

**Minutes
Hudson Development Corporation
Tuesday, May 27th, 2025
One North Front Street
Hudson, NY 12534**

The Annual HDC Board Meeting and the regularly scheduled April 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 May 27th, 2025.

Meeting was called to order at 12:02 PM by Christine Jones, President.

• President's Monthly Notes

- President Jones welcomed Board and members of the public, thanked Board Members for their service, and confirmed that we are conducting a hybrid meeting.
- Jones announced today is first HDC meeting with Executive Director Jess Wallen onboard and looks forward to Jess working with the Board and HDC members.
- Noted that winter was very tough for the Warren Street retailers in Hudson, and there is a desire to have a stronger support system among the business community.
- Opportunity to join/support together: HDC and HBC (Hudson Business Coalition).
- Pitch Deck: Andreau Trudeau will present a Hudson Business Community Survey.
- What can HDC do in connection with the county Tourism Board (Mike Tucker).

Name	Title	Status	Arrived/Departed
Paul Barrett	Secretary	Present	
Andrew Trudeau	Board Member	Present	
Tom DePietro	Board Member (Ex-Officio)	Absent	
Phil Forman	Treasurer	Present	
John Friedman	Board Member	Present	
Nicholas Haddad	Vice President	Present	
Mayor Kamal Johnson	Board Member (Ex-Officio)	Absent	
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	

• Request for Ratification of April Minutes

- President Jones asked for a motion to approve April Minutes as submitted.
- Secretary Forman so motioned, with Secretary Barrett seconding.

- Motion to approve April Minutes unanimously carried.

- **Treasurer's Financial Report**

- Treasurer Forman noted HDC is "holding steady" with cash available of \$2.6 million+.
- Little impact on our portfolio as our fixed income items are stable.
- Executive Committee had a dinner with brokers; continue to want to engage with different vehicles (including equities), but due to uncertainty in the market want to hold off for now.
- Finance Committee members will meet with a new partner who is coming to the firm (daughter of the firm's partner).
- Continue to wrestle with Department of Labor regarding W-2 employee status.
- To do: vet existing HDC insurance policies.
- Treasurer Forman asked for motion to approve statements as submitted.
- Member Zuckerman so motioned, seconded by member Friedman and unanimously carried.

ONGOING BUSINESS

- **Executive Director Jess Wallen**

- A. CFA Grants and Timeline

- Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) HDC is continuing to build on work/grants we started last year.
 - Due July 31st, many different grants/applications.
 - Takes time/work, so ascertaining what we need/what's available/what HDC is eligible for is critical.
 - Executive Committee will help determine what HDC applies for/what we don't.

- B. Programs and Committee Review

- Reviewing current committees that Board members can sit on: Governance, Finance, Nominating, Development, Real Estate, City Spaces (parking lots, sidewalks, etc)

- C. Events: Movie Night, Hudson Mile Race

- HDC is prioritizing/focusing on visibility with two events coming up.
 - Member Zuckerman spoke about Hudson Movie Night: posters, t-shirts, banners (with help from DPW)
 - Food trucks will also be participating; liquor permits are forthcoming.
 - Mass gathering permit filed, insurance policy as well.
 - Promoting the event is up next.
 - HDC is providing fiscal sponsorship for the Hudson Mile Race on July 12th.
 - Race will be from top of Warren downhill to Front Street.
 - Money raised (outside of event cost) will be donated to Friends of Hudson Youth.

- D. Press Release

- In early June: announce new ED/role, new board members, Movie Night, and will include the Hudson Business Community Survey as well.

E. Website Updates

- Updating of the website will continue (as we drive more folks to site) and will update/add bios as well.

NOTE: Runner's Club will be handling the Hudson Mile Race, and HDC will be involved as fiscal sponsor only.

• **What Design Can Do Pitch Recap/Discussion (Christine Jones)**

- Recap: Jon Stampinato (Hudson native) presented last month.
- A huge idea for Hudson, led by Hudson's design community.
- Bronson House Design events were held by Hudson Business Coalition (pre-COVID) got a lot of press for Hudson both before and after event.
- Brought a lot of NYC design people to Hudson for the weekend-long event.
- HDC mission is to focus on business-supporting and business-building ideas/events, so this concept fits HDC mission.
- Simplest articulation of the idea: What Design Can Do provides a creative community with connections, resources, and funding around a core design challenge.
- Focus is on solving tough issues facing Hudson and addressed by creative minds over a time period with sponsors and prizes for the strongest solutions.
- Challenges for Hudson include childcare, waterfront, climate change, housing and education.
- Estimated cost: \$200,000.
- 8 \$25,000 sponsors are a suggestion and would need a good advance timeline to complete.
- First time in America for the What Design Can Do organization.
- This event could bring people to Hudson, where they can contribute to retail, restaurants, etc. of Hudson.
- Member Zuckerman asked if this is largely sponsored by IKEA – does this idea need a large national sponsor?
- What Design Can Do would handle event logistics.
- Timing for this event was discussed; perhaps during the "slower" months here in Hudson; more valuable to businesses in Hudson.
- Zoom call suggested to speak with What Design Can Do founder (based in Amsterdam).
- President Jones suggested What Design Can Do may be an appropriate way for HDC to celebrate 50th Anniversary next year.
- Event has typically occurred over a 6–8-month period.
- Can HDC help implement outcome for the winners of the challenge? I.e., set up meetings with mayor's office, HDC, business leaders, financial support/lenders, etc.
- Member Nick Haddad spoke about "one-offs" in Hudson's history i.e., the film festival, arts walks.
- Winter Walk has been a notable success.
- Member Trudeau noted that it would be helpful to fully understand HDC's role and participation in this event as co-host, key sponsor, etc.

