



DOWNTOWN ALBANY
Business Improvement District

**Downtown Albany Business Improvement District
Board of Directors' Meeting
January 24, 2019
BID Conference Room**

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Georgette Steffens
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Richard Rosen
PRESIDENT

Mark Aronowitz
VICE PRESIDENT

Daniel Fariello
TREASURER

Pamela Nichols
SECRETARY

Stephen M. Cleary
David Galin
Chief Eric Hawkins
Tracy Metzger
Hon. Darius Shahinfar

Pamela Nichols
Tyler Wrightson

ATTENDANCE:

Daniel Fariello
Lena Hart
Seth Meltzer
Richard Rosen
Mark Yonally

ON PHONE:

David Sarraf

ABSENT:

Mark Aronowitz
Louis Bannister
Meghan Barkley
Frank O'Connor, III
Chris Pratt
George Penn

STAFF PRESENT:

Jason Bonafide
Jenny Coye
Rebecca Haizmann
Georgette Steffens
Don Wilson

APD BEAT OFFICERS:

Sal Sturiale
Mike Delano

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Board President Richard Rosen at 4:35 PM.

Mr. Rosen asked for approval of the December Board minutes | Motion by Mr. Cleary, Ms. Metzger seconds| All approve.

Mr. Rosen welcomed BID Beat Albany Police Officers Mr. Sturiale and Mr. Delano, thanked them for attending the Board meeting, and invited them to introduce themselves. Mr. Sturiale noted that he has been with the Albany Police Department for about 14 years, has been on the Downtown beat for about two years, and works 7am-3pm Monday-Friday. Mr. Delano noted that he has been with the APD for 15 years, has been on the Downtown beat for about two years, and works 4pm-12am Tuesday-Saturday. He stated that hours can be flexible if there is something that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Steffens noted that the BID has benefited from the consistency of Mr. Sturiale and Mr. Delano in Downtown for the past few years, adding that the two officers are good partners and will stop in to let BID staff know what's going on, and will meet new Stakeholders. She noted they also caught the package bandit. Mr. Rosen thanked them for their work.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Annual Meeting

Mr. Rosen noted that the Annual Meeting will be held May 22 at the Renaissance Hotel and asked that Board members ensure it is on their calendars. Ms. Steffens added that the BID will vote on the new by-laws at the Annual Meeting and that the process will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Board Elections

Mr. Rosen noted that the election process has begun for new Board members, and that there are three nominations for our four open positions, all four of which are Class A (Property Owner) positions. Mr. Steffens noted that a property owner is able to designate a tenant as their representative. A question was raised about who will be rolling off the BID Board, and Ms. Steffens noted that Mr. Aronowitz, Mr. Rosen, Mr. Cleary and Mr. Yonally will be rolling off. Ms. Steffens added that if a person is nominated, they will still need to express their interest in joining the Board by filling out a Statement of Interest form.



A question was raised about nominating a representative from Redburn Development, and Ms. Steffens noted they are one of the nominees. Ms. Steffens also noted that if the property does not pay the BID tax, they are ineligible to serve on the Board.

Ms. Steffens noted that the nominees to date, in addition to the Redburn representative, are Leola Edelin from Renaissance Hotel and Mohamed Hemmid from Hampton Inn.

A question was raised about previous years nominees and Ms. Steffens noted that BID staff went back to one property owner who previously submitted to join the Board, but this year declined to move forward with the process. Mr. Rosen noted there are nomination forms on the table for Board members to nominate people, and that interviews will be conducted in February with nominations brought to the Board on the February 28 meeting.

DRI Update

Mr. Rosen discussed that the Wayfinding funding was not selected through the recently announced CFA funding, but the proposal has been submitted through the DRI process. Ms. Steffens added that Tricentennial Park was also submitted for DRI funding. Mr. Rosen noted that the BID is hopeful there will be support on those projects and that if it's not the BID will consider the possibility of the BID funding the project with other strategic partners, as it has support from the Board, Mayor's office, and ParkAlbany.

Ms. Metzger added that she and Mr. Aronowitz are on the Local Planning Committee for the DRI, but they need to recuse themselves from voting since they sit on the BID Board.

A question was raised regarding ParkAlbany submitting for wayfinding too. Ms. Steffens noted that ParkAlbany submitted for two projects that offer better connections from their garages, and that ParkAlbany has committed \$75,000-\$100,000 for directing people to parking which is a high priority – getting people off the highway and understanding where public parking is. She added that the BID has also committed funds, and that there are pieces of the Wayfinding project the BID could move forward with should DRI funding not come through. Ms. Steffens discussed Larisa Ortiz, a retail strategist who was brought in by the DRI consultant to discuss priorities, and Wayfinding and Tricentennial Park were laid out as high priorities.

