

**DRAFT**  
**Economic Development Committee**  
**Wednesday, June 3, 2020**

**Present:** Kristina Dousharm (Chair), Chris Klose (Secretary), Marty Reilingh, Jacob Testa (*ex officio*), Vanessa Shafer, members; Robert McKeon (Red Hook Town Supervisor), Ed Blundell (Mayor of Red Hook), Kim McGrath (Executive Director, Red Hook Area Chamber of Commerce)

**Call to Order:** With a quorum present, Chair Dousharm called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**Minutes:** On a motion by Dr. Reilingh and second by Ms. Shafer, the Minutes of the Meeting of May 27, 2020 were unanimously approved.

**Old Business:**

- **Discussion** – Kristina: build on the energy of Red Hook Responds a la Hudson Bonds Small Business Emergency Relief Fund; 50-50 funds for business voucher and the business; struggle = coming up with ideas that can grow and sustain for all the businesses because volunteer efforts fizzle out due to time constraints/stress/etc; RHR = great at providing ongoing 1 hour service stints, balancing the effort with cheerleading and assigning; Dan: last four days new energy on the street, doubling our business but very difficult through contactless takeout; legal now for people to come in so we are shifting (but worried about safety)

Kristina: as a Town committee, feel our ongoing effort should be supported municipally because unsure whether we can continue through volunteers; Dan: set up a system now that customers pay full price, with some going to the business relief fund; maybe market such a system to be folded into a community funding system; RHR has made/delivered meals to deal with the emergency but is shifting to groceries, so a business-funding system would need to be outside of RHR; Kristina: need is there so what/how can we do.

Ed: looked at “Ithaca Bucks” but it’s way beyond our Village; need sophisticated, experienced people to run; not enough money to dole out to business relief and who makes the decision about which business to give to, anyway?; must be a corporate entity/money managing system; Kim: not convinced we have the volume to do so is there a way to get cash directly to the businesses through a third party; what can we do? Dan: targeted event with a specific day/weekly period.

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Robert: centralized, current website funded by the municipality through the Chamber, for example (Kim: Chamber out of money/no dues income); more critical now than ever, so Town can hire some “techsperts,” plus engage volunteers in a centralized location to help Red Hook residents find what they need; need to connect the dots about staying local; Red Hook Moms has been an unofficial version of this so it makes great deal of sense to have it hosted municipally; Kim: needs to be a layered marketing campaign to alert people to what is available;

Dan: RHR developing a “Shop Red Hook” system for people to buy via the website for products coming from Red Hook farms, such as lettuce; a place where people can go, see and buy; it’s the businesses who want to be in an register; James Davison = Flatiron/tech wizard who can do it; if Shop Red Hook is the brand then let’s make it an official campaign and promote it; needs to be fresh, graphically clean, energetic;

Dan: Woo Commerce = one of the top three e-commerce platforms worldwide could be the system, so go to Davison for a plan to create the system (Shop Red Hook; Davison has offered to build); Maarty: platforms are there so the marketing/tech aspects are key; need a clone of Elisabeth Harmor or a Bard student; Ed: can’t expect people to volunteer to help generate money for businesses; doesn’t need to be as complicated as shop online, which offers scads of stuff; keep it simple, drive people to the businesses; Vanessa: need an anchor retailer for the system so need to identify that one business to focus on; Ed: how about working with not-for-profit farms (hah, hah); Phase 2 starts next week, so Village is focusing on enabling temporary seating/places (while stymieing end runs such as the concrete patio on the side of Impossible Burger, which has not applied for a building permit and is supposedly temporary);

Dan: 21 years doing business; feel like we’re going to see a flood of regional visitors this summer, so a Shop Red Hook system could really help; Kristina: how can we make it happen other than through volunteers?; Dan: key is to prepare for the business to come back; for example, extending business hours so I’ve brought back evening employees for next two weeks to see to test if possible; Robert: want to ensure that our “hidden” businesses are promoted as well as restaurants which, like Taste Budds, have a visible street presence;

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Robert: Town has had to reduce level of service because of lower share of sales tax revenues from the County; no idea what's going to happen with 40 million out of work; Ed: there is some state aid for the Village to keep some staff on payroll but very difficult to do business as normal, especially with health care costs; biggest worry is people not paying their property taxes;

Jacob: Bard to open in the fall with as many students as possible; second week in August = graduation; no layoffs due or reduced salaries to Covid; Summer Scape canceled but will do a kickoff event in late summer after Phase 3 opens; mostly positive outlook.

Maarty: AirBnB open in Phases 1 and 2? Phase 3, probably; mostly, people are not AirBnBing; Beekman Arms/hotels taking reservations for Phase 3; day-tripper options: where to eat, what to see; Dutchess Tourism handles but doesn't promote northern Dutchess much;

**Next Meeting:** 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 10, 2020 via RingCentral.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: Christopher Klose, Secretary