

Board Meeting Minutes
Hoboken Business Alliance, Inc.
March 3, 2020
Hoboken Business Center-4:30pm

Call to order/Roll Call Announcements- 4:43pm

Present: Hany Ahmed, Greg Dell Aquilla, Edyta Espasa, Dian Fini, Councilwoman Tiffanie Fisher, Eugene Flinn, Donna Garban, Jennifer Gonzalez, Armando Luis, Meghan Lukin, Chris Mazzola, Carol Swift

Absent: Donna Garban

Also Present: Natalie Chape', Stuart Koperweis

Adoption of February 4, 2020 Minutes

MOTION: to accept February 4, 2020 Minutes –D. Fini, Second by – G. Dell Aquilla

Presidents Report

E. Flinn mentioned we are due \$1.3 million from the City Assessment and of that we were only given \$189k. **S. Koperweis** has been in contact with the Tax Collectors office and they are looking into this and we should have an answer this week. **S. Koperweis** has advised we have spent about \$35k to date.

Cleaning: E. Flinn was approached by one the DPW workers the other day who said to him “we are losing our jobs because of the SID”. With all the layoffs the City is doing right now he feels hiring a cleaning company now is a very delicate situation. **T. Fisher** feels we should wait and not hire the cleaning company right away so that the DPW employees do not feel they lost their jobs because of the HBA.

G. Dell Aquilla disagrees and would like to see the HBA staff cleaning the streets, although he does agree it could be a touchy issue. **E. Flinn** does agree that we need to go ahead with all of our services but maybe not right now. **H. Ahmed** suggested we focus our cleaning efforts on CBD and not the entire City right now, to avoid controversy. It was decided to hold off for three months; however we should still keep looking at companies.

J. Gonzalez will “clear the rumor”, however she agrees with **Councilwoman Fisher**. **S. Koperweis** asked for someone from the City to clarify at the council meeting that the HBA is NOT involved with City layoffs, to put on record.

Treasurers Report

S. Koperweis advised reports are not available at this time. We will have QuickBooks running by the end of the week, pending on line set up. Once everything is set up, we will have Treasures Reports and will be sent to Treasurer for approval prior to Board Meetings.

Marketing

Marketing firm: **C. Mazzola** gave an update on the Marketing Firm and where we are. We have an agreement from Branding Shorts that was reviewed with **S. Koperweis**. **S. Koperweis** went down the list of items and the pricing per agreement. The monthly retainer fee of \$7,250 raised a lot of questions regarding what is “included” and “not included”. The concern seemed to be whether we would be nickel and dimed by them. **S. Koperweis** mentioned they were available for a phone call.

We made a list of questions to ask them in advance to save time on the phone call.

D. Fini would like to know if they will set up a text and email available. Will they help us set up a text and email list?

A. Luis would like to know what the level of social media is for this price?

H. Ahmed would like to know how often they would come and present to us.

M. Lukin would like to know what is the strategy for getting more followers and setting up IG contests.

After the call and having a conversation with Branding Shorts they assured us there would be no extra charge for extra communication with them or extra social media posts and they will be flexible with what is included in the fee. They also mentioned they will have a kick off session and a social media session to discuss how we launch. They also stated content can be out in 1-2 days after designed. Their contract states they need 60-90 days to get everything going, board advised them that is not going to cut it, needs to be more like 15 days. They advised that is cutting it close but they will get it done. There will be a kick off meeting next week. As far as the social media and data collection questions, we will have to wait till Shari (Branding Shorts) is available to speak on this.

MOTION: to accept Branding Shorts Contract as presented–D. Fini, Second – G. Aquilla. Approved.

Arts & Music Festival: **S. Koperweis-** stated that we last left it that we would ask our business owners on Washington Street if they would like to get a spot in front of their store, limiting it to the first 50 who respond. He informed the Board that the City has finally gotten back to our request; and stated that they do not feel this is the time for the HBA businesses to do this. They mentioned there are a lot of “regular” vendors and they like their regular spots; which may be in front of a Washington Street business. They suggested we can try again in the fall.

E. Flinn feels we should have a list of paid business owners and advocate that they get their spot in front of their store, and if they can’t we should go to the Mayors Office. **H. Ahmed** feels **S. Koperweis** should communicate to Mayor and Council that we want businesses to be more involved in the festival and be in front of their store. **A. Luis** has stated this festival is wrong and is not good for business.

G. Aquilla has suggested we put forth a resolution that goes in front of the City Council. **S. Koperweis** has asked everyone to please allow him to continue working with Gerri

and Jason. If that doesn't work he will then go in front of the Mayor. This is a process and we can potentially have the opportunity to do it the way we want in the fall. **S. Koperweis** is waiting for list that exists in City of paid businesses. **He will have list within two weeks; once we have we can determine next steps.** We should get a letter together to the businesses that says: If you are interested in participating in the festival in the fall, HBA can help you.

Visual/Capital

Update on Environmental Services: **J. Gonzalez** and **S. Koperweis** reviewed email update of 2.26.20 as follows –

Tree guards and Tree inventory is taking place. We are waiting for full inventory to see which pits require replacement and what trees need to be replaced. Once we have we can then decide how to proceed. There is a meeting scheduled for **March 10th** with the Shade Tree Commission with **S. Koperweis** and **E. Flinn** attending. **Will follow up.**

Curb/Sidewalk we would like to offer grant program. Discussion: Who should get? There was mention that if city sites a violation that should be our trigger to assist. Then the question was how much should we offer? What is the actual costs? **A. Luis** stated that his property cost about \$40k for forty feet. Thus, the point is what the HBA percentage should be to contribute as we cannot pay full amount for all who need. **Maybe we can look into grant from state or city tax abatements. Follow up.**

Utility Box Inventory is in progress. Once complete will contact PSEG, Verizon and Altice to **make sure we can clean, then paint or shrink wrap.**

Waste Collection – Garbage were looking to see if we can have HBA sanitation contractor to increase the frequency of collection or provide specific collection say at 5:00 PM every day using HBA logo bags. **As per discussion above on hiring cleaning service, this is on hold.**

Street Light inventory, looking to get full list in excel so we can determine what hardware is on each to determine plantings.

List of City Events to coordinate with all so we can produce master calendar. **Working with J. Gonzalez to finalize.**

Banners as noted above need to determine poles. Once done we need to set up a policy of what banners and where in conjunction with City. **Follow up.**

City Business List still do not have complete list. Need to work with **J. Gonzalez** and follow up. **E. Flinn** is upset that we do not have this completed by now.

Plantings: Discussion on getting quotes from firms that do both plantings and water/maintenance. Working with several firms, need to finalize. There was discussion on the type of flower baskets for hanging and whether there should be flower pots on streets. **S. Koperweis** will work with **J. Gonzalez** as to locations/quantity. The board would prefer the double “C” clamshell baskets around the poles as opposed to double hanging arms. Looking to set this up for Mother's Day.

Old Business

Hardship committee: Looking to set up meeting for March 10 or 12. **Will confirm next week.**

Retail Market Analysis: Reviewed information from Buxton. Need to set up follow up meeting so all board members can attend, so can ask questions directly. **S. Koperweis** will set up for either March 10 or 12.

MOTION: to adjourn meeting– D. Fini, Second M. Lukin – 6:39pm

Next Meeting April 7, 2020