



**DOWNTOWN ALBANY**  
Business Improvement District

**Downtown Albany Business Improvement District  
Board of Directors' Meeting  
December 8, 2021  
Hampton Inn & Suites and Zoom**

21 Lodge Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
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[www.downtownalbany.org](http://www.downtownalbany.org)

**Georgette Steffens**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Frank O'Connor, III**  
PRESIDENT

**Elizabeth Young Jojo**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

**Lisa Reddy Farrell**  
TREASURER

**David Sarraf**  
SECRETARY

ATTENDANCE IN PERSON:

Frank O'Connor, III  
Riley Ackley  
Ken Countermine  
Lena Hart  
Mohamed Hemmid  
Angelo Maddox

ATTENDANCE ON ZOOM:

Elizabeth Young Jojo  
David Sarraf  
Leyla Kiosse  
Lucas Rogers  
Hon. Darius Shahinfar

ABSENT:

Lisa Reddy Farrell  
Leola Edelin  
Pamela Nichols  
Neil McGreevy  
Tracy Metzger  
Frank Zeoli

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 4:04 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**

**Strategic Plan**

Mr. O'Connor noted that an updated version of the Strategic Plan can be found in tonight's packet, and he invited Ms. Steffens to present the updates for the Board.

Ms. Steffens noted that:

- All feedback, notes and items discussed at the last Board meeting have been added to the Strategic Plan along with target dates of completion based on the order of priority.
- Staff feels that these goals are achievable.
- Some items that were initially put down as tactics have now been made objectives, namely increasing foot traffic, and enhancing the parking experience.
- At the next Board meeting we will discuss metrics for measuring the goals set forth in the plan.
- Committees will be developed based on the main goals of the Strategic Plan. They will be Clean and Safe, Marketing, Special Events and Economic Development. Each committee will work on the priorities and tactics set forth within the plan. Each committee will ideally have a Board member as the chairperson and then members can be either Board members or stakeholders.
- There will be two non-committee groups, a Merchants Group, and a Commercial Property Owners Group, which will meet quarterly and semi-annually respectively.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**2022 Budget Approval**

- Ms. Steffens noted that the budget included in tonight's packet is the one that the Budget & Finance and Executive Committees have reviewed with only a few minor changes:
- An SCO settled and we had to pay \$23,000 back to the property owner.
- That same settlement resulted in a \$9.6 million decrease, causing a \$20,000 decrease in our overall budget.

- The Budget & Finance and Executive Committees reviewed the options for the 2022 BID Assessment Calculations and the preferred option is to increase the rate to 0.00279, which is less than we discussed at the November Board meeting.
- Ms. Steffens and Ms. Medhus are finalizing the National Grid Grant and will submit all of the final paperwork in 2021, but reimbursement may not be received until 2022.

A discussion was held regarding raising the BID Assessment tax rate and it was agreed that the proposed option is a good compromise to help balance the budget without having to charge the maximum assessment rate. The Board also encouraged Staff to obtain more sponsorship money to continue to help offset the decrease in the budget.

Mr. O'Connor calls for a motion to adopt the Budget as presented | Mr. Countermine motions | Mr. Hemmid seconds | All approve.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **Updates**

Ms. Steffens presented the following updates from around the District:

- The Enchanted Florist expanded into the former Fifth Tier space next door and had a ribbon cutting on Small Business Saturday.
- Wizard Burger and Banh Mi 47 also had ribbon cuttings.
- Primrose Café in 677 Broadway will have a ribbon cutting on Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup> and Maurice's has opened in their new location on South Pearl and will have their ribbon cutting on Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Skinny Pancake is now open on North Pearl and will hold a ribbon cutting in the near future.
- The money that was left over from the Split the Bill initiative went towards a partnership with Uber where we sponsored free rides up to \$50 throughout Thanksgiving weekend. 90 people took advantage of the program and since there is still money left we plan to do another round during Christmas and New Year's Eve.
- The Shop & Savor SmAlbany contest was launched the week before Small Business Saturday and continued through the week after. Patrons who spent money at Downtown Albany businesses could submit receipts and be entered to win various prizes. 349 receipts were submitted, and it resulted in \$16,000 of spending in Downtown Albany.
- Reports from the business owners regarding Small Business Saturday have been varied, but overall the majority of businesses deemed it to be a success.
- We have launched another round of BOGO gift cards on Cyber Monday with the other remaining Split The Bill funds. \$11,000 worth of gift cards were purchased during the first week and a half of the promotion and there is about \$9,000 remaining. 2,299 gift cards have been purchased since we first launched them, totaling \$111,992. \$50,000 of that have been bonus dollars. Since March \$66,273 has been redeemed and the average total spend has amounted to \$86,817 at our participating businesses.
- The Downtown Decorating Contest has been launched with 13 participating windows. Voting is open until January 3<sup>rd</sup> and the winner will not only get a trophy but will also receive \$200 worth of marketing as well.
- The Hot Chocolate Stroll is this Saturday from 12-4pm. 300 people attended the last one in 2019. This year we capped the participants at 300 and tickets have already sold out. We've partnered with the company that makes the Upstate of Mind clothing and they designed a keepsake mug that everyone who purchased a ticket will receive. The Beaver Alley Market in conjunction with Fort Orange General Store will also be taking place Saturday at the same time and Capitalize Albany will also be promoting the Clinton Market Collective in Federal Plaza.
- The Williams Street Lighting Project is nearly complete. The light installation will be finished by tomorrow and we will put furniture out and have the mural painted in the spring.



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- The Mayor hosted a Covid Task Force reception where she outlined the latest grant money becoming available. There will be specific eligibility requirements and they are encouraging applicants to partner with other organizations or businesses to apply jointly for money. The process will begin in January.

The meeting went into Executive Session at 4:44PM.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55PM.

**Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 4:00 PM**

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