

Hoboken Business Alliance, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Video Conference – September 13, 2022 4:30pm

Present: James Runkle, Edyta Espasa, Pratik Patel, Hany Ahmed, Jennifer Gonzalez, Mario Fini, Chris Mazzola, Phil Cohen, Dave Jacey, Mark Stehli, Catherine Willhoit, Anthony Pino, Jenny Davis

Absent:

Also Present: Roxanne Earley, Daniel Ackerman,

Call to order - 4:33 pm

J. Runkle welcomed everyone and asked **D. Ackerman** to read the Open Public Meetings Act statement. **D. Ackerman** read the statement of compliance with Chapter 231 of the Open Public Meetings Act noting that adequate meeting notice was provided.

The minutes from the July 12th meeting were reviewed. **Motion to approve the July 12th minutes: P. Cohen. Second by P. Patel. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Treasurers Report

P. Patel reported that there is a bank account balance of \$752,832.48 as of July 31st. The Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) shows a balance of \$712,824.07 which accounts for uncleared transactions of \$40,008.41. The reconciliation report shows a register balance of \$709,710.95 as of 8/08 which accounts for additional uncleared transactions after 7/31 of \$3,078.12. **Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report: C. Willhoit. Second by: P. Cohen – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

President's Report

J. Runkle started the meeting by welcoming Roxanne Earley, the new Executive Director of the Hoboken Business Alliance. **J. Runkle** thanked the board members who were able to give extra support and volunteer hours during the search process. **J. Runkle** shared professional highlights from **R. Earley's** work in New York City as well as updated the board on **R. Earley's** significantly active first few days. **J. Runkle** ended by inviting the board members to reach out to **R. Earley** and set up time to meet with her.

R. Earley thanked the board for the opportunity and shared how excited she is to be here.

R. Earley laid out her objectives for the next few months to: 1 – meet with every board member and learn what makes them so passionate about the organization and where we are headed, 2 – learn all about Hoboken from major initiatives to local history, and 3 – to create streamlined processes to help the board focus on governance and guiding the HBA, noting that she wants to make their volunteer jobs easier and full of value.

J. Runkle asked the board to hold space on their calendars for **R. Earley's** introductory press conference on Monday, September 19th at 11am. **J. Runkle** also noted that he and **R. Earley** would be viewing some potential office spaces in the terminal district this week. **P. Cohen** shared that he was lucky to share the news with the City Council last week and is excited to see what we can accomplish.

Committee Reports

Events

D. Ackerman updated the Board on ongoing discussions with the City regarding Irish Heritage Week and the St. Patrick's Day parade. Both **D. Jacey** and **D. Ackerman** have spoken with a number of bar owners, and they committed to not participating in the Con events if the parade was to come back. The Public Safety request from the City has increased to \$137,000 and they are requesting that the HBA contribute \$74,000 to that cost. This increases the total budget to \$232,000 from our initial budget of \$175,000. In addition, the City asked about having the bar owners sign a letter acknowledging they won't participate in the Con events, the City would like to do a public survey to inquire on the community's feelings about bringing the parade back, and the City would like a letter of support from additional non food and beverage businesses stating they support bringing it back.

D. Ackerman said that at the July board meeting the board approved a deposit of \$10,000 toward the production cost and he wants to confirm that everyone is still in support acknowledging the increased budget.

Motion to approve the Cliffhanger Irish Heritage Week Proposal with the release of \$10,000 deposit and further approval contingent on commitment from city: M. Fini. Second by: J. Runkel – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman presented the proposed plan for 1st Street Open Streets noting that the Events Committee met in August and supports moving forward with HBA support. The first event occurred the weekend prior to the board meeting and looked to be an early success with more work to be done. The HBA needs to be the permit holder and sponsor since the bars involved cannot directly pay for OEP police support. In previous years, the City waived the costs involved and this year the HBA has proposed paying roughly 30% of the cost with a reduction in future years. **R. Earley** shared that she sees a great opportunity here and wants to involve more businesses than just the bars. She met this week with a few concerned residents to hear their concerns and thinks there is a path forward that creates a program that works for everyone while being respectful to the neighbors.

