



DOWNTOWN ALBANY
Business Improvement District

**Downtown Albany Business Improvement District
Board of Directors' Meeting
March 4, 2020
BID Conference Room**

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Georgette Steffens
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Daniel Fariello
PRESIDENT

Pamela Nichols
VICE-PRESIDENT

Frank O'Connor, III
TREASURER

David Sarraf
SECRETARY

ATTENDANCE:

Daniel Fariello
David Sarraf
Leola Edelin
Lena Hart
Hon. Darius Shahinfar

ABSENT:

Frank O'Connor
Louis Bannister
Mohamed Hemmid
Chris Pratt
Lucas Rogers
Tyler Wrightson

STAFF PRESENT:

Georgette Steffens
Kate Medhus
Rebecca Hughes
Jason Bonafide
Don Wilson

ON THE PHONE:

Pamela Nichols
Lisa Reddy Farrell
Elizabeth Young Jojo
Tracy Metzger

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Board President Daniel Fariello at 4:37 PM.

Mr. Fariello calls for a motion to approve the January 2020 Board Minutes | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Mr. Sarraf seconds | All approve.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Audit Committee

Mr. Fariello noted that the Executive Committee recommends Mr. Hemmid to chair the Audit Committee due to his extensive experience with complex operations budgets in the hotels he manages. The Executive Committee recommends Mr. Shahinfar to serve on this committee and notes that there is still a need for one or two more members.

Mr. Fariello calls for a motion to officially approve the aforementioned committee appointments for a term of one year | Ms. Metzger motions | Ms. Edelin seconds | All Approve.

County Representative

Mr. Fariello noted that Matt Cannon no longer works for the County of Albany and that the County Executive has appointed Lucas Rogers, policy analyst, to be his new representative on the Board. Mr. Rogers will join in on the next Board Meeting and will be meeting with Ms. Steffens before that in order to get a greater understanding of our organization.

Annual Meeting

Mr. Fariello noted that the official date for the BID's Annual Meeting will be Thursday, June 18, 2020 at the Kenmore Ballroom. Ms. Medhus sent out calendar invites to the entire Board earlier this week. An outline for sponsorship opportunities will be emailed to the Board. Mr. Fariello encouraged all Board members and/or their companies to become sponsors of the event, noting sponsorship opportunities are included in their Board packets.

Updated Meeting Dates

Mr. Fariello stated that because the Annual Meeting was moved to June 18th, the Spring Board Meeting dates need to be moved as well. The April Board Meeting date has been moved up one week to Wednesday, April 22nd and the June Board Meeting has been up to Wednesday, May 20th. There will be a break for summer after the Annual Meeting. Ms. Medhus sent updated calendar invites to everyone.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Funding Requests

Ms. Steffens noted that the Budget & Finance Committee recommends the following funding requests:

- SUNY movie night in partnership with Christ's Church on July 11th. Last year was the first year and it had our largest attendance for an outdoor movie to date with 350 people in attendance. Staff would like to do it again this year and then plans to add it to the annual budget. The total cost is \$1,200.
- Tree planting for Arbor Day. The pilot program was in 2018 with the planting of 16 trees. Last year 10 trees were planted. The City Forrester will remove any bad trees and the BID would replace them. Staff has identified 9 trees for replacement this year; 5 on S. Pearl St and 4 on upper Madison Ave. The trees that were planted in past years are doing well. The long-term vision for this project is to eventually replace trees on lower Broadway and lower Madison as well. The total cost for the program is \$3,500.
- The Special Projects sheet has been included for reference which shows that there is \$105,000 in available funds, so these projects would be subtracted from there.

Mr. Fariello calls for a motion to approve the funding of the aforementioned requests at a total of \$4,700 | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Ms. Edelin seconds | All approve.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Williams Street

Ms. Steffens outlined the following lighting projects:

- Norton Street between 80 State and 30 N. Pearl Street has no light poles whatsoever. Staff has been working with DLC Electric and Omni Development on a contract to install lighting at a cost of \$4,900. This amount can be reimbursed either through the National Grid Grant and construction will be able to begin shortly.

