

WEST CHESTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

OCTOBER 13, 2020

(WEBEX)

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|-------|---|--------------------------|
| I. | Introductions & Public Comment: | (S. Riper) |
| II. | Approval of September Minutes: | (S. Riper) |
| III. | Comments of Chair: | (S. Riper) |
| IV. | Executive Director Report: | (J. O'Brien) |
| V. | Treasurer/Finance: <i>(See Reports)</i> | (M. Reese) |
| VI. | WCDF Update: | (M. Holliday) |
| VII. | Borough Update: | (B. Flynn) |
| VIII. | Committee Reports: <i>See Reports</i> | |
| | -Advocacy / Design | (J. Dietrich) |
| | -Business Attraction | (D. Wroten / K. Winston) |
| | -Marketing / Holiday Task Force | (T. Crisp) |
| IX. | Other Business: | |

Next Meeting: Tues., November 10, 2020 – 8am

Board meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month)

WEST CHESTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
137 N. HIGH ST.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Webex
September 8, 2020

Present Board: P. Campbell, J. Dietrich, B. Flynn, M. Holliday, J. Long, J. Maxwell, L. Nelson, R. May, M. Reese, S. Riper, W. Scott, D. Wroten,
Absent Board: T. Crisp, A. Wetzel, K. Winston
Present Other: Julie Fitzpatrick – PA Downtown Center, Steve Pitcherella
BID Staff: J. O’Brien, Ruth Agbokah – BID Intern

- I. Introductions and Public Comment:** (S. Riper) Welcomed Ruth Agbokah. (*See Exec. Dir. Report*) During her internship with the BID, Ruth will focus on implementing some small events, evaluate our marketing strategy, assist businesses with improving their Google Business Profile, and help with the RFP to create a new website. Ruth will also assist with the reauthorization.
- II. Approval of August Minutes:**
Motion to approve August 2020 Minutes
Motion Passed: (J. Maxwell / D. Wroten)
- III. Comments of Chair: (S. Riper)**
West Chester BID 5 Year Plan: Thank you to Julie Fitzpatrick, Steve Pitcherella and the task force for their efforts in pulling together the preliminary plan. (J. Fitzpatrick) Facilitated one-on-one interviews and focus groups with property and business owners, and gained a true sense of feedback on where the BID needs to be from an organizational perspective.

It is noted that on the map there are two properties that need to be highlighted in green, and one change to the written description of the map, which needs to be updated to match the map route.

Motion to approve distribution of the Preliminary West Chester BID 5 Year Plan, as amended, to Property and Business Owners, no later than Sept. 11, 2020.

Motion Passed: (M. Holliday / M. Reese)

Executive Director Report - See Full Report

Timeline of Approval Process for West Chester BID 5 Year Plan

-The Plan will be mailed to all downtown property and business owners by Sept. 11, 2020.

-The 9/11 mailing begins the 30-day window for public comment.

-The public hearing will be advertised for Tues., Oct. 20, 2020 at 6:30 pm at Borough Hall during Council’s work session.

-If there are no substantive changes to the plan, the BID will do a mailing to property owners with notification of the 45-day objection period

-If objections do not reach 40% of commercial parcels in the BID, Council will be able to vote to reauthorize the West Chester BID at the December meeting.

Received input from the BID’s solicitor, our consultant, and the Borough solicitor to draw up the Municipal Services Agreement, and Ordinance. The BID solicitor will advertise the October Public Hearing in the Daily Local News.

Website RFP: The hope is to have an RFP out in September, and the new website in place by the end of 2020.

Downtown Events: Ruth is working on Storybook Walking Tour, Halloween Decorating Contest, Trick or Treating in the downtown, and Sidewalk Chalk Art.

Gay Street Marketplace Survey: The BID will be conducting formal polling of the businesses on Gay St. and off Gay St. to determine the impact the closure is having on the downtown. The results of the poll will be provided to Borough Council in September.

Budget Finances Survey: Working with R. May and the Borough Ad Hoc Finance Comm. on a survey to determine how the Borough’s finances will impact the downtown business community.