D. Ackerman reviewed the financial aspect of the event. The HBA will pay all of the bills involved for a rough total each week of \$2,795 and the bars will contribute \$400 each for a total of \$2,000. Over the course of 9 events, the HBA contribution would not exceed \$7,155 for the direct event costs and an additional amount of \$5,000 for programming. For audit and compliance purposes, we are asking for approval to spend \$30,155 of which we will receive \$18,000 in reimbursement from participants.

Motion to approve a not-to-exceed budget of \$30,155 for programming 1st Street open streets: D. Jacey. Second by: E. Espasa. – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman reported that the Events Committee proposed moving forward with support for the City's Fall Harvest Festival. This event has not happened in 2 or 3 years and the HBA seems like a great partner to bring it back. The Events Committee discussed that our events should reach different audiences and geographies in Hoboken. This event is a great way to reach our residential and family audience and support the businesses that cater to this demographic. Geri Fallo from Cultural Affairs provided a rough budget of \$18,450 and to make sure we have a bit of a buffer we are requesting authorization for a budget of \$20,000. **H. Ahmed** asked about the total previous cost of the event mentioning it is a nice event and the HBA can plan to expand in future. **D. Jacey** also mentioned the potential to expand the event in the future.

Motion to approve a not-to- exceed budget of \$20,000 to support the Fall Harvest Festival: H. Ahmed. Second by: J. Davis. – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman reported on previous discussions regarding the Main Street Pops Holiday Extravaganza proposal for \$40,000. Last year, the HBA produced a holiday market at the Lackawanna Terminal and there was concern over costs lost to contractual fees and staffing related to the transit facility. The proposal this year is for a holiday extravaganza event to run as an expansion of the December 18th Artisan Market. This proposal seeks to incorporate the local businesses near the 14th Street viaduct and layer on additional free programming to appeal to families. The Events Committee expressed support for doing a holiday event and doing programming in the uptown and NW areas of the City. **R. Earley** mentioned that she has ideas for holiday promotions, and while this proposal looks interesting, she has some concerns about the cost and would like more details. The fee for production is \$20,000 and she needs more information to understand if this is reasonable or not. **H. Ahmed** asked about how this will be impactful to the businesses and the community. **D. Ackerman** shared that the proposal seeks to integrate some of the local businesses and would be free to the whole community to participate. **R. Earley** asked for a motion to approve the budget as proposed noting that she will seek to reduce the overall cost or have better justification for the cost.

Motion to approve the Main Street Pops Holiday Extravaganza proposal for \$40,000: E. Espasa. Second by: D. Jacey. – All approved with no opposed, H.Ahmed abstaining.

Visual/Capital

D. Ackerman reported that the board approved a preliminary budget of \$5,000 for the engineering related to the Bistro Lights proposal for Washington St. We received two quotes for this, and both came back over \$5,000. Based on their detailed proposal, **D. Ackerman** recommends we move forward with the proposal from Lahita Engineering at a cost of \$7,500.

Motion to approve the Lahita Engineering proposal for \$7,500: H. Ahmed. Second by: M. Fini – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman reviewed the previous board discussion regarding rodent baiting and a proposed partnership with the City for a citywide rodent program. The board requested rationale and analysis for the HBA contribution. The City reviewed the real estate ratables and found that HBA assessed properties make up 38% of the ratables. The new cost sharing proposal requests that the HBA contribute \$18,840 of the initial cost, which is 30% of the total cost of the 2022

contract. This will get us through the end of the year and then we will need to review the success of the program and decide on the HBA contribution for 2023. **P. Cohen** noted that he has seen paramount exterminating going in and out of manholes related to this work. **M. Fini** asked about requirements for parklets and construction. **J. Gonzalez** reported that there is a requirement and the City is paying closer attention to these areas. **M. Fini** noted that the rodent issue is a huge quality of life issue for Hoboken, if the HBA is going to do things to attract people to visit Hoboken then we need to do these things as well. **D. Jacey** asked about the parklets and mulch beds as problem areas and **J. Gonzalez** reported that parklets need to bait and she was told that mulch beds shouldn't be an issue, but again this is why the citywide program is necessary.

