

HUDSON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

May 26, 2020

12:00 PM

1 North Front Street, Hudson, NY 12534

PRESENT:

Mayor Kamal Johnson
Bob Rasner
Tom DePietro
Seth Rogovoy
Nick Haddad
Paul Barrett
Martha Lane
Carolyn Lawrence
Kristan Keck
Steve Dunn
Phil Forman
Paul Colarusso

ABSENT:

Paul Colarusso

STAFF:

Branda Maholtz

- I. Minutes: April, Special May Meeting
 - a. Paul Barrett MOTIONS to accept the April Minutes with changes requested by Steve Dunn. Chris SECONDS. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED.
 - b. Paul Barrett MOTIONS to accept the Special May Minutes. Phil SECONDS. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED.
- II. Finances
 - a. Monthly report—The board discusses the monthly financial statements. We have little cash assets and need to have more revenue, but this is difficult given the pandemic. No transactions out of ordinary with the usual operating costs for the month.

- b. Annual Audit Status—Branda reports that there has been little activity for the audit, but will check in with the firm and make sure we are on target to file on time this year.
- III. Old Business
- a. Emergency Task Force
 - i. Business Task Force—Bob reports on the collaboration happening across the Task Forces and how the channels of communication are open. We have been putting together ideas for assisting small businesses with reopening and pivoting with a few initiatives to be discussed under new business.
 - ii. Hospitality Task Force—Kristan Keck reports on the committee and the value of the Customer Sentiment Survey put out for two weeks with a lot of respondents. Branda and John Paul Kane worked together to get this out. The board discusses some of the findings including that the age demographic was higher than expected, the financial impact on the individual is directly correlated to how they intend to spend money after the pause, everyone wants outdoor dining for increased social distancing, and the vast majority of respondents feel that masks are absolutely necessary until there is a vaccine.
 - iii. Culture Task Force—Seth reports that there is still a lot of engagement with this group and that we awarded the third round of Hudson Emergency Arts Program stipends. We will continue to try to fundraise and keep the program going, but the initiative had a lot of momentum at first, but is now waning as we started to reopen. The projects are varied across mediums and the TSL mural is almost finished and quite impressive. There is also sub-groups forming because of the committee where people are working on their own side projects including a great cross-communication with members of the Tourism Board.
 - b. Mill Street Property—The board discusses the potential minimum bid for the property for when we go to sealed bid. We will public notice for 60 days and be sure to advertise to get interest in the property. There is still interest from the adjacent owner. Paul Barrett will work with Branda to put this together immediately. We will need to engage with a lawyer to get this done properly and quickly.
 - c. Wick Hotel Update—Lease Payments, Wall Rebuild—Bob Rasner reports that Tom Rossi has paid for the use of the lot, but we haven't received the signed contract yet. The wall that Rossi had constructed when they tore down part of the warehouse collapsed, but they immediately contacted the contractor who built the wall and had them repair it to better standard.
 - d. KAZ-CSX Parcel
 - i. LOI from Front State Partners—There is still interest from them to purchase or lease the parking area, however, their project is severely delayed at this time. We have been in contact with them. The board discusses that it may not be advantageous to lease or sell the property as it may require a right-of-way easement and may lessen the

Montgomery Street property as a whole. Bob reminds the board that we purchased the CSX lot after we received feedback from potential developers that the access to Front Street was crucial to a successful project.

- ii. LOI from Hudson Brewery. There has been no communication with Hudson Brewery as they are probably no longer interested in the proposed plan with the pandemic.
 - iii. Potential tear-down—The board discusses whether we should have the building and concrete pad removed to be “shovel-ready” for a developer. It is unclear if our communication with firms prior to the shut-down would still be willing to do the tear-down at reduced rate for the materials. The board also discusses if it might be better to have the building on the property as the asset.
- e. Berkshire Taconic Community Fund Updates—The board has been in contact with BTCF and have discussed varied ways that the funds could work for both re-opening and longer term. Chris Jones has been starting to reach out to potential donors to see if we can start with some seed money to get matching funds. There was a conversation to establish a relationship with The Maker to see if they would be willing to donate and help other businesses in Hudson. The Maker is working on PR and Marketing for their reopening and was very pleased with our efforts. We will be in contact with them as we move forward.

IV. New Business

- a. Empire State Development Proposal, reallocation of DRI funds for Covid-19 Relief: The executive committee put together three projects/initiatives for consideration to reallocate DRI funds awarded to HDC toward grants and programs to help small businesses in Hudson through 1. grant funding opportunity with Berkshire Taconic, 2. Pedestrian Warren Street for social distancing and outdoor dining, and 3. Clean and Safe Hudson, a full-city sanitation protocol that would be the first of its kind in the region. With Branda now as Executive Director and a Partnership with BTCF, we have met some of the expectations of ESD to get the board momentum to start taking on the DRI and programs. ESD said no initially. But by the end of the meeting they asked for us to submit ideas. We want to be positive, but we’re asking for something huge to happened. Nick reminds the board that the DRI funds were to be reimbursed—we had to spend to get any money back for the awards. He adds that we are trying to be creative with our ideas to engage them. Since we can take down the building at little cost, why can’t we use the money on something that will help small business in this crisis. We have not had a response yet. Branda will be reaching out to Mike Yevoli and his office to see where we are. The board acknowledges that the money might not even be available anymore.
- b. Hudson Lodging Website—Bob Rasner reports that he has been in contact with a third-party firm that provides a service for lodging owners that compiles all the offerings into one site for visitors to book rooms. Since many of the lodging businesses use the same firm for bookings, this could be a way to bring all the varied options for lodging together. They do the website, the

photography, and maintenance for 3 years. It may also list restaurants. It does not include Air BnBs. We have support from all the lodging in town. The service is a pretty reasonable cost for lodging owners to opt in. Bob explains that this solves an on-going problem in the lodging sector as many visitors may only know of some B&Bs and Hotels and they have to go directly to the establishment's site in order to book. If they are booked, they always ask where else to stay as there's no centralized information. Kristan confirms that owners spend a lot of time helping visitors find other options for lodging. The board discusses HDC's role for this: HDC would be the applicant for the grant and manage the contract with the firm. Seth asks for clarification about the cost of \$5000 because it seems so low. Bob restates that this is for 3 years. Phil MOTIONS for HDC to Apply to the Tourism Boards RFP for funds to support this initiative as it fits our mission. Paul Barrett SECONDS. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED.

- c. Nominating Committee—(added by Chris during the meeting). Steve asks if we are discussing nominees, we should do it in executive session. If in general, we can discuss. Chris presents two candidates that will be voted on at a later meeting. Caitlin Hilverman who is a young woman from Hudson. She's an extraordinary candidate with a PhD. She works for quantify which is like an NGO to statistics and programs on food and housing insecurity. She is potentially the new generation of Hudson that will become involved and important to the future of Hudson. She can be a bridge to the community. Peter Schram is the other candidate, he runs Homestead Tree Farm. His family goes back to the proprietors. He has successful businesses including building development. He's the chairman of the board of the Powerboat Association. Seth asks if they were asked to submit a statement about being on the board as he remembered doing this.
- V. Public Comment—Marc Schribo comments that the work HDC is doing has been great. He asks about the lodging website as he's been working on the cultural task force to look at all the websites in Hudson for various realms. He just wants to make sure that the conversation is congruent. Bob will send examples of the URLs so that we can see examples.
- VI. Adjournment