- IV. Treasurer / Finance: (M. Reese) *See Reports***
Checking account balance at end of August \$186k. Line of Credit paid to \$0. UDAG checking account open. Inflow of this year's assessments are comparable with previous years. Late notices will go out later in September. The Finance Committee met to make revisions to this year's budget. About ten line items, totaling approx. \$40k, are being reallocated to four line items: M. Johnstone's Vacation/PETO Payout; Intern; PBID Mgr. CRM; Website Redesign
- V. WCDF: (M. Holliday)** Board recently completed community grant project. The committee met and reviewed seventeen applications requesting a total of close to \$40k. Unfortunately, CCCF provided numbers based on March / April market, rather than what it has been since it recovered, so a less than \$15k awarded this year. The Board is currently considering some requests for funding for holiday initiatives.
- VI. County Update: (Comm. Maxwell)** Working with CCCF to implement a \$3M grant program for smaller non-profits.
- VII. Borough Update: (B. Flynn)** The Borough is having meetings with Penn-DOT and Harrisburg to discuss the possibility of the state turning Gay Street back to the Borough. PECO has fired their contractor, and they have not yet hired a new contractor. A resident asked the Borough to offer free parking on First Fridays. (Bernie noted that the Borough is losing approx. \$34k/month in parking revenues due to the Gay Street closure)
- VIII. Committees: *See Reports***
-Advocacy/Design: (J. Dietrich) Everything covered in report.
-Business Attraction: (D. Wroten) New website will allow for better tracking of available spaces.
-Customer Attraction: (S. Riper) Developing a task force to focus on the holiday shopping season.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 – 8am – Webex.

Executive Director Report October 13, 2020

Reauthorization

The BID mailed out a copy of the five-year reauthorization packet to every property owner and business in the BID. The BID's lawyer, Amanda Sundquist from Unruh, Turner, Burke & Frees, met with Kristin Camp, the borough's solicitor, to formalize the municipal agreement and the borough ordinance reauthorizing the BID.

The notice for public hearing was placed in the Daily Local News on October 5th. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday October 20th at 6:30 p.m. through the Borough's WebEx system. Assuming everything at the hearing goes according to plan, the BID will mail out to the property owners how they can object to the five-year plan. If less than 40% of the property owners object, then council will be able to vote for reauthorization on December 16th during their regular council meeting.

Assessment Collections

We currently have 29 outstanding assessments. One of those outstanding assessments is for a property owner that is in a board approved payment plan. There are two outstanding assessments for a property owner who passed away. The BID sent a letter to the remaining 26 reminding them that their payments are late and to please make quick effort to pay. A late fee has not been applied.

Holiday Taskforce

The BID has put together a holiday taskforce, comprised of 12 business owners from stores throughout the town, to find ways to promote the downtown during the holiday season. The group is meeting every other week. Since events are limited due to COVID-19, there will be a real effort to create more ambience in the downtown to draw customers. The BID will be allocating \$15,000 to this effort. We will be purchasing lights to wrap all the light poles in the downtown. Public Works has agreed to hang these lights for us. We are also looking to buy additional decorations to be placed throughout the downtown. Additionally, we will be using part of the \$15,000 to market West Chester for the Holidays and Shop Small Weekend.

Downtown Events

The Story Walk is now up and running. We have gotten some good feedback via the library from some of their patrons. We distributed flyers and promoted online, Halloween Window Decorating in the downtown. We will promote participating stores on social media. We have decided not to pursue trick or treating in the downtown out of concerns for the pandemic.

Website Update

The RFP was issued on Sept 30th to five companies. The companies have until 5 pm on Monday October 19th to provide a proposal to the BID. A group of board members consisting of Sandra Riper, Jonathan Long, and Denise Wroten will decide on the winning proposal. The plan is to have a company selected by October 30th. Depending on the proposal, we are hoping to have the new website up and running by early 2021.

Google Business Profiles

Google My Business is a free tool that allows small business owners to promote their business information on Google Search and Maps. With Google My Business, you can connect with your customers, post updates to your business profile, and see how customers are interacting with your business on Google.

