

Board Meeting of the Trustees
Fort Lee Improvement District Corporation
DBA: Business District Alliance (BDA) of Fort Lee
8/12/15

Call to Order: 6:05 pm

Present: Councilman Joseph Cervieri, Anthony Clores, Robert Durando, Denis Glennon, Kathy Lee, James Liu, Councilman Harvey Sohmer, Mayor Mark Sokolich, Romina Starace, Luciano Bruni

Absent: Michael Beyer, Victor Cividini, Janice Friedman, Gloria Gallo, Frank Patti, Brian Ribarro, Ashley Yook

Also Present: Al Restaino – Fort Lee Business Administrator, Michael Maresca – Fort Lee Director of Public Works, Nelson Page – Fort Lee Film Commission, Rene & Lori – Direct Development

New Representative

Welcoming and introductions were made to **Luciano Bruni** who is the new representative for Tucker Development.

Adoption of 7.8.15 Minutes

MOTION: J. Liu, Second by J. Cervieri — APPROVED

Treasurer's Report

M. Beyer was not present so **S. Koperweis** briefly reviewed the financials attached in the meeting packet. The main expenditure for the month of July was the sponsorship of the St. Rocco's Feast.

Film Commission Sponsorship

Nelson Page of the Fort Lee Film Commission presented a sponsorship request in the amount of \$2,500.00 for the Women of Fox Film Festival. This event will be held at the Loews Theater at 175th Street and Broadway for 4 Sundays in the last quarter of this year. The sponsorship will include the BDA logo on all flyers, web pages and press releases.

The BDA will have a table in the lobby and can provide the branding DVD to be shown before the film. The theater holds up to three thousand seats and the audience should be the upwardly mobile demo from Brooklyn, Washington Heights and Manhattan. The BDA will be able to promote the event on the website. There will be a meet and greet time frame for 1 hour before and after with Fox News anchor

women. **J. Cervieri** voiced that he had been to similar events at this theater with positive experiences and therefore thinks this would be a great opportunity.

Recommendation to sponsor the Women of Fox Film Festival for \$250 per day (\$1000 for all 4 days) and allocate \$1,500 for the advertisement of the branding DVD for a total cost of \$2,500.00

MOTION to sponsor the Women of Fox Film Festival for \$2500.00: J. Cervieri, Second by K. Lee — APPROVED

Committee Reports

Visual Capital Improvement

Beautification/Clean – Commercial District Services (CDS) started their work on August 3rd. A report of the work performed so far was passed around. **M. Maresca** requested to have a weekly report and mentioned that in addition to the CDS, he has local kids sweeping Main Street every day. The CDS does not have the BDA vests yet but will have them shortly.

Marketing/Events Committee

Website – Just about ready to launch. Lori of Direct Development presented the website:

The home page will promote the BDA's latest initiatives along with current pictures that can be updated as needed. Visitors to the site can subscribe to a weekly BDA newsletter. The site will be capable of distinguishing the list between residents and BDA businesses for separate mailings. Ideally, every BDA business will have a photo and information and links to their own website and social media pages. Direct Development has a google alert set up for relevant notifications.

There is a blog section which could be renamed to something like "Fort Lee Focus". The blog will talk about ribbon cuttings and other business related news. Here the business can share their information across all Social Media platforms in order to push their unique business. The blog can spotlight businesses and even support videography. Posting on the website will not be open to the community.

There will be a Resources section which will be where BDA businesses can fill out a promotion request form. Under the Experiences section, the BDA businesses will be categorized in a uniform listing. The Events section will contain the BDA calendar of events as well as other local calendars. The Contact section can contain directions.

K. Lee requested for the logo to be larger if possible. **H. Sohmer** inquired about search engine ranking. Lori explained that there are many factors involved in the ranking such as search terms and content management. An increase in ranking can take weeks or months and depends on key words in text on the website. The website is mobile responsive but a mobile app will be required in order to have direct links such as calling and directions on the mobile phones. Analytics will be able to be tracked as frequently as necessary.

