Board Member Ivy Fairchild stated that she is going to help the BID to develop a quarterly electronic newsletter to better communicate with BID members and plans to launch that in the New Year in Spanish and English.

- Board Member Kaminsky came up with some ideas including wanting to do an historical/architectural tour of the downtown. After lengthy conversation, Exec. Dir. Powers said he would send Mr. Kaminsky contacts to him for followup and noted that there was a brochure done similar to what he wants to do in the in 1990s that may just need to be updated. It was suggested that he reach out to John Curran and Frank Gooderre.

Economic Development Update – Board Member Rudikoff was not available for an update due to the holidays.

Artist Update – Board Member Brideau reported that the Poetry, Painting and Music artwork is up at the Bean Runner. She would like to see something similar on a grander scale. Sec. Claxton noted that there will be an exhibit of historic buildings/locations done in quilts. The quilts are currently at the library.

New Chamber Executive Director – Pres. Del Rosario announced that Carol Voisey was appointed the new Executive Director of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce

Executive Director's Report –

- Exec. Dir. Powers noted that if we were to go back to in-person meetings we would need to find a larger location since the chamber conference room is small and has not ventilation. He stated that the BID's renewal required the city to provide space for BID meetings at no cost; he also stated that in order for the BID meetings to be a hybrid—in person and Zoom—would be cost prohibitive. Councilman Fassett stated that he would check on availability of city locations. Several board members stated that COVID is still prevalent but also stated that it is more productive sometimes to meet in person. The Board decided to do one in person meeting per quarter. Sec. Claxton made a motion to conduct monthly board meetings via Zoom and the last meeting per quarter would be in person, seconded by Board Member Fairchild, all in favor. It was later suggested to invite three businesses to come to that meeting and introduce themselves.
- **Halloween Decorating** – To be held at Pugsley Park on Saturday, October 29 from 11am to 1pm. The Guess the Weight of the Giant Pumpkin will be at the Farmers Market all day; winner gets a \$100 gift card.
- **Peekskill Makes Me Merry** – Designs for the 2022 buttons are going to be distributed to the board for approval.
- **2023 Budget** – Will present the 2023 at next month's meeting for approval; budget has to be approved and forwarded to the city in November to be included in the City's Budget. He suggested that we increase the supported events line and that the Evens Committee should review requests for funding and come back with a recommendation to the full board after having reviewed the request. He also suggested we set aside funds to produce the quarterly newsletter. Funding for bollards on Bank Street would have to be pulled from the budget reserves.
- **Leave Behind** – Exec. Dir. Powers has been working on a leave behind brochure about the BID.

- **One to Love You Event** – is Saturday and Sunday on Esther Street. The event at the paramount was canceled for Sunday night so there will not be any interference with the Paramount performance.

- **BID Member Public Comment** – Mary Foster noted that Trevor Noble who did the tourist app has joined the library board in hopes that he can improve the library's social media and bring traction to library programs. Sarah Scott is the history librarian and she can help with research.

Marie Inserra asked if the CAC could have a table for more weeks at the Farmers Market. Exec. Dir. Powers said he would find out, but noted that many non-profits want to attend. She also asked if the BID would support legislation to reduce and eliminate plastics; the BID is not a position to take on such an issue. We could share any information that the CAC has available.

- **Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn by Sec. Claxton, seconded by Vice Pres. Joseph, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at about 7:25pm.