

NLBID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MAY 14, 2020, 11:00am

Virtual meeting

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Matt Bell, Gwendolyn Carry, Mark Charry, Oron Daskal, Dorothea Gamble, Courtney Haverkamp, Owen Kamihira, Richard Maimon, William Reed, Ira Upin

NLBID Staff: Kris Kennedy, Pam Simpson, Ann Lastuvka, Clara Flores

Review of prior month's minutes.

Approved as written.

ASSESSMENT COLLECTION

Status: Total collected= \$331,507

Fully funded budget= \$355,388 76% of \$437,750 (total billing) 88% rate is assumed in legislation
Will add approx. \$2k by year's end

One last billing for the year before sending out new bills in July

In June, we'll engage auditor to prepare our books for closeout. They will start in earnest in July.

CRIME REPORT

26th District reported that by and large there has been a drop in crime.

- "Smash and grab" in Trend Eyecare and they were able to apprehend the perpetrators very quickly, thanks to the camera program.
- Shooting from last week was deemed intentional, targeted, not representing uptick in random crime.
- Statistics look normal to reduced.

ED UPDATE

Regarding meeting with Philadelphia's Commerce Department:

- Streets department will address opening streets for restaurant use on a case-by-case basis. They will follow the Mayor's director. This temporary measure would last a year. Not to be permanent.
- Commerce Department coming up with guidelines for reopening. (Recharge and Reimagine).
- PPA will announce restart of ticketing

Question: BID will have to advocate for what we feel is "right". There seems to be a conflict between the Mayor, Senator, and Squilla??

Answer: Implementation details will require amendments to existing legislation. There will be more flexibility with regard to fees and signature requirements.

Business Roundtables:

Hosted three roundtables for service providers. We are waiting for the government's guidelines for reopening. At the same time, government officials (who fully participated in all meetings)have asked the BIDs to suggest their guidelines.

Takeaways: can't have blanket guidelines but look at the nature of businesses (gym vs. salon)
Request that Board members send feedback

Drexel think tank hour of discussion (FB and YouTube t 2pm)

Intern has started (with bike rack)

Alliance with South Street??

BID has received complaints about trash. Probably a byproduct of wind, more people on the street, more take out containers and streets' changes.

Board suggested that the message of recycling every other week needs to be put out more. Will schedule social media around this.

ED receiving calls interested in PAYING!

Sidewalk Replacement and Façade Beautification

Since the City froze storefront improvement for any new applications and the applications will become more competitive, our small businesses might not qualify for those grants anymore.

ED would like our façade beautification to be more flexible to expand to incorporate any improvement that the storefront improvement from the city won't address. Instead of 50%, make it \$1,000.

For façade: mimic the storefront (replace a window, brickwork, planter, painting)

Request by ED to remove the condition of "up to 50%" reimbursement and replace it with a standard \$1,000 grant for either the sidewalk or façade improvement programs. Board supports this change.

Entrepreneur Popup

Pam and Kris have discussed the idea of taking over a store front and bringing businesses (every three months?) Please reach out with thoughts or ideas

RETAIL RECRUITER REPORT

Pivoted from recruitment to retention through roundtables and by personally reaching out to each business. Most businesses are looking forward to returning to work and discussing pivoting strategies. No businesses are announcing closures.

- Will do further messaging through marketing strategy to be reviewed by the Economic Development Committee.

- Website update: currently working with developers (J2) to make it more visually appealing and have search features.
- RR would like to start building content for website, in the form of blogs authored by various experts
- Outreach will focus on retention, reopening and preparing for a potential second wave of virus (thus, quarantine), reshaping ideas and strategies, and online shopping.
- Would like to develop retail resiliency courses: Classes that we can record with an expert and send it out to service providers. Topics would include: use of various social media platforms, business plan forecasting, etc.
- Reached out to commercial listing agents and property owners. They (surprisingly) have continued to sign leases.
- Observed new uptick in health and wellness sector: bio companies, fabrication of masks, etc. The main obstacles for these businesses are financing and building delays.
- Moving forward we'll have to acknowledge that the PPP is not going to pay for rent and unemployment might continue to rise. However, small business creation and adaptation will come out of this pandemic (gallery style and digitally native stores). Experiential businesses (chocolate making example). Spas, supplies, hardware stores. Fulfillment and Fabricator businesses
- Supplying and new customer behavior will also rise from this pandemic. Storage and space. Is there a warehouse space for fulfillment business? We'll have to take this into consideration.
- The BID is going to play a pivotal role: might be able to be in the form grants and (perhaps) forgivable loans (conditional on attending the resiliency courses?)