Mr. Rosen noted that there are 13 public improvement projects, 18 new development or rehabilitation projects, four workforce training and revolving loan programs, and one branding and marketing project submitted for DRI funding. He added that there is \$9.7 million in funding available and nearly \$30 million in proposed projects.

Ms. Steffens noted that the priorities for the next round of CFA money will come out of the DRI process, so projects not funded by DRI will go to the top of the list to the Regional Council. She also noted that most of the projects are exciting and transformational for the area.

A question was asked about the weighting for scoring. Ms. Metzger discussed the feasibility piece of proposed projects and that they will need to be completed within 18 months. Ms. Steffens added that there are five community goals that were identified, and projects are scored on 1-3 based on those goals and how it would transform Clinton Square. She added there is another community meeting February 5 at which point community members will be able to weigh in on their priorities.

Mr. Rosen added there is a mix of proposed projects from residential to artists lofts, cyber hub, theREP's new space, Palace Theatre, three-season market, and a new retail location for Death Wish Coffee. Ms. Steffens noted that the three-season market is proposed for Federal Plaza Park.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bank Signatures



Ms. Steffens discussed that when the BID has a new Executive Committee come online, signature information on bank accounts need to be updated. Currently, any check over \$500 requires a second signature or if the BID is needing to move money around, correct contacts need to be listed and some banks require a Board resolution for information to be updated. The BID will be adding Mr. Rosen, Mr. Fariello, Mr. Aronowitz, Ms. Nichols, and Ms. Steffens to be signators on the account.

Mr. Steffens requested approval to add the abovementioned Executive Committee members as signators | Motion by Mr. Cleary, Hon. Shahinfar seconds | All approve.

2019 Budget Corrections

Ms. Steffens noted that the CFO for Hire senior accountant is working well, and a mistake was caught on the 2019 budget that had been presented. The Sculpture in the Streets line wasn't adding in the totals column and accounted for \$20,000 in expenses, so that Special Projects line needed to be adjusted and decrease it by \$20,000, a change from \$74,000 to \$54,000 in the 2019 budget, leaving a total of \$76,000 in the Special Projects budget. She added that the Budget & Finance Committee discussed lowering the BID's Operating Reserve, which is currently \$216,000. Ms. Steffens calculated what the liability would be for two months if the BID were to close, with liabilities being below \$150,000, and the Budget & Finance Committee is recommending dropping the reserves to \$150,000 and adding the \$66,000 balance to Special Projects funds.

Ms. Steffens added that in previous years, any unspent funds were rolled into the Operating Reserves. She noted that the moving of those funds would give the BID \$142,000 for Special Projects.

Funding Requests

Ms. Steffens noted she is in the process of updating the contract with the City to be the district management association for the Downtown Albany BID. The BID is working with the BIDs for Lark Street and Central Avenue to have a core framework developed by Kate Hedgeman who completed the Downtown Albany BID's nonprofit by-laws. That cost would be \$2,000 and then any individual needs would be billed at Ms. Hedgeman's hourly rate.

Mr. Steffens requested approval of \$2,000 to work with Ms. Hedgeman on the City contract | Motion by Mr. Cleary, Hon. Shahinfar seconds | All approve.

Ms. Steffens discussed the Irish American Heritage Museum's 5k on St. Patrick's Day parade day along the parade route. The BID has been working with the Museum's new leadership to breathe more life into the event. Ms. Steffens noted that attendance to the parade has decreased in Downtown, and that the race will add a more family feel to the day by bringing more people down to run, have lunch, and head back to watch the parade. She added that there are discussions of adding a kid's fun run next year, and that long-term there is an opportunity for it to be a big fundraising event for the Museum, and that in the future they will not need the BID's involvement at the level it is now.

Mr. Rosen noted that it is the only Capital Region 5k on St. Patrick's Day, and that it is a good partnership with the Irish American Heritage Museum.

Mr. Steffens requested approval of \$2,000 to support the Parade Day 5k | Motion by Mr. Cleary, Mr. Meltzer seconds | All approve.

Ms. Steffens added that the Museum is making it a full weekend of events, with a family fun day on parade day and events at the Museum on Sunday, which is actually St. Patrick's Day.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT **Conflict of Interest Forms**



Ms. Steffens noted that all Board members need to sign the Conflict of Interest forms to ensure we have them on file.

