Peekskill Business Improvement District
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 13, 2022 @ 6:00pm
Via Zoom

Present: Cynthia Del Rosario, Vice President LaFern Joseph, Sec. Drew Claxton, Board Members Frank Vasquez, David Kaminsky, Brian Fassett, Monique Brideau, Ivy Fairchild, and Executive Director Bill Powers. Board Member Matthew Rudikoff joined the meeting in progress.
Absent: Board Members Monique Michaels and Treasurer Matthew Alexander.
Guests: Chereese Jervis Hill
BID Members: Mary Foster, Scarlet Antonia
Others attending: Eileen Sullivan

Call September 13, 2022 Board of Directors meeting to order – President Del Rosario called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

BID Member Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Approval of August 3, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes – Sec. Claxton made a notion for the board to approve the August 3, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes, seconded by Councilman Fassett, all in favor except Sec. Claxton who abstained because she did not attend the meeting.

Proposal to Increase BID Member Database – Chereese Jervis Hill
Requested by Executive Director to boost BID engagement; two ETR staff members, one who is Spanish speaking, to go door to door to encourage businesses to register to become BID members. Plan is to collect important data/information with an Ipad onsite or get a business cards and have staff input it. Three hours of outreach and one hour of administrative work per session at a cost of $589 per “session.”

Board Members Matthew Rudikoff and Ivy Fairchild joined the meeting.

BID will also create a leave behind pamphlet. We are planning to use a QR Code that takes the business right to the registration page on the BID website. Board Member Claxton pointed out that we have many retailers on second floors because they can't afford first floor commercial space. There is a list of vacant storefront. There was some discussion about the expense associated with the project brought up by Board Member Fairchild, but in the end, the Board approved up to four sessions at $589 per session. Board Member Fassett suggested that we move forward, call it a pilot program, and cap it, and review the project's status before adding more funding to the project. Vice Pres. Joseph made a motion to cap the project at $3,000 and four sessions, seconded by Councilman Fassett, all in favor, Board Member Fairchild abstained.

Board Member D'Amico joined the meeting.

Proposal for Holiday Market in Conjunction with Tree Lighting – Sue Sheridan initially met with Pres. Del Rosario and Councilman Fassett about adding a holiday market to the tree lighting, but after

consideration, it was determined that there was not enough time to pull it together. Pres. Del Rosario encouraged the board to come up with good ideas and how they could be implemented. She also noted that she has a an extremely busy travel schedule for her own business trough December. She tasked the board with coming up with at least one idea to be considered for 2023.

There was discussion about compiling a list of events in the downtown in one location. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that any BID member can post their events on the BID calendar on the BID website and the city has a volunteer who solicits and then posts event flyers in the two informational kiosks downtown.

Appoint Harriett Tubman Statue Committee – Sec. Claxton stated that there is no formal committee for the statue yet. She noted that the original creator of the statue is producing another version for municipalities to purchase and it would create in essence a trailway, linking the statues together in various states. She stated that other communities use statues to mark African American history. Peekskill could recognize Hawley Green, the Hallenback Brothers or Hayward Burns, among other prominent local African Americans. She'd like to see a larger African American trail internally in Peekskill and she stated that she would help to fundraise for it. Councilman Fassett expressed support for doing an African American History tour in the downtown. Pres. Del Rosario asked the board to reach out to Sec. Claxton if they would like to join her committee. Board Members Rudikoff, D'Amico, Fassett, and Joseph all volunteered to be on the committee. Board Member D'Amico said there is a part of the DRI that starts the art trail from the riverfront to Downtown that has a set of images of the abolitionists. There will also be a series of quotations painted on the sidewalk going up Central Avenue along with a few sculptures and a mural. There will be a large art piece on the retaining wall on Central, representative fabrics of the diversity of Peekskill. A representative artwork of an image of Harriet Tubman may be placed on The Fern Tree building. RFPs will be going out soon.

City of Peekskill Update – Councilman Fassett provided an update on city initiatives including:

1. Connectivity and City Hub and the Monument/Pugsley Park Upgrades, which have local committees and that work has begun.
2. Peekskill Arts Center, originally slated for the Workers Comp building, then inside the Paramount, is now being considered for the old Ford Piano building. Renderings are done but not yet released.
3. Main Street sidewalk improvements are ongoing and are happening quickly from Nelson to North Division.
4. The city manager has put together a quality of life committee to address QOL issues throughout the city, but many are focused in the downtown. Police, DPW, Corp Counsel meet weekly.
5. New initiative of pickup trash on the streets and DPW picked up 83 barrels of trash along Highland Avenue. Looking at 2 DPW staffers doing this as their job.
6. City issued about 40 tickets to address such things as double parking.
7. Code enforcement and police have been working together and closed down three illegal businesses. Noise complaints and public intoxication incidents are also being attended to.
8. City is working to fill a new role at city hall with a sustainability coordinator and to hire another code enforcement office to fill out the staff in that department.
9. City has had two public hearings, one on 1070 Lower South Street for transitional housing (Jan Peek House) and one about the Ginsburg Development Project on Railroad Avenue.