Popup stores: exhibitions in order to recruit a store to open.

The first one is the bagel making couple in Urban Village!!!

Strategy to attract an anchor store

From Board member: suggestion of getting another hospitality roundtable together. This industry will change and will need feedback from other restaurants (hospitality and retail combo)

Question: solid plan of action if someone in your workplace tested positive for COVID? Will need playbook

Discussion:

There is a state guidance out now: If someone in the workplace tests positive, they need to go home. Clean the place, take people's temperatures in the workplace.

Some of this could be done proactively. Temperature checks at the beginning of every shift.

Launch packages through BID: We can put together "launch" packages. We could buy things in bulk such as contactless thermometers, masks, etc., and ask businesses to pay what they can.

Task for committee.

El Camino is already working in teams that don't cross over in order to limit the number of staff that need to be quarantined.

Other ideas and concerns may be to take this issue offline to further discuss.

Incumbent upon BID to provide specific guidelines to have consistency. Has already started to compile documents with primary resources, including HVAC issues (airflow within confined spaces) that have not been addressed.

ASHRAY? Covid 19 information re airflow

COMMUNICATIONS

- Continuing to expand the audience for all social media platforms.
- Creating or reposting content daily.
- Continuing to forward information and creating newsletters.
- However, the next step is measuring success as an increase in revenue for businesses. Will develop feasible approaches for the short term and sustainable system for evaluation for the long term. (ED to forward information to CM)

SPECIAL EVENTS

No new permits for big events issued from the city for the rest of the year or foreseeable future. It is clear that the city won't have resources to manage them. Maybe small gatherings will be available.

Meeting with various individuals and businesses on strategies to engage clients virtually (see Art Star Bazaar). Developing strategies on how to pivot sales and events to online platforms.

Owen: recommendation to combine 2nd Saturdays and 2nd st festival to regular closure of 2nd street to make it a pedestrian

Feedback from city is that not inclined to allow closure of streets that disrupt SEPTA

We could use the detours used for upcoming sewer work

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Capital Improvement

- Completed walk through for bike racks and mapped out the existing ones and the issue of how they were getting hit. Since the new ones will be bright, maybe won't be hit but recommend reflective tape. Prioritize replacing or adding new in hotspots (higher traffic).
- Reviewed one parklet location (eventually more than one). Corner of Laurel and 2nd. Also looking in front of Soy Café. Ann is working on a parklet application. Seeking out vendors.

Econ Development

- Councilperson Squilla suggested (heartily) that we should be submitting the BID's ideas on how to open back up.
- Heard from the realtor that a deal was lost for 2nd and Girard for Dim Sum? Could this person be put in touch with Pam?

- Now more so than ever, we could use larger spaces for a hardware store. Maybe it could be presented as a lifestyle store.
- Bank kiosk is open but port a potty is out in display
- Denise from Flowers, etc. had the busiest Mother's Day ever and had to stop taking orders!!
- State Rep Larry suggests supports more online
- Some stores had/have guards (some armed) to limit the number of people in the store. Heirloom had arrows on the street and now they were removed.
- How should we help owners to enforce the use of masks. Need to come up with policy with strategies.
- An official entity backing up the use of masks will help. Maybe NLBID can send out signs in the form of pdfs?

OPEN DISCUSSION

How are restaurants doing with takeout?

Will: upping the game? Not a great money maker but keeps the business operating. It is about 10-20% of regular business but expenses are the same. Initial support helped but it is no longer available (forbearance)

Owen: We've expanded takeout and delivery, which has already been a good portion of their previous business. Not enough to survive, but remaining creative. Thinking about opening two virtual restaurants. We haven't received support with Federal players. We don't expect real clarity for a while. Despite PPP.

Hero's Act: more support coming?

William: Do we have money from events to use for a "radio station" DJ? Pop up with a DJ behind glass. Hyper local event differentiating NL and helping to build community. Engaging the public and using an empty storefront.

"Price is real" wheel available through a friend. Could we use it as a mobile thing, maybe giving out gift cards to businesses. Drive it around, PPE and maintaining social distancing.

Owen: during hospitality roundtable tenant-landlord disputes came up and there aren't best practice guidelines. Nothing from the govt. Could the BID reach out to state reps asking if there's any movement in tenant- landlord guidelines? Maybe AG?

Answer: BID must be aware that we serve both landlords and tenants. KK can reach out to AG asking if there are guidelines.

Ann: example

KK: we have sent out emails strongly requesting guidelines?? Could use example as case study.

Minutes will go out tomorrow, not a month later.

Adjourn 12:36