- President Jones noted that HDC needs to create a “matrix” to understand and categorize HDC involvement.
- Creating a matrix like this would help HDC members to vote with clarity on what to support/what to deny.

• **A Growing Board**

- President Jones noted that HDC has been successful in growing the HDC board.
- It is incumbent on HDC to make sure there is a protocol for potential members, so they understand where they fit into the board.
- Nomination protocol: what we do, what the potential member does, how they can contribute.
- Diversity, inclusion is important.
- Seeking members with Specific Skillsets: Digital/Tech, Hospitality, Place Management.
- Midweek Hudson (hospitality in Hudson)
- People visiting Hudson: staying here, spending here.
- Treasurer Forman noted that affluent people who live in Hudson could be important for a growing HDC board; people with the means to support some of our initiatives.
- Forman also noted the branding potential for HDC’s fiscal sponsorships.
- Speaking about the Hudson Mile Race, Member Coffey noted that it’s not about the run; it’s about the social aspect (bars, gathering, eating, etc) afterwards.
- Hudson Mile Race is currently being scheduled for the late afternoon.
- Member Friedman noted potential food vendors for the day, ie, new Hudson Diner, etc.

FUTURE BUSINESS

• **Board Support Needed**

- For marketing and events, particularly around HDC’s Movie Night

• **Business Roundtables**

- President Jones noted that HDC will again work with Hudson Business Coalition (Billy Blowers) to bring back the Business Roundtable meetings.
- Use the results of the Hudson Business Community Survey for first meeting in late August.

• **Business Resilience/Lending Model**

- The uncertainty of the future greatly affects small Hudson businesses; HDC wants to be poised to help them.
- Zoom calls during the pandemic were very successful and helped foster open communication among business community.

- Executive Director Wallen spoke about navigating small business in Hudson: helping to accelerate businesses, protecting businesses during economic uncertainty/slowdown.
- An HDC program to help business survive economic hurdles; a lending model that would be in place.
- Business funding model needs to be developed: how would HDC structure their lending model?
- Bridge loans, granting money would be a big win for HDC, according to President Jones.
- Reach out to Martha Lane (CEDC) for more information.
- Member Coffey noted the legal barriers/requirements for lending as a cautionary note.
- Member Friedman noted that perhaps HDC could start a “fund” with contributions from HDC and solicit other donor’s money to help.
- Need to talk to businesses and understand their needs and assets if HDC were to move forward with this idea.
- John Friedman will follow-up with Martha Lane and get back to HDC next month (pitch deck).

• **Pitch Deck (Andrew Trudeau)**

- Business Community Survey goal is to get to know what local businesses need, what they want, get some numbers around their issues.
- Opportunity for HDC to validate ideas for how HDC can help.
- Topics include current business climate, resource needs, attracting new businesses, opportunities/growth areas.
- Member Trudeau asked the board to think about further questions that may be included in survey.
- Member Coffey would love to understand where business owners experienced friction/challenges in doing business in Hudson.
- Member Zuckerman noted that an important question would be for longtime business owners: what are challenges they have now that they didn’t have when they opened?
- Trained staff, less young people to work, raising rents were among the topics discussed.
- How does HDC incentivize business owners to get them to participate in the survey?
- Member Coffey suggested that HDC could publish an annual HDC State of Business in Hudson in 2025 with 10 key findings that note what other business owners are challenged with, and here’s what they did.
- HDC can be a resource (a conduit) for local business information (ie, here’s what other business owners are experiencing, here’s where/how you can get some help).
- Contact HDC to help you with more information.
- Member Zuckerman suggested HDC could be a real business “connector”, helping business connect with each other to solve staffing issues, etc.

- Challenges, solutions, information; a worthy exercise to fully understand the challenges of doing business in Hudson.
- Executive Director Wallen asked about timing: first email (and Facebook) goes out for 3 weeks, then a follow-up/reminder (or two) in successive weeks.
- Incentive could include \$5 gift cards, send you the results of the survey.
- An Annual Report on the state of Hudson Business from the HDC would be helpful.
- ED Wallen asked about timing: how long will results of survey take to analyze? Can the survey results be finalized in time for late August/early September Hudson Business Roundtable?
- The data collected over time can be useful to business community (has the business community sentiment improved/declined this year, etc).
- Hold a business get-together to celebrate participants in Survey?
- Member Haddad spoke about competing business not really communicating with one another.
- Next steps: pulling questions together, adding HDC member ideas, survey link, and send it out.
- HDC has the HBC mailing list and should consult directly with Billy Blowers.

• Next HDC Regular Board Meeting is Tuesday, June 24th, 2025 @ noon.

With no other business to be conducted, President Jones thanked Board members for their service and asked for motion to adjourn May meeting.

- Secretary Zuckerman so motioned, member Friedman seconded, and motion to adjourn unanimously carried.
- May meeting adjourned @ 1:40 PM

Respectfully submitted by Jan Egan