Councilman Fassett encouraged the board to watch both public hearings because there were many engaged citizens expressing their opinions and it was great.

10. There will be another public hearing at 630 Washington Street, a new full scale supermarket by the owners of La Placita through a NYS Restore Grant that the city is supporting.

Pres. Del Rosario thanked Councilman Fassett and the Council for handling the quality of life issues and cited some specific examples.

Economic Development Update – Board Member Rudikoff noted that he is generating databases like vacant storefronts, all one acre+ sites in the city, and a vacant land database. He worked with the county GIS to develop a database of developable land and to merge some data. He also has been working on the marketing/branding/wayfinding signage/social media RFP from the DRI--$500K. There is also another DRI project on offering free broadband to some of the downtown and adjacent housing units. Request has been received by the IDA for the creation of a video following the Enlighten Peekskill art initiative. Also aiding businesses who want to apply for the cannabis dispensary licenses. He has also been responding to final questions about the Kitchen Incubator and helping to bring cruise lines to Fleishman's Pier. IDA also has funds for workforce development.

Artist Update – Board Member Brideau said she was excited to see the positive NY Times article on Peekskill and hoped it would generate more applications for the Certified Artist program; HV MOCA is having their first in-person show since the pandemic started on Saturday from 3-5pm; Bean Runner is hosting a gallery of the artwork generated from the Painting, Poetry and Music Series the BID helped sponsor; opening from 3pm-5pm on September 24; Artist Christine Milton is showing at WCC from September through December—her reception is on September 27 from 6pm-8pm.

Executive Director's Report –

- Exec. Dir. Powers noted that he has been appointed to the Historic Hudson River Towns Board of Directors representing Peekskill; he is working on updating the HHRT website information about the City of Peekskill. He noted that he and Board Member Rudikoff met with the new Executive Director of HHRT.

- He further noted that the farmers market is hosting a contest to guess the weight of the giant pumpkin on Saturday October 29 and the BID is sponsoring the pumpkin decorating at Pugsley Park the same day.

- He noted that the annual tree lighting is scheduled for Saturday December 3 at 4pm, and we will have live performances again.

2023 Peekskill Festivals – Pres. Del Rosario wants to establish a committee to work on special events like the music festival and harvest festival. We need to establish and pick dates sooner rather than later. Please send an email to Pres. Del Rosario if you are interested in helping.

Update on Board Vacancy – Pres. Del Rosario reminded the board that we had a tie for the last board seat, and noted that with the next election fast approaching, it was decided by the the Executive

Board that we should wait until the next election to fill that seat. She noted that the two candidates have not attended recent meetings. The next election cycle begins January 2, 2023. Board Member Claxton made a motion to fill the open board seat at the next election, seconded by Vice Pres. Joseph. All in favor.

BID Member Public Comment –

- BID Member Foster pointed out that there a number of events that are not on the BID calendar and Exec. Dir. Powers stated that it was up to the event organizers to submit events to the calendar. It was suggested that we communicate the availability of the BID calendar to BID members. But it was acknowledged that getting all the info in one spot and communicating to people who don't know about these events is the issue. Exec. Dir. Powers noted that when he sees an event shared on Facebook in the downtown, he shares it on the BID Facebook page. BID Member Foster suggested working with Bruce Apar from the River Journal and Regina Clarkin from the Herald.
- BID Member Foster stated the hanging flower baskets look wonderful downtown, adding that the collaboration between the BID and the City is wonderful. Sec. Claxton said the are "awesome."
- Eileen Sullivan who used to live in Peekskill and now lives in Dutchess County, is a member of WJCS behavioral health location in Peekskill. They are now a certified community behavioral health clinic, offering wrap around services, and she stated that "we are looking to connect with more of the community in Peekskill to help alleviate some of the quality of life issues." She stated that she is a member of the board, the consumer advisory board, in one of the sub committees in the Peekskill location and working with the board there; she stated "that's my position here." She also stated that she would be happy to work with the historic committee but that the meetings would have to be virtual. Pres. Del Rosario asked Ms. Sullivan to send links to WJCS and that she would pass that info onto the board.
- **Adjournment -** Councilman Fassett made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Vice Pres. Joseph, all in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.