Our goal at the BID is to make sure that your business is optimally positioned for success! Ruth is going to be leading this effort and working directly with businesses to enhance their presence on Google. If you are interested in participating please contact Ruth at ruth@wcbid.com.

PECO Update

PECO has rebid the project and has not announced a new contractor. At this point they are expecting the project to resume in December.

Gay Street Open Air Market

I surveyed 44 businesses along Gay St to see if the Open-Air Market was helping their business, hurting their business, or having no effect on their business. 61% said it was helping, 25% said it was hurting, and 14% said it had no effect.

PennDOT and the FHWA granted an extension of the Gay St permits to November 29th. The resolution that council passed in June had the closure going until November 15th. I have asked Council to provide some clarity so that the BID can remove the concrete blocks at the appropriate time.

The BID continues to promote mask wearing in the downtown. We have purchased additional signs to remind people of the importance of wearing their mask when walking around.

MAIN STREET STRONG	
GAY STREET OPEN-AIR MARKETPLACE BUDGET	
UDAG FUNDS	
ITEM	COST
Bin blocks	\$ 3,200.00
Bin Block Removal	\$ 1,500.00
Hand sanitizing stations (n=16)	\$ 5,100.00
Batteries+Refills	\$ 1,299.00
Wells Fargo Signs	\$ 300.00
Traffic Cones	\$ 219.50
Roadway signage	\$ 5,300.00
PennDOT engineering consultant	\$ 6,440.00
Chestnut Street restriping	\$ 12,450.00
Safety signage & posters	\$ 2,134.05
	\$ 37,942.55

Donations and Income	
Donation from Downtown Foundation for Signs	\$ (2,500.00)
University Tees Donation	\$ (343.90)
MainStreet Strong Tee Shirts	\$ (540.00)
<u>TOTAL</u>	\$ 34,558.65

Minutes

8:00 am/ZOOM
September 11, 2020
Advocacy & Design Committee

-- Introductions- Roy Smith, Will Williamson, Pattie Campbell, John O'Brien, Sandy Riper

-- Minutes

-- Discussion

- Clean and Green Program Budget
 - Banner Program- PAC took over the banner program. Moving banners around. Focusing on Christmas time during Event for a walking history tour.
 - Bike Rakes- The BID had been approached by "The Fence Authority" on a donation of bike rakes for the downtown. John O'Brien is going to do more exploration of the types of bike rakes that are optimal for West Chester.
 - Information Kiosks- The committee discussed the idea of placing information kiosks in the downtown. The question centered on whether the group should pursue an app-based information center or a physical kiosk. No decision was reached.
 - West Chester Visitors Center- The committee also discussed placing a small Welcome Center in the lobby of 137 N High St. John O'Brien is going to have further conversations with Dave Fairman from the GWWCC as to what possibilities there are.
- Mask Wearing in Downtown- The BID purchased additional signs that have been hung instructing people that Mask Are Mandatory in the downtown. While mask wearing is improving it is not where we want it to be. A discussion was held again about enforcement of mask wearing. There is no mechanism in the governor's executive order for enforcement. John has been working the PD and the mayor to find ways to encourage more mask wearing in downtown West Chester.
- Governor's Latest Announcement on Restaurants- The governor announced that on September 21st restaurants could go to 50% occupancy if they self-certified they were ready based on a list of criteria. That list won't be available until the 21st. The governor also announced that restaurants would be required to stop selling alcohol at 10 p.m.
- Chestnut Street Garage- The BID is working with the borough and local restaurants to allow alcohol sales on the roof of the garages to create the possibility of a pop-up restaurant using the space. Borough council will decide this issue at their September meeting.

-- Updates

- 5 Year Plan- The BID mailed out the 5-year plan to all businesses and property owners in the district. The public hearing on the 5-year plan will occur on Tuesday October 20th at 6:30 p.m. before Council's work session.
- West Chester Post Office- The BID has reached out to Congresswoman Houlihan's office about finding funds for the repair of the West Chester Post Office. The congresswoman's office originally suggested grant funding, but since it is a federal building that will not work. Conversations will continue about how to find the resources to make adequate repairs to the building.

