

**COVID-19 Emergency**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Hoboken Business Alliance, Inc.**  
**March 16, 2020**  
**Conference Call-2:00pm**

**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:**

**Also Present:** Natalie Chape', Stuart Koperweis

**President E. Flinn** has requested this board meeting to put together some ideas of things we can do to help our businesses during this terrible time.

Conversations were had on different opinions / ideas, such as: Financial Packages, Marketing Strategies and a Parking Plan for when the crisis is over.

**E. Flinn** feels the Mayor moved too quickly on this matter with making the decision to close the businesses. Although he knows health comes first, he stated most restaurants had already shopped for product that now has to be discarded. He says he is disappointed that the HBA doesn't have a seat at the table. He also **made mention that we need to get these businesses help with resources they may need now!**

**C. Mazzola** and others agreed that we need to be doing more behind the scenes work to help them. We need to continue with our Marketing Company and do everything that needs to be done so when the businesses come out of this **we are ready to hit the ground running.** He disagreed with **E. Flinn** and stated the Mayor is doing a great job. He **does not feel a financial packet for all businesses is going to be useful** because of how quickly everything is moving with this COVID-19 spread. **A. Luis** agrees that we need to **move forward with RMA, Marketing plan** etc. We can not put these items on hold because the businesses will need us the most when we all come out of this.

**T. Fisher** would like to see a business list in place so we can communicate to our businesses throughout and keep them updated with different ways the HBA can assist them; even if it's just **giving them the resources they need to get grants and loans, etc.** **S. Koperweis** mentioned we did get a list from the City. The list is not complete and it has a bunch of duplicates but we are currently working with that list and cleaning it up. We will reach out to businesses, as many as we can and get more contact information from them as we go. He also suggested getting interns to assist with the process of getting more contacts. **T. Fisher** would like to assist with this list. **S. Koperweis** sent to her and **N. Chape'** who will split it and update.

**D. Fini** believes we **need to get our website up ASAP** even if it's a site called "hobokenhelps" or something to that effect. We need to get our social media up and running and all that information needs to be easily accessible right away. **S. Koperweis** has already been in communication with

Branding Shorts (BS) and they have put together their recommendations and are ready to move on this right away. **S. Koperweis** sent the email from Tony (BS) to the Board for review.

**H. Ahmed** stated our job right now is to enforce issues with government. He suggested ideas like coming up with a parking plan for when all these businesses are back up and running so people can move around again. We should have a sub committee of people who are going to concentrate on what government is doing now! (See below, **Government Policy Committee**)

**H. Ahmed** also had an idea he presented to **C. Mazzola** of pre-paid debit cards. They are gift cards that are backed up with money that customers can spend at any business in Hoboken. This needs to be discussed further as to the type of gift card or certificates.

Conversation was had about the planters and whether or not we need to go ahead with ordering them or not. Some disagreed that we should not worry about that now and we should not spend our money on that right now. **S. Koperweis** made the point that this is just to have them. If we order them now we can have them ready by May and hopefully by then all is back to normal. **C. Swift** disagreed with waiting and thinks we should install them right away because Hoboken should look beautiful even during difficult times. After some conversation on this topic, all agreed we should continue with ordering planters so that we are ready to go when we get the green light from the government.

**C. Mazzola** suggested that **E. Flinn** be our “seat at the table” that was mentioned. He stated, **E. Flinn** is our President and should be our voice in the City. He suggested he keep knocking on Mayor’s door.

**C. Mazzola** also nominated **H. Ahmed** to be the Chairman of the **Government Policy Committee** as he feels he would be the best fit to Chair this Committee. **H. Ahmed** accepted, with the help of **T. Fisher**; which will handle all the administrative work for him. **E. Flinn** as president is automatically on this Committee as is **S. Koperweis**.

**E. Flinn** would like for everyone to send an email with their ideas on how we all feel on moving forward. No opinions, just ideas and we will compile and speak again once they are all in. Also he mentioned that we need to all submit the questionnaire for the Marketing Company ASAP. These were asked to be submitted last week and we only have 4 in at this time.