

**Minutes**  
**Hudson Development Corporation**  
**Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**One North Front Street**  
**Hudson, NY 12534**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Hudson Development Corporation (HDC) Board of Directors was held at the offices of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce located at One North Front Street, Hudson, NY 12534 on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived/Departed</b>
Paul Barrett	Secretary	Present	
Andrew Trudeau	Board Member	Present	
Tom DePietro	Board Member (Ex-Officio)	Present	
Phil Forman	Treasurer	Absent	
John Friedman	Board Member	Absent	
Nicholas Haddad	Vice President	Present	
Mayor Kamal Johnson	Board Member (Ex-Officio)	Present	
Christine Jones	President	Present	
Jan Egan	Scribe	Present	
Kyle Coffey	Board Member	Present	
Britt Zuckerman	Board Member	Present	
Kristal Heinz	HDC Attorney	Absent	
Jess Wallen	Executive Director	Present	
Ryan Curran	Board Member	Present	

**I.** Meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM by Christine Jones, President.

**II. Approve July Minutes**

- President Jones thanked members for their service, noted the new timing of HDC meetings @ 4 PM, and asked for a motion to approve July Minutes as submitted.
- Secretary Barrett so motioned, with member Zuckerman seconding.
- Motion to approve July Minutes unanimously carried.

**III. President's Remarks on the Month**

- President Jones noted that we have a big agenda and shared a timely quote:  
“...we each have an extraordinary level of control over what we notice, but it's a choice. And we must choose to notice/pay attention when things are happening for the HDC, allowing us to be curious, entertain new thinking, be open to collaboration. This is how change occurs for our community.”
- ED Wallen continues to meet with local organizations to foster partnerships going into the Fall e.g. CEDC, Hudson Hall, City Officials, and Friends of Hudson Youth.

- Efforts are focused on the six HDC-identified areas: *childcare/education, hospitality, CMH, train service, city spaces, business/career enablement*.
- Exciting new ideas are coming to HDC, ie What Design Can Do, as well as a collaboration with the Hudson Hall Opera House regarding a hospitality symposium.
- Fire on upper Warren Street underscored the hazardous fact of historic, wooden structures.
- HDC can help preserve the beauty of our town with fire/smoke detectors.
- Warren Street church is empty with broken windows—what are the laws?
- Member Haddad spoke about regulation in place with commercial property owners annually submitting proof of smoke detectors, sprinklers, extinguishers.
- Member Zuckerman spoke about property taxes and “vacancy” taxes; is there an opportunity to help Code Enforcement Officer Haigh enforce this law?
- Ex-officio DePietro spoke about the law of vacant buildings; very hard to enforce.
- 19 vacant buildings are currently on the list, according to member Zuckerman.
- Member Coffey spoke about increasing the “vacancy” tax to \$5,000 from \$1,000.
- Matt deGenaro is the person who inspects and reports on vacancies and fire/smoke/alarm systems.
- President Jones spoke about the empty building owned by Galvan on Warren (now a hair salon) and smoking/fire potential before it was renovated.
- Member Curran spoke about renovating his Warren Street building, and smoke detectors.
- Curran noted the expense of smoke detectors (about \$140/plus install and battery) and suggested that a Hudson entity (HDC?) could purchase detection units in quantity and offer to local businesses.
- Member Zuckerman noted that perhaps a grant could be written for detectors and/or installation. (Or purchase in bulk and make available at a low price for businesses.)
- President Jones suggested putting these ideas forward to the Common Council and/or Hudson Preservation Commission (HPC).
- Member Curran noted that fire hazards also exist with the wooden garbage bins on Warren Street.
- President Jones reminded all new members that ABO is a requirement for all; must comply by January 2026.

#### **IV. Treasurer’s Financial Report**

- Susan van Tassel (for Treasurer Forman) presented the Statement of Activity and noted that HDC finances continue to progress very much as planned.
- General expenses and payroll are consistent, no new expenses.
- President Jones asked for a motion to approve Treasurer’s Financial report.
- Member Zuckerman so motioned, with member Barrett seconding, and motion unanimously carried.

#### **V. ONGOING BUSINESS (Executive Director Jess Wallen)**

##### **1. Hudson Business Fitness Poll – Still Open**

- Planned to close the survey in July, will extend closing for more responses.
- Distributed to HBC list, full Chamber of Commerce list, all downtown businesses.
- Member Trudeau noted that 43 businesses have responded: a robust number.
- Trudeau very optimistic about response rate and suggests closing survey about a week or two before next HDC meeting to put some findings together for next meeting. (Or October meeting if needed).
- 75% are from “downtown” Hudson, which suggests that 25% are from “off Warren Street.”
- ED Wallen noted that the survey confirms some of the things we already knew: business owners seem to struggle with the “seasonal” nature of business in Hudson, and that respondents are willing to employ/train interns/trainees.
- Member Trudeau noted that 80%+ believe (4 on a scale of 1 to 5) in the future of Hudson.