-- Items not on the agenda

-- Meetings in 2020: Second Friday of the month, 8:00 am; except May 8 moved to May 15 and October 9 moved to October 16.

Business Attraction Committee Minutes

8:00 am/ZOOM
October 6, 2020

- Introductions- Denise Wroten, Ken Winston, Tom Walsh, Phil Bieg, Ruth Agbokah, John O'Brien
- Minutes- No revision to the September minutes were requested.
- Discussion
 - Review List of Open Properties- The committee has reviewed the list of properties that are for sale and for lease. John O'Brien gave an update on tours he had at Align Space, 9 N High St, and 17 E Market. The committee discussed how many first-floor retail spaces are currently available.
 - West Chester University Center for Community Solutions- The BID has been approved by the Center for Community Solutions to have work done on two projects.
 - The first project will be mapping vacant properties. The university's Geographic Information Systems department will map the downtown and highlight vacant properties and available properties. This is hoped to be an ongoing project with the University and the goal is to incorporate this into the website.
 - The second project will be a "Market Study" of West Chester. The goal of this study will be to examine the key amenities such as income level, age, demographics, parking, tax base, etc. that West Chester has and see how that lines up with companies looking to site a new location. This will give the committee the ability to better target companies and industries that would be more naturally willing to relocate to West Chester.
 - Improving Bicycling in the Downtown
 - The committee discussed how to improve biking routes in West Chester. With the county making a concerted effort to expand trails in Chester County, we want to ensure that West Chester is part of the conversation.

The BID is going to put together a group to discuss ideas like additional signage and infrastructure like bike parking in the downtown.

- Updates
 - The Gay Street Open Air Market permit has been extended until November 29th. The borough resolution that originally authorized the shutdown had the Open-Air Market going until November 15th. John O'Brien has asked Borough Council for clarity on when the barriers will be removed. Denise Wroten expressed concern with traffic issues. Specifically, people being confused and kids on bikes and skateboards riding with traffic. John O'Brien is going to follow up with West Chester PD.
 - New Businesses in Downtown West Chester
 - Classic Kitchens is opening in October in the building formally housing Old Soul Décor.
 - West Chester Food Co-Op is going into the old Susquehanna Brewing Company on East Market.

- Items not on the agenda

West Chester BID
Customer Attraction / Marketing Committee
September 17, 2020 - 8am
Zoom

PRESENT: E. Brittingham, K. Cavin, P. Comerford, T. Crisp, M. Martinez, P. Mavrides, S. Riper,
V. Tettamanti - **BID STAFF:** J. O'Brien, R. Agbokah, E. McGuire

Introductions: Ruth Agbokah - Intern

Budget / Plan: Contacted *En Route* Marketing to pull together a fall / holiday campaign proposal, with emphasis on digital. Among *En Route's* clients are the Chester Co. Brandywine Valley Conference & Visitor Bureau, and the Chestnut Hill Business District. Cost: \$6,750. The proposal just came in last evening, so John will review and then send to the Board for feedback, and share with the Holiday Task Force, scheduled to meet on Tues. Finance will take a closer look at the BID budget to determine what dollars are available for Fall / Holiday marketing efforts. John will be meeting with Jo Anne Durako, County Lines Magazine, to discuss replacing articles about the downtown with a series of full-page ads. Waiting for more info from Fig about their direct mail piece.

Updates:

BID paid for and distributed additional signs to remind visitors to wear a mask. The larger, more eye catching signs are strategically placed at eight locations along Gay St. West Chester currently has 66 COVID cases that are the result of people in their early twenties attending large house parties. The state has applied to the Federal Highway Administration for a 180-day extension of existing street closure permits, which, if approved, could allow for closures through March 2021. The Borough is in meetings with the state to discuss reclaiming Gay Street as a local road, so there would be more flexibility with closures. The idea of pop-up restaurants and retail shops on the rooftop of the Chestnut Street garage is being explored. However, the sale of alcohol on the rooftop is one of several hurdles that has to be addressed before final approvals would be considered. John polled the business owners on Gay St. on the impact the closure is having on their business. Of the 44 polled 61% - Positive; 25% - Negative; 14% - Neutral. John will continue polling to the off Gay St. businesses, and give the results to Borough Council in Sept.

