

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Board of Directors Meeting

Zoom

Friday, November 19, 2021 – 9:00 AM

Present: Matt Callahan, Sarah Caciola, Marie Gavazzi, Monica Kurzejeski, Dylan Turek, Dan Frament, Kerry Fagan, Chris Nolin, Kim Fredericks

Staff: Geoff Brault

Absent: Dave Gardell, Jeff Mirel, Genika Blandshaw, Seamus Donnelly, Kate Manley, Dan Yamin, Vito Ciccarelli

MINUTES

· Call to Order at 9:04am

Matt Callahan

President's Report

Matt Callahan

- Matt, Geoff, and Matt Antolowitz from Dalle Accounting have started on the 2022 budget; BID board members should give thought to the direction to go with the organization. Geoff has been meeting with members and getting feedback; will need the board to help shape the future of the BID.

Treasurer's Report

Geoff Brault/Matt Antolowitz

- Update provided on the financial status of the organization; they are figuring out how to fund the BID going forward. Geoff states they are working off "sound financial footing." Current reports indicate \$1200 in advertising spending which is representative of the current tote bag promotion with Troy Cloth and Paper; and a \$300 payment made for multi-channel marketing campaign. \$4,000 line item for beautification is for 66 planters in the district and kissing balls placed in monument square. Geoff states the "bottom line remains strong."
- BID received \$150,000 from the city for the tax assessment at the end of October; this amount is up slightly from years past. Monica confirmed the BID gets paid when the city receives the payments. BID can expect \$165,000 in tax assessment funds in 2022 (up \$15,000.)
- Payroll line item is under budget by \$43,000 due to the 3 months without a full-time executive director salary expense. Outside contract services line item represents payments to Katie Hammon after she left her position as executive director. Rent is on track; phone, internet and utilities expenses are zero because these items are included in the monthly rent payment.

Executive Director's Report

Geoff Brault

- Ringing of the Bells – Holiday kick-off event planned for Tuesday, November 23, 2021, at Noon on River Street. Will be attended by the Mayor, Congressman Paul Tonko, Kate Manley of the Chamber, representatives from Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway, and the Hart Cluett Museum, along with the CDTA trolley which will be decorated for the event.

- Holiday campaign for Shop Dine Stroll – BID will spend only \$2,500 for a \$10,000 campaign thanks to sponsors including Pioneer Bank, CDTA, Chamber of Commerce, and Honest Weight Food Co-Op. Snow globe graphic designed by Engine 7 Designs; tote bags being distributed on Small Business Saturday, American Express has provided swag for SBS (albeit much smaller than in previous years) and there will be 300,000 digital impressions made.
- Fully decorated CDTA Trolley will be parked in 4 locations: River Street across from Rice Building on 11/27; Monument Square on 12/5; 3rd Street & Broadway on 12/11; and nearby the NEWS Apartments on 12/18. Media coverage of the trolley is anticipated.
- Chromoscope Videos – There are currently 2 videos in production: Health, Wellness, & Beauty video is having the final edits completed; and filming has started on the walking tour of downtown; videos will be finalized soon.

Board Business

- 2022 Budget Planning – BID projects a 2022 Tax Assessment of \$165,000 and 2022 staff expense of \$180,000 representative of Geoff, Joyce, Trevor, and one additional part time staffer at minimum wage. After projected operational expenses, this results in a deficit of \$88,665, which includes minimum wage adjustments and bringing Joyce up to a non-exempt salary threshold (equivalent to a 3.5% cost-of-living raise.) Geoff would like to hire a third full time staff member but realizes it may be a challenge.
 - Noted “public benefits spending” of \$26,800 representative of marketing, beautification, and print projects, but board members pointed out that everything the BID accomplishes provides a public benefit.
 - Past revenue was generated from events and their sponsorships. It was noted that Geoff’s skill set is different from Katie’s skill set. BID has been focused on events in the past, but it should consider a different direction. Question raised regarding how time would be spent if time is freed up by events; and answered: by figuring out how to fill the deficit with other opportunities such as streetscape projects, pop-up performances on the street, and “stroll-like” events.
 - Geoff was thanked for his “brave and honest approach to a difficult situation” in reference to the budget planning. It was mentioned that this deficit is an “income issue” and that we must look at sustainable ways to grow the income; to consider what the expectation is from the community. Concluded that there may be an opportunity to pivot our approach. Consider what activities can be done to raise funds and provide the public benefits the community is expecting. Suggestion was made to have the city help bolster the organization to give the BID the ability to support its functions in the short-term. Suggestion made to have Dylan meet with Kate and Tony to access resources from the city.
 - Recommendation made for board members to start thinking about the future of the BID, suggesting this may be an opportunity to pivot, and to change what the organization does to meet the needs of the community. Suggestion made to consider a capital campaign; and define first what the benefit will be to the community. Recommendation received to set up a committee to determine how to move the organization forward; start with a select group of board members, and then consider including members of the local community. Community members named: James at the Whiskey Pickle, Jinah from Sunhees, and Charlotte from Bard & Baker.
- Barker Park & Downtown Quality of Life Update - Recent meetings held regarding problems at Barker Park and what the BID’s role is to try to address these issues and how to improve the quality of life in downtown. Concerns were raised regarding unstable individuals in the city with an increase in panhandlers and individuals with mental health issues who are not getting proper support and treatment due to a lack of resources.

Standing / Special Committee Reports

Matt Callahan/Sarah Caciola

- Governance Committee - Meeting held at the end of October; minutes were sent under separate cover. List of candidates determined for open seats (2 Class A and 1 Class C.) Follow up calls are being made; formal recommendations to be made in December to appoint the open seats; planning for 2022 election in May. Committee is interested in looking into board member's engagement and commitment moving into 2022.
- Outreach Committee – Committee has met a few times with Geoff; reconsidering the direction of the Ambassador Program. Committee is looking to find ways for others to be involved. Will be discussing further at future meetings.
- Beautification Committee – This committee has been brought back; is comprised of 7 people working to identify projects and disburse beautification funds appropriately. Thank you to Marie for helping to bring back the committee; still room for others to join if anyone would like to help.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:13am
BID Board Minutes 11/19/2021