2019 Staff Priorities

Ms. Steffens stated, as part of the budgeting process, she discussed the BID's 2019 priorities as coming alongside and supporting the major development that's taking place in Downtown, some of which the BID will take on and some that will involve helping with advocacy or funding. She added she has been meeting with BID staff regarding 2019 priorities, with each person identifying key priorities based on feedback received from Board members and Stakeholders, and the following priorities have been identified:

- Pedestrian safety. Ms. Steffens noted that two people have been hit by cars in the past year or so, one of whom was in a crosswalk. She added that APD has gone before the Common Council for funding for pedestrian safety as well, and the BID will work to partner with them on this initiative. Ms. Steffens noted that the BID has a meeting with Bill Trudeau next week. The goal is to time this initiative with the paving of Pearl Street when new crosswalks are put in.
- Consistent events for residents. Ms. Steffens discussed wanting to have events every month so residents know to look for the BID for events. Save the dates are being sent out so people know what's happening throughout the year.
- Increased engagement on social media. Ms. Steffens discussed that Ms. Coye has been looking at trends on social media, and noticing that people are engaging with posts on the people behind the businesses, and shared images of Downtown by professional and amateur photographers.

A discussion was held on the Skyway and opposition from the Common Council to a bond authorization, and that there might be a request to advocate on behalf of the project. The Board expressed support for the project and a willingness to help. They requested talking points to better communicate their support.

A discussion was held on residential properties and if the BID has a contact at each building to help promote BID events. Ms. Steffens discussed the goal of having an ambassador in each building, a person who would disseminate information to other residents, and being able to identify them through events like residential trivia.

2019 Placemaking Exhibit

Ms. Steffens discussed the proposed Placemaking exhibit for 2019, modeled after a program that was in Louisville, KY called Alley Gallery and that the BID would call Open Gallery. The project takes the back doors of buildings along our newly created connective corridors and adds color and vibrancy. BID staff walked through the Convention Center District, from State to Hudson, Eagle to Broadway, and there were over 25 doors that were identified as potentials for inclusion. Ms. Steffens noted that State OGS is very interested and might be first to commit. There would be a curatorial committee and process, and a goal to have property owners select which design they'd like and pay for it to be placed.

Ms. Steffens added that Louisville has completed 100 doors to date, which cost approximately \$79,000 with \$32,000 of that going to participating artists. She noted one of the great pieces of the Nipper project was funds went back to local artists.

A question was asked regarding the longevity of the artwork, and Ms. Steffens said that vinyl would last longer than painting the doors, and noted that Albany Center Gallery would help with selection of artists.

Placemaking Events

Ms. Steffens discussed upcoming events, including the weekend trolley and in an effort to promote that, the BID has partnered with the Lark Street BID for the First Friday trolley, with the trolley moving people to both Districts. Various Stakeholders are participating with different events, like Fort Orange General Store hosting a pop-up screen printing;



trivia, live music, and pop-up art installations are also taking place around Downtown. The goal is to bring First Friday back for Downtown and Lark Street BIDs as a true destination once a month.

Ms. Steffens noted that Downtown Resident Trivia is coming up February 6, and the beat officers will be attending as well. For the last event about 70 people attended.

Ms. Steffens added that staff has been working to make sure the things the BID does are resonating with residents. The BID will be hosting Resident Roundtable in mid-February at City Beer Hall. The event serves as an opportunity for residents to provide confidential input and feedback on BID events and investments. Albany Center Gallery has also asked to attend to garner input on what should be happening in the community and in the Gallery, and the BID is looking to have other organizations or City entities attend as well.

Ms. Steffens also noted that Restaurant Week is coming up April 13-19, the BID is helping Daniel Mozzes with a fashion show. A discussion was held on the fashion show and Ms. Steffens added that there will be a call for models tomorrow and Saturday, and a call for designers will be coming. Additionally, staff has been meeting with Angelo Maddox from Fresh & Fly about incorporating his business into the event as well.

A question was asked about the trolley and where stops are. Ms. Steffens discussed there are signs hung up, and that for February's First Friday there will be sandwich boards indicating stops. Going forward, the plan is to adhere large stickers to the sidewalk at each intersection directing people where the closest stop is. Mr. Bonafide added that the CityFinder app also tells people where stops are and when the next trolley is arriving. Ms. Steffens noted that pick-up spots are at key intersections, and that the loop is 20 minutes. A question was raised about promoting the trolley during Restaurant Week. Ms. Steffens added that BID staff will be walking to the businesses and engaging with the staff to discuss and market the trolley to them.

NEW BUSINESS

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting ended at 5:35 PM.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, February 28, 2019

4:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room