## **2. Partnering with CEDC (Workforce Dev. Grants, Microloans)**

- ED Jess Wallen met with Mike Tucker and discussed ways HDC can collaborate with CEDC.
- Currently participating in Workforce Development planning conversations with regional schools (SUNY, CGCC and Chamber etc.) to build a coalition and stronger awareness of apprenticeship, programs, and young adult workers.
- Investigating grant program through Empire State Development (Office of Strategic Workforce Development), Capitol Grant program.
- HDC may not be eligible as a primary candidate but may be a strong partner for training programs (due in October).
- Along with member Coffey and Barrett, met with Martha Lane (CEDC) about Microlending program; lots of interesting information and possibility to create a program with them.
- Member Coffey updated all, and spoke about SBA-allocated funds for granting to manage a workforce program, employees, rent, enhancements, etc.
- Targeting those who are not “banked.”
- Restaurants, food/beverage are tough, retail is sweet spot.
- Lane interested in the idea that HDC could infuse loan program with Hudson-specific funding to free up CEDC resource for broader Columbia County.
- President Jones noted that CEDC “default” rate is very low; member Coffey concurred.
- This low default rate is common among microlending programs, with good guidance and strong technical assistance contributing to success rate.
- Advisory role to “pair up” with applicants to help with business plan, pro forma, etc.
- Member Coffey noted that he will come back at next meeting with details and more information.

## **3. Hospitality/Creative Economy Symposium with Hudson Hall**

- In talks to do symposium with Hudson Hall on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Creative Legion that would look at hospitality and the creative economy.

- Targeted, industry event (invitation only) that will inspire and create a structure for “cultural tourism” in a healthy way.
- HDC will lead with Adam Weinert of Hudson Hall and keynote speaker to discuss positives and negatives of cultural tourism in Hudson.
- Plan is for event to be recorded for future viewing on HDC website.

#### **4. Exploratory Conversation with Columbia Memorial Hospital**

- President Jones noted that HDC wants to do further exploration with CMH for job workforce needs and childcare.
- Catskill hospital building is being converted into an ambulatory center and a capital campaign will be used to fund this effort.
- CMH would like HDC to contribute to capital campaign effort.
- CEO asked President Jones to reach out to CMH HR person to learn more about workforce needs and childcare.
- Meeting in the works with CMH HR person (and ED Wallen) after Labor Day.

#### **5. Community Festival: Berkshire Busk**

- ED Wallen spoke about a group who started the Berkshire Busk to support artists and retailers in Great Barrington to get people out on the street during COVID.
- The Berkshire Busk Foundation initiated a conversation with the City of Hudson to see if this is something that would be right for Hudson.
- Mayor Johnson went to Great Barrington and encouraged all to go to see how it’s done.
- 25,000 people attended in Great Barrington during the summer of 2024 to see the Busk, over 10 summer weekends.
- Buskers would be vetted through auditions and invited to participate.
- Member Curran noted that it contributes to the artistic, lively “feeling” of Warren Street that benefits everyone.
- Member Trudeau noted that “quieter weekends” might especially benefit from this idea.
- ED Wallen noted that perhaps late spring might be ideal.

#### **6. City Spaces Committee – Pocket Parks**

- ED Wallen discussed City Spaces (shared Hudson spaces/infrastructure).
- Wallen has reached out to Mayor’s office, Code Enforcement Officer Haigh’s office and DPW Rob Perry to discuss the recent history of pocket parks in Hudson.
- Once completed, ED Wallen will prepare a working document to include what’s happened, what could happen, and any further plans.
- President Jones stated that the goal is to have a Parks Department that can manage/oversee the parks.

### **VI. FUTURE BUSINESS**

#### **1. Business Roundtables**

A. President Jones said topics still needed for Roundtables: for business-building,

business thinking, starting a biz, rebuilding a biz, retail, restaurant biz etc.

- “Second Story” businesses topic suggested by member Friedman.
- Results of survey will be shared, possibly in November.
- President Jones suggested Creative Legion for unveiling of survey results.
- Member Trudeau suggested this could also facilitate a “second” round of survey respondents as well, including Roundtable Topics.
- Member Coffey spoke about Apprenticeship/Employment Resources topic for business owners.
- HDC could help subsidize salary/wages/transportation for business training/workforce.
- Member DiPietro spoke about Build Hudson construction business that uses CGCC students and pays a nominal wage to students and to train them on the job.

## **2. Debate Sponsorship**

- HDC exploring ways to sponsor Mayoral debate, would need partners.

## **VII. Pitch Decks**

### **1. What Design Can Do**

- ED Wallen has been speaking to this Dutch organization, which is committed to “socially driven design”: creative thinkers/makers who look at social issues in place.
- Interested in Hudson because of location and strong arts, culture, and design base.
- Spoke with Dutch attaché, who is hoping to come to Hudson to speak with HDC.
- Cost: \$200,000 (looking for sponsors).
- Themes for initiative are broad, community-driven.
- Member Zuckerman spoke about a large biennale theme: The American Porch (the space, the activity, the design, etc.)
- “Dutch-ness” could be part of the theme as well, given the country of origin for What Design Can Do.

### **2. Free Community Movie Night: October**

- Looking at ET or Rocky Horror
- Universal Studios will give HDC a discount.
- Business partners could be TSL.
- Member Curran asked if it could be stage on Warren Street i.e., Story Screen Cinema could bring a large screen, speakers, close a block.
- Only 15 Shark shirts remaining!
- Member Curran spoke about the early evening hours of that evening; as crowd gathers, show a children’s short film.
- Hudson citizen (and mayoral candidate) Lloyd Koedding spoke about his platform for the upcoming election: harmony, unity, and collaboration for all.

### **3. ED Wallen Reminders:**

- Push the HDC Business Survey
- Keep thinking of speakers/topics for Biz Roundtables
- Take your ABO Training
- Go see the Berkshire Busk

### **VIII. Next Meeting: September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Tuesday @ 4PM (new time)**

### **IX. Move to Adjourn**

- With no other business to be conducted, President Jones asked for motion to adjourn August meeting.
- Motion made by all members, seconded by all members, and unanimously carried.
- August HDC meeting adjourned @ 5:22 PM

*Respectfully submitted by Jan Egan*