

HUDSON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



Board Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2020

12:00 PM

1 North Front Street, Hudson, NY 12534

PRESENT:

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

-
ABSENT:

STAFF:

Branda Maholtz

I. **Call Meeting to Order: Bob calls the meeting to order at 12:00 PM. Bob makes some introductory remarks:**

Good afternoon. Welcome to the February meeting of the Hudson Development corporation. A few quick thoughts before we proceed with the agenda for the day.

Recently the organization has been referred to as a “quasi-governmental” group. To be clear, as defined by the State of New York, the HDC is a private, not-for-profit corporation. Incorporated 45 years ago, we are a volunteer organization, privately funded, not reliant on taxpayer’s money.

The organization was formed, among other purposes, to “Lessen the burdens of government and act in the public interest.”

Keep that in mind... “Lessen the burdens of government and act in the public interest...” for a moment while I digress briefly.

During recent discussions with parties expressing interest in investing in the city by means of developing the land owned by the HDC, we have been asked about the economic health of the City of Hudson. In recent months the same question has been raised by friends and business associates... I am sure it may have come up in your conversations in recent months. The question comes as no surprise as the prospective buyer may be considering projects that will require an investment of over \$25M. It is, however, a tough question to fully answer.

Municipalities throughout the world find themselves struggling to make their way through the economic impact of the pandemic. Hudson is not different. The task before our elected leaders is complex and formidable. How to maintain services we all rely upon while experiencing serious revenue shortfalls.

To gain an understanding of the dilemma in which we find ourselves, the minutes of last year's City Finance Committee were reviewed, paying particular attention to the reports of Heather Campbell, our City Treasurer. Heather was contacted and asked if she might be willing to meet with a small group to inform us on the current economic outlook for the City.

Heather agreed.

A dozen or so individuals were invited.. individuals that would not only want to join the meeting, but might have insights as to charting a path forward. To be clear, this was not an HDC meeting, but a meeting facilitated to bring about information that could be useful in aiding the City in this difficult economic time

Because information is power, and with the belief that citizens with information can accomplish extraordinary things.... the goal of the gathering was to arm participants with information that might, and I'll now circle back to where we started, to "Lessen the burdens of government and act in the public interest."

The meeting was held yesterday morning. Heather went over in great detail "how we got to here". There were questions and observations by the group, but I add that her presentation was so thorough that little clarification was needed by anyone.

The meeting of just over an hour, with the Treasurer was conducted via ZOOM and recorded. If you'd like to view the meeting, contact Branda for the link. Armed with that information, we want to hear your best ideas for Hudson.

Where do we go from here? I am going to propose formation of an Economic Task Force similar to those we formed almost a year ago to assist the community at the beginning of the pandemic. I will propose it be facilitated by this Board, but consist of citizens that can and be willing to work very hard to see Hudson through a difficult time... in short, to "Lessen the burdens of government and act in the public interest."

- II. Minutes: January Meeting: Paul Barrett Motions to Accept Minutes. Phil Seconds. All in Favor. Motion Passed.
- III. Finance: Phil Forman reports. Branda reports the monthly spending and current cash assets on hand. Paul Motions to accept the financials for the month. Carolyn seconds. All in favor. Motion passed.
- IV. Old Business
 - a. Mt. Merino: Paul Barrett—Title Search, Appraisal
 - b. Disposition of Montgomery Street Property: Board Discussion
 - i. Survey, Appraisal, Title-- Forthcoming
 - ii. Offer and Pending Offers
 - c. Narrow Parcel North of Dog Park
 - i. Survey—Forthcoming, may potentially be some misalignment between title and parcel description.

ii. RFP/Gift—Holding for survey, Branda will speak with mayor's office about their DRI project.

- d. CSX: Steve Dunn reports that he has received verbal confirmation that CSX has granted us right of first refusal. Steve will handle the paperwork so as not to incur cost. We can assign that right of first refusal to someone else if the Montgomery Street parcels are sold. Bob thanks Steve for his fantastic job.
- e. By-Laws Revisions: Paul and Martha—They have put together a strategy to make the task less difficult. Since we aren't meeting in person, it will be easiest to do in a google doc. Before the next meeting we will have a chapter/selection for the board to look over and be prepared for the next meeting's discussion.

V. New Business

- a. Nominating Committee: Nick Haddad: we have not received any applications from the announcement that went out last month. The committee has met and brought forth a candidate Susan Knauss. We have more people to reach out to and speak with about being a board member. Nick invites the rest of board and public to make suggestions. Branda will distribute Susan Knauss's application and materials to the board. Mayor Johnson asks about a previous applicant and if she was still interested. She had withdrawn.

VI. Public Comment—Ronald Kopnicki comments about the ad hoc committees for the city council. He states that he knows that there will be reports for the full council, he inquires if HDC will also provide reports to the council. We have our board meeting minutes, but if the Mayor and Council President would like to report, they are on the HDC board they can also report to the council. Mayor clarifies that he isn't on the council. Bob asks if Tom is comfortable with this format. Tom confirms that he is.

Bob will reach out to board members about the formation of the task force and will report back at the meeting about community involvement.

Aliya Schneider asks about the task force and that it would include members of the community as well. She inquires about the goal of the task force. Bob states that it's to

support and assist the elected officials with the financial issues—we don't know what the ideas will be but we know that our talented members will definitely think of something.

Seth Rogovoy asks whether we are talking more general about Hudson's economy of the city's government. Bob clarifies that he is speaking to the city's government—for example the city's revenue is difficult to forecast with the loss of parking revenue, or lodging taxes due to the pandemic. The initial thought was to bring forth ideas for city revenue and surely it will spread across the rest of the economy.

Aliya asks how we will form the group. Bob states that we are reaching out to those who have expressed interest so far, and more people that are residents, and stakeholders in town. Aliya also asked how the first meeting came to be. And Bob restates that we had inquiry from potential investors about the state of the city which made him realize that there are several people that had similar inquires. Heather agreed to do an information session. We'll see where we go from here.

VII. Adjournment: Nick Motions to adjourn at 12: 40 PM. Paul Seconds. ALL IN FAVOR.
MOTION PASSED.