



## **Manager's Report to West Chester BID Board of Directors**

Malcolm Johnstone, Executive Director | March 7, 2020 – April 10, 2020

### **Billing and action planning**

I'm working with Ghana, the Public Information Support Analyst, Chester County Department of Computing and Information Services, to acquire 2019 assessment data. Steve Pitcherella once again is assisting in the process of preparing the assessment billing for 2020. In May (or no later than June), the Board will need to pass a resolution supporting the assessment billing.

*I need to be clear*—this is not a routine process this year. Before the billing goes out, the BID needs to develop a recovery program for downtown (see below) and then advise our downtown stakeholders of our actions. It needs to be clear that the BID will be focused on a recovery plan and our constituent support is needed.

### **Board meeting**

A majority of the Executive Board agreed to have an informal, unadvertised BID Board meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 11:00am. It will take place remotely. Mark Yoder is managing the Zoom meeting.

Topic: BID Board Meeting

Time: Apr 14, 2020 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6037790869?pwd=ZmhsOE1SK2xhZE1CcHdqL2Z0N1dIQT09>

Meeting ID: 603 779 0869

Password: chamber

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,6037790869#,,#702677# US (New York)

+13126266799,,6037790869#,,#702677# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

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+1 253 215 8782 US

+1 301 715 8592 US

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 603 779 0869

Password: 702677

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6037790869>

### **COVID-19 background**

On Saturday, March 14, Gov. Wolf made his first declaration of emergency which was quickly followed by Mayor Herrin's declaration. Mayor Herrin, Rep. Carolyn Comitta, Mark Yoder, and I discussed initial actions Saturday Night. From that point, I began actively working with Mayor Herrin. I worked a full day Sunday and spoke with persons at over 40 establishments. It was mostly about Gov. Wolf having issued a disaster declaration for Chester County requiring most retail/restaurant businesses to be shut down to customers except for online sales, food take-out, and delivery sales. Of course, the BID/Chamber office is closed to the public. But Elizabeth and I are continuing BID operations to address downtown business needs.

Elle created a graphic for supporting businesses and placed it on the homepage with links to the restaurant and retail directories (DowntownWestChester.com). The week before Easter she created the Easter Specials campaign for restaurants and we're supporting it with social media. Amy Trout (Charlie and Co. Barbershop) and Susan Sluk (eat. drink. Om. YOGA CAFE) created #AWorldOfHearts window decorating campaign which is getting amazing social media response.

### **Together We Can**

Mayor Herrin and I are now directing our attention to a downtown recovery program. It's no secret that many downtown businesses—particularly retail—are distressed to the point of permanently closing. We will be asking BID board members to support the recovery programs we are looking at and want to begin implementing as soon as possible:

- **Local small-business loan program.** While SBA programs like PPP appear to be good, they can be extremely difficult to procure. I am currently working on creating a local loan program to provide immediate help.
- **Small business rent relief program.** We will be working with landlords to help negotiate reasonable temporary solutions for small business rent structures.

In the meantime, I am also keeping a BID webpage up-to-date with available resources for businesses such SBA, SCORE, and Main Street. You can link to it home from the homepage at DowntownWestChester.com.

Attached is the letter from Mayor Herrin outlining her *Together We Can: West Chester Community Meal Fund*.

### **Carol Lady making changes**

Carol Lady, the BID bookkeeper, has accepted a full time position at another agency. She has indicated that she will assist whenever and however she can. We will need to discuss all options.



**BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER**  
PENNSYLVANIA

DIANNE HERRIN  
MAYOR

MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
401 E. GAY STREET  
WEST CHESTER, PA 19380  
PHONE: (610) 696-1452

March 26, 2020

Dear Business Owner:

The unprecedented time we are in has brought about many challenges, but it has also showed how strong we are as a community. The restaurant community, in particular, has stepped up to provide meals for residents affected by the pandemic – the elderly, low-income, immunocompromised, and unemployed.

Over the past weeks, a number of restauranteurs have contacted The Mayor's Office to find out who was most in need. Hundreds of meals were donated to feed our community through the West Chester Senior Center, Safe Harbor Homeless Shelter, and Denney Reyburn Apartments. As our restaurants face economic challenges of their own, a more sustainable approach is needed for them to keep providing meals for residents in need.

The Mayor's Office, in partnership with the Chester County Community Foundation, has therefore established the *Together We Can: West Chester Community Meal Fund* to collect donations, which will reimburse restaurants to carefully prepare nutritious meals for our residents in need. We are excited about this venture, as it helps provide a revenue source for restaurants and food purveyors during this economically challenging time, while aiding those in need. The fund is now live on the Foundation's site here: <https://chescocf.org/fund/food-for-wc-seniors/>.

All interested restaurants and purveyors should contact my assistant, Emily Pisano ([episano@west-chester.com](mailto:episano@west-chester.com)) to be placed on a participant list and matched with needs in our community. All participating businesses will be given guidelines for meal preparation and will be refunded for the cost of food, packaging, and labor.

Thank you for your unending commitment to the community. We're all in this together.

Kind Regards,

Dianne Herrin, Mayor  
Borough of West Chester, PA