Mr. Fariello calls for a motion to approve the award of the contract to DLC Electric at a cost of \$4,900 | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Ms. Metzger seconds | All approve.

- National Grid grant money will be used to hang lighting on Williams Street behind Fresh and Fly and the parking garage. An artist will be commissioned to paint the ground and Staff will put bistro tables and chairs out to see how the space is used before putting in any permanent fixtures. Rectangular planters for flowers will also be installed. The BID will pay for the installation of the lights and the City will own and maintain the lighting while the BID maintains any other fixtures. The lights will be metered to Ed Swyer's garage. The BID has worked through the first hurdle of approving a draft contract with OGS and will continue to finalize all remaining documents so construction can begin around June 1st.

Mr. Fariello calls for a motion to approve the awarding of the contract to DLC Electric | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Ms. Edelin seconds | All approve.

Office Market Update

Ms. Steffens noted that:

- There has been a 9.6% decrease in office vacancy, but Albany still has the highest vacancy rate in the region at 15%.
- Class A office space vacancy is at 18.5%, which is down 5% from last year and the asking lease rate went up \$3.35 per square foot.
- The class B lease rate is up \$2 per square foot.
- The suburban total vacancy rate is 12.3%

- Staff released an RFP for a demographic study. Proposals are due Wednesday, March 11th. The results from the study will be the sole focus of the Annual Meeting presentation and will be the basis for the creation of a new marketing plan.

Attraction Programs

Ms. Steffens outlined the following regarding the Office Attraction Pilot Program:

- A draft of the pilot program can be found in the Board packet. This still needs to be reviewed by a lawyer.
- Staff added in suggestions received at last month's meeting, such as the two-tiered program.
- April 1st is a realistic launch date.
- Board members are encouraged to reach out to Ms. Steffens with questions or comments.

Ms. Steffens outlined the following regarding the Pop-Up Retail Program:

- Staff performed a walk-through at a potential location on Friday with Buildings and Codes to see what is needed in order to obtain a CO.
- Ms. Steffens has begun to talk to parties who may be interested in participating.
- The contract for a business mentoring program will be awarded shortly.
- Staff should be ready to release a call for retailers in April.
- Retailers may need to build up products, so Staff feels it would be best to start with existing businesses or to line up a few businesses to start.
- June 1st is the goal for launching the pop-up retail location.

Placemaking Exhibit

Ms. Steffens outlined the following placemaking project for 2020:

- This year the thought was to shift the program to November/December and the focus would be on the 1st Christmas card in the country which was printed here in Downtown Albany at 111 Pine Street as well as the first commercialized use of Santa.
- Staff would work with Albany Center Gallery to create large greeting cards and there would be a large cut out of the original card that would be set up for photo ops.
- The idea would be to tie this in with the Holiday Market, Hot Chocolate Stroll and Holiday Decorating Contest.
- And idea would be to possibly have school kids and other group participate by making their own unique cards.
- Staff is communicating with the Albany Institute of History and Art who are trying to locate a second original card that may exist in New York City and, if found, could possibly be available to include in the program.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Steffens noted that:

- 47 businesses participated in the coupon book that will go into the Residential Welcome Kits. The kits will be ready for delivery in a few weeks.
- Restaurant Week will be at the end of April. Loch & Quay is a new participant this year and Charter in the Hilton returned. Staff is waiting to hear back from The Bishop to see if they will participate.
- The Times Union Center has reached out regarding the activation of their atrium space in front of the center. Staff is discussing the possibility of holding movie nights there in August as well as concerts in July. The BID's Bites, Camera, Action series is slated to be held there in June.
- Board Nomination forms can be found in the Board packet. There are openings for 2 property owners, 1 commercial tenant and 1 resident. A call for nominations will go out on March 9th and nomination forms are due on March 30th.



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With no further business to be discussed Mr. Fariello calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30pm | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Mr. Sarraf seconds | All approve.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

21 Lodge St, 2nd Floor Conference Room