



DOWNTOWN ALBANY
Business Improvement District

Downtown Albany Business Improvement District
Board of Directors' Meeting
March 9, 2022
Zoom

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Georgette Steffens
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Frank O'Connor, III
PRESIDENT

Elizabeth Young Jojo
VICE-PRESIDENT

Lisa Reddy Farrell
TREASURER

David Sarraf
SECRETARY

ATTENDANCE:

Frank O'Connor, III
Elizabeth Young Jojo
Lisa Reddy Farrell
Riley Ackley
Ken Countermine
Leola Edelin
Lena Hart
Angelo Maddox
Neil McGreevy
Tracy Metzger
Lucas Rogers
Hon. Darius Shahinfar
Frank Zeoli

ABSENT:

David Sarraf
Leyla Kiosse
Mohamed Hemmid
Pamela Nichols

STAFF PRESENT:

Georgette Steffens
Kate Medhus
Rebecca Hughes
Jason Bonafide
Don Wilson

The meeting was called to order by Board President Frank O'Connor at 4:02 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. O'Connor asks for objections to the Consent Agenda and hearing none adopts the Consent Agenda on behalf of the Board.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board Elections

Mr. O'Connor noted that Board elections have started. There are 4 property owner and 1 commercial tenant positions open. He outlined the timeline:

- Nominations are due this Friday, 3/11.
- Statement of Interest Forms are due Friday, 3/25.
- Interviews will be conducted the week of 3/28.
- Nominations will be brought to the Board on Wednesday, 4/13.
- The slate will be announced on Friday, 4/15.
- Petitions are due by Friday, 4/29.
- Voting opens on Monday, 5/2.
- Voting closes on Friday, 5/20.
- Results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 15th from 4-6pm.

Mr. O'Connor added that 2 commercial tenants and 1 property owner have been nominated thus far. He asked that if the Board members have anyone they think would be a great addition to the Board, that they please complete a nomination form and submit it by the end of the week.

City's COVID Recovery Grant

Mr. O'Connor went over the grant applications that the BID has taken part in:

- The BID was the lead on two grant applications:
 - Downtown Office Attraction Program for \$350,000.
 - Wayfinding & Ambassador Program for \$950,000.
- The BID partnered on two grant applications:
 - Citywide Small Business Assistance Program for \$1 million.
 - Art for All (First Friday) for \$400,000.
- The first round of applications was due March 1st. The City has \$25 million allotted in total. They received 147 applications totaling \$141 million in funding requests.
- We anticipate hearing in late March/early April if we will be asked to go through to the second phase of the application.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Farrell noted that there is nothing to report at the moment. At the next meeting, the year-end financials, first-quarter financials, and a statement of financial position will be included in the Consent Agenda. There will also be two contracts for approval.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Clean & Safe

Ms. Hart noted that the Clean & Safe Committee:

- discussed the main gateways into Downtown and identified the fencing around the Liberty Park/E-Comm2 buildings as a potential project.
- identified underpasses and abutments that could be good spots for lighting and/or art and looked at lighting options for both the underpasses and Beaver Alley.
- discussed signage for picking up after dogs as well as spots where waste stations might be beneficial.
- was informed by the APD that the package thief was apprehended and will most likely finish serving the sentence that he was out on parole for.
- will meet and walk through the District later this month to check out the current lighting situation and identify more areas that need attention.

Marketing

Ms. Metzger noted that the Marketing Committee:

- focused on #downtownworks office attraction initiative and enhancing the PR plan at their last meeting. Ms. Hughes has submitted a \$350,000 proposal to the City for funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to use on expanding the #downtownworks program.
- Liz Benjamin, Managing Director of Marathon Strategies, who is working with Capitalize Albany on the #downtownworks initiative provided great perspective and feedback.
- discussed how co-working spaces in Downtown are doing well and that we are likely to see more activity and interest in those.
- discussed ways to attract new energy to offices, new employees and/or tenants. The idea of a Downtown location being a drawn for talent in such a tight job market was impressed upon. They discussed the idea of bringing back the Toolkits for property owners and commercial real estate agents, as well as educating brokers and reminding them of the advantages of being in Downtown.
- is looking for ideas for office tenants to showcase and highlight – folks who are celebrating a big anniversary or are leaders or doing cutting edge work in their industries.

A brief discussion was held about green spaces and how they could add to the draw in attracting office tenants. The possibility of hosting a CIREB event in Downtown was also discussed.

Special Events

Ms. Bonafide noted that the Special Events Committee:

- had two new members this month: Leola Edelin of Renaissance Albany and Kevin Skeen from Food Near Me.
- focused on ideas for a 2022 Placemaking Program. The ideas were as follows:
 - Parklets in parking spaces
 - Life-sized greeting cards for the holidays/winter based on the first Christmas card printed at 518 Broadway
 - Lightmapping and/or projection art
 - Dining in the street program
 - Other ideas and suggestions are welcome

A brief discussion was held on busking and live music as well as outdoor furniture that might be available to borrow and/or have.

Governance

Ms. Jojo noted that the Governance Committee met to discuss candidates for the Jim DiNapoli award. The Committee was presented with the full list of suggestions and narrowed it down to 3 options to bring to the full Board:

- Capital Walls Mural Project with Albany Center Gallery and the Albany Parking Authority
- Carm Basile/CDTA
- Redburn Development

The discussion centered on which projects, entities or persons have had the greatest impact on Downtown and ultimately Redburn Development was selected to recommend to the Board. Ms. Steffens added that the Executive Committee also discussed the list of candidates and felt that Redburn Development was their top choice to receive this year's award. Ms. Jojo abstained from the conversation when Redburn was the topic during both the Executive and Governance Committee meetings.

Mr. O'Connor read the criteria for the Jim DiNapoli award and asked the Board if anyone had any comments or suggestions. A discussion was held, and the Board agreed that Redburn Development should receive the award in 2022 and that Capital Walls should either receive the Norman Rice award at the 2022 Garden Party or receive the Jim DiNapoli award in 2023.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Parking

Ms. Steffens noted that she met with the Parking Authority to discuss the free night and weekend parking arrangement that we've had for the past 3-4 years, and they discussed the following:

- The BID has been paying \$20,000 to the APA in order to provide free parking from 5pm on weeknights and all weekend, both on the street and in the garages.
- The Parking Authority reports that they are averaging only about 18 cars per night in their garages, so they feel that the usage is not very high for the amount of money we are currently paying.
- They are seeing an increase in parking in all three garages when evening events are taking place. They are anticipating that soon there will be events 5 nights per week when the free parking won't apply anyway.
- APA is proposing to instead charge \$5 for parking in the garages on nights and weekends when there are no events, and then partner with the BID on our events to do validated parking, as well as a paid advertising campaign, rather than collecting the \$20,000 in exchange for free garage parking. The meters would still end at 5pm on weeknights as they do now.

Other Business

Ms. Hughes noted that we have the following ribbon cuttings coming up:

- Skinny Pancake tomorrow (March 10th)
- The Yard on March 17th

Ms. Steffens added that the St. Patrick's Day parade is returning this year and is scheduled for Saturday, March 12th.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20PM.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 4:00 PM

21 Lodge St., Second Floor Conference Room