The Holiday task Force has begun to meet every other Tues., and is currently discussing an in-town Trick or Treat, Halloween Window Decorating, and ideas for an enhanced holiday atmosphere in Downtown. (T. Crisp recommended Nashville Wraps, and Malena will send contact for a company in Exton for promotional items) Halloween falls on a Sat., so day(s) and time(s) of day that would work best for a downtown Trick or Treat are being discussed.

Google My Business: Ruth is working with the downtown business owners to update their business profiles.

Downtown Events: The BID is partnering with the West Chester Public Library to create Storybook Walking Tour. The tour will start at the library and continue with stops at fourteen off Gay St. locations throughout town, where children and their families can read an enlarged page in each store window. The tour will conclude at Gemelli on W. Market St. The BID will purchase sidewalk chalk and partner with kids to create artwork in the downtown area in September. **West Chester Pride Month:** Encourage decorated storefronts, and work with Uptown! for educational programs.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 15, 2020 - 8am - Meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of the Month

Holiday Task Force – Meeting #2 – 9/29/20

Present: D. Anderson, C. Curtin, K. Finn, J. Long, A. Martinelli, M. Martinez
BID Staff: J. O'Brien, R. Agbokah, E. McGuire

Proposal *En Route* Marketing: Bill Gehrman - Founder & CEO, and his team presented the various aspects of the proposal. Fall / Holiday 2020 Campaign: \$6,500 (Scalable)

John- What would be turnaround time to pull together a FB campaign for Shop Small?

-About two weeks needed to pull together a good Search campaign.

Kevin- What do you see us buying for West Chester?

-E-News letters, Radio Ads. iHeartRadio, Radio.com are more reasonable than traditional radio, and offer ability to collect e-mail lists.

Proposal Discussion:

Malena- Request that En Route provide growth analytics.

Sandy/Kevin- Work with En Route after website is developed- early next year.

Malena- Utilize BID's digital assets, and encourage businesses to add photos to Google Drive, so new images don't need to be created.

Website RFP: Going out Oct. 1, with contractor selection at the end of October. Approx. three months to build.

Budget for Fall / Holiday Campaign: \$15,000

Halloween Decorating: Ruth created a flyer that will be distributed to encourage decorated shops and restaurants. Promote on Instagram. The group was not in favor of BID-sponsored trick or treating in the downtown.

The BID will be purchasing additional white lights, and working with the Borough to have the lights installed on all "Acorn" lamp posts in the downtown. Budget: \$4,000

Due to health concerns, the WCDF will not be sponsoring caroling, this season. The BID is looking into working with local musicians to provide entertainment on Thurs., Fri., Sat. evenings.

Gay St. permit extended through the end of Nov. Borough Council will determine if the closure will conclude sooner. Chris / Sandy- Keep Gay St. closed if beneficial to businesses. Malena- If closure continues on a permanent basis, the Borough will need to find a place for delivery trucks to park- instead of in front of her business. Alysha- Keep Gay St. closed through Shop Small Weekend. Ask Eli for use of Lot 10 for Shop Small Weekend, and post FREE parking signs at Lot 10 and garages. Borough is currently in discussions with Penn-DOT about the Borough reclaiming control of Gay St. Ask Rep. Comitta for political assistance to move these discussions forward.

Holiday Window Decorating Contest: Several PAC judges have, once again, volunteered their time to judge the contest. Budgeted at \$1,500 for contest winner prizes (professional, framed photos of storefronts).

Letters to Santa Mailboxes: Place at 44 West and Courthouse.

Holiday Greens / Decorations: The BID will encourage business owners to participate in the Chamber's Hanging of the Greens program. The WCDF is a sponsor of this year's program. Malena- Add festive decorations (greens, balls) to planter boxes.

Christmas Marketplace: Revisit at next meeting.

Next Meeting: Tues., Oct. 13 – 10am - Zoom