Rene of Direct Development talked creative ideas to strengthen the BDA identity's of a metropolitan lifestyle. The businesses need to know the BDA is a resource; and one way to do that is with workshops. For example, one workshop will be to educate business owner on how to advertise on the internet or on their own website. Another suggestion is for a restaurant week where participating restaurants provide a price fix option or to have a tasting event where once price is paid to taste various restaurant offerings.

PBS – the contract has been signed and forwarded

St. Rocco's Feast – **R. Starace** reported that the BDA did not end up having a booth at the Feast but instead provided the Fort Lee Police with gift cards purchased in the district to hand out at their dunk tank booth. **R. Starace** mentioned that Tom Keelen of the Fort Lee Police was very pleased with the arrangement and will keep the BDA in mind for future sponsorship opportunities.

Old Business

Main Street

M. Maresca reported that Main Street is currently being milled and paved this week. The lights are expected to be installed next week which puts the project about 4 months ahead of schedule. The Mayor mentioned that he stopped into most stores on Main Street and overall received a very positive response.

Parking

G. Gallo was not present but had sent an update. The East side of Lemoine Ave will be replacing curbs next week and therefore the meters will be removed and there will be no parking in that area for approximately 2 months. The parking lines on Main Street are scheduled to be completed in 2 weeks. Will not be able to enforce parking until all the meters and sleeves are installed. In the meantime, still working on alternative parking for the construction workers such as the High School parking lot which is scheduled to be paved pending approval from the Board of Ed and the Double Tree Hotel which is pending the completion of the contract by the Port Authority attorney. She will be meeting with the engineer for the Gunzer Lot parking deck within the next 2 weeks.

The current time schedule is to have the plans drawn up in the fall with construction starting in the first quarter of 2016. **Mayor M. Sokolich** mentioned that he had a positive meeting with Congressman Pascrell who is also on the Postal Committee, regarding the relocation of the Post Office to the new parking deck. Once relocated, the current space will be turned into a passive park which will be ideal for the BDA to use for events.

DOT 46

No update.

Vacant Stores

S. Koperweis advised that he will reach out to various organizations such as the International Council of Shopping Centers for help in promoting the district. Other organizations such as Downtown NJ can look at businesses that have succeeded in one town and want to expand to other towns. He also suggested that there are boot camps for current retailers to improve their existing business. **A. Clores** suggested to talk to landlords (who don't have a real estate agent) in order to assist them in locating a good tenant.

Hudson Lights

L. Bruni advised they the selection of businesses they are looking to fill Hudson Lights range from restaurants, retailers, dessert places and banks. They should have 60-70% leased by the opening which is scheduled for late in the first quarter of 2016. The IPic Theater is scheduled to start construction in September and is also scheduled to open at the same time of the retail phase. The retail opening will occur before the residential phase. The retail leasing plan is currently on the website. The park construction is also scheduled to begin this September.

New Business

Korean-American Symposium

S. Koperweis mentioned that the preliminary meeting with the Mayor and representative from the Korean-American Associations went very well. Based upon the input from that meeting, the date was changed to Monday, September 21st at 6:30pm in Borough Hall. An invitation and flyer will be created and sent to the Korean-American Association for translation. The guest list will be created and will also include local Korean-American bank loan managers. A neutral translator will be hired for the symposium.

At the symposium, events such as the light pole decorating contest and window displays will be highlighted. **S. Koperweis** will also give a "What a SID is" presentation.

Other Business

Light Poles

M. Maresca mentioned that will need to get permission from PSE&G as well as the council before attach anything to the light poles. Will need to advise the height and weight of the objects being placed or hung on the poles. **H. Levine** and **S. Koperweis** will create and send the required requests and follow up with PSE&G.

MOTION to adjourn at 7:25 pm: J. Liu, Second by J. Cervieri – APPROVED

*Next BDA Meeting is scheduled for 9/9/15