Motion to approve the spending of \$18,840 toward the Paramount Extermination contract: D. Jacey. Second by: J. Runkle – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman shared the fall and winter planting proposal from Hufnagel Landscaping. These plantings are for the ground planters throughout the city, the hanging baskets on Washington St, and the 11th Street Islands. The fall costs are \$31,890 consisting of \$12,000 for the 11th Street Island on both sides, \$7,500 for the Washington St planters and \$12,390 for the citywide planters which are larger. The winter costs are \$49,060 consisting of \$9,500 for the 11th Street Island west side only, \$7,500 for the Washington St planters, \$17,560 for the citywide planters, and \$14,500 for the hanging baskets. We are in discussion about using evergreen trees in the larger citywide planters, which will reduce our costs in the future. We are also in discussion about a community plant adoption event for early October.

Motion to approve the Hufnagel Landscaping fall and winter planting proposal at a total cost of \$80,950: H. Ahmed. Second by: E. Espasa – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman reviewed the proposal for an additional base to elevate the existing holiday tree used at 11th Street Island. We received two quotes for a new base and would like to move forward with the lower quote from Rileighs who supplied us with the original tree.

The board discussed additional holiday ideas including the Santa float and enhancing the holiday tree lighting with additional lighting and hot chocolate.

Motion to approve the purchase of an extension for the panel tree from Rileighs at a cost of \$4,246: H. Ahmed. Second by: D. Jacey – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman presented the proposal for the overall management including installation, de-installation and storage of our existing holiday lights. The Capital and Visual Committee reviewed several proposals previously and decided to support moving forward with Christmas Décor. There is still additional work to be done on the placement and locations for the new bracket lights as well as the potential use of a menorah that the vendor has in stock.

Motion to approve the proposal from Christmas Décor for the installation, deinstallation and storage of the holiday lights at a cost of \$30,850: E. Espasa. Second by: P.Cohen – All approved with no opposed or abstentions

Art Mural

D. Ackerman updated the board on the proposed mural installation by Michelle Hoogevelde on Garage B. There was a public hearing on September 7th and the comments from the public were all relatively supportive of the project but concerned about the use of funds during stressful times and more diversity in public art. The comments from the councilmembers were about the useful life of the garage similar to the HBA discussion. The HBA board previously approved a budget of \$87,625 and we are now projecting a budget of \$67,025. The HBA board expressed a desire to request a payback if the redevelopment project moves forward within 5 years. While we won't be able to get that in writing, the City has expressed that they believe the garage will be around for 5 years. **P. Cohen** and **H. Ahmed** shared that they don't envision any development project moving this quickly.

Parking

D. Ackerman updated the board that the parking committee has met twice since the last board meeting and are working on two major initiatives. The first is to create more awareness about city parking garage availability and we are testing a few ways to show the # of available spaces in each garage to encourage people to use the garages. Once we get this up and running, we will look at a few ways to promote this and drive people to the website. The second initiative is to work with a Parking Logix, a private third-party parking solution provider. Parking Logix provides lot management products, signage and sensors. We have a proposal from Parking Logix to outfit a private garage with sensors to track the current availability. We can then add this data to our website, place signs in the public realm that indicate availability at garage head. Parking is available in Hoboken! We just need to promote the availability of the parking. We have not yet identified a private garage partner and that is our next step, luckily, we have several options. Ideally, we find partners who want to work together and eventually we might be able to encourage more promotions etc. with private operators as well as with the City. **H. Ahmed** remarked that this is an important topic for the HBA to be working on and inquired about ways to help landlords and businesses with information, discounted parking programs and other ideas. **D. Jacey** mentioned the old valet parking program inquiring about the status.

Motion to approve the proposal from Parking Logix at an initial cost of \$8,469.75 with annual data fees of \$1,105 for a total cost of \$9,575: D. Jacey. Second by: H. Ahmed – All approved with no opposed or abstentions

Old Business - None

New Business

J. Runkle shared that the City would like to partner with the HBA to repaint the Hoboken Mural on the NJ Transit trestle entering into the City, as well as launch a signage project for the gateways. The City has prepared an RFP and the HBA will be involved in the process. At this time, the HBA is not committing any funds but that is certainly a discussion to be had.

Public Session - None

Motion to adjourn **J. Runkle**. Second: **E. Espasa**. 5:43 pm - Approved

Next Board Meeting October 4, 2022