



VILLAGE CHAT - DOBBS FERRY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024
10:00am Zoom

In attendance: Mayor Vincent Rossillo, Robert Yamuder (Dobbs Ferry Village Administrator), Matt Rosenberg (Dobbs Ferry Village Trustee), Shari Rosen Ascher (Dobbs Ferry Village Trustee and County Representative), Jessica Galen (Dobbs Ferry Trustee/Bloomy's), Paddy Steinschneider (Dobbs Ferry Village Rep/Gotham Design Placemaking Planning & Development Ltd), Nitin Gupta (Dobbs Ferry Village Rep/Rivertowns Pediatrics), Danielle Centofanti-Davidson (Chamber President/Main Street Business Strategies), Christy Knell (Chamber Treasurer/Hudco), Lauren Fraternali/Analog-on-Hudson

Meeting Notes:

- County Recap - Dobbs Ferry was a recipient of a downtown improvement grant from the County. Dobbs Ferry collected the most consumer surveys (1400+). Findings: 90% disagreed that everything is fine and nothing needs to change. Survey helps point work in the right direction. Consultant will be doing an overview at a workshop on February 27th. To get the grant money, collaboration is required between the Chamber and the municipal government. Consultant gave recommendations on what should be tackled first. County will help facilitate, but some issues have to be addressed at the state level. Shari is working to make it so that this is not a reimbursement grant, and instead, that the money be given to the village to move forward with their priorities. Report was shared with the Mayor, Rob and Christy, but is not yet open to public discussion until we know what we want to do as a community. Shari will review, along with the consultant, what each village decided they'd like to focus on and will present to Joan McDonald. Consultants are available to the County until July 31st.
- County is currently focused on workforce development.
 - April 3rd - Job fair/ clean energy summit for younger people to learn more about clean energy employment opportunities.
 - April 10th - Job fair for people who have been impacted by social justice and have been formerly incarcerated. Will take place at the Yonkers Riverfront Library
 - April 30th - Job fair for diverse abilities, taking place at the County Convention Center.
 - May (Date TBD) with County Chambers and MWBEs - Fair with resources and abilities for small businesses.
 - Also working on North of 287 job fair.

- County is open to suggestions on what other offerings they should provide to address small business needs.
- Village Administrator update: Currently on schedule to have the renovated section of Gould Park with the basketball court and children's playground opening in May (by Memorial Day) to coincide with pool opening. Heavier work on the construction side has been done due to good weather during the winter months. Project is on budget as well. Village Rep Nitin commented that the recreation department summer camp was a concern for parents, so this is good news.
- Presentation by Analog on Hudson - who they are, what services they provide. They're branching out to retail as well. Interested in the Ferry Festa.
- Village Update: Dig Grant Project. Met last week. Village is currently working on several other grants.
- The Embassy Community Center renovation is almost finished and will be ready to reopen for the Recreation Department's Programs soon.
- Hiring of Downtown Advocate - The Local Development Corp. (LDC) is a financial entity that can help fund projects that promote economic development. LDC just hired a Downtown Advocate (referred to as an Economic Development Advocate). The new Economic Development Advocate is Rob D'Annibale, who is a member of the Downtown Committee, and will serve as an intermediary between the Chamber, the Downtown Committee, the Village, and the LDC. First meeting was recently held to give him immediate areas of focus so he can come up with a work plan for the first quarter. Discussed assistance with Ferry Festa; perhaps LDC can help fundraise for the Festa. Rob should be involved with decisions or at least kept up to speed with what's going on
- Ferry Festa meeting taking place on Monday, March 4th at 1pm. Rob should be made aware. Currently working on setting a date for Ferry Festa with a rain date the following day, a Sunday. The idea is that the LDC can be a mechanism to loan money to small businesses. Ferry Festa can make money for the LDC thru sponsorships, etc. Mayor would like Paddy, with his institutional knowledge of the Festa, to help Rob
- RFQ released for developers for affordable housing units at 99 Cedar and two other locations on Cedar. Village Rep Paddy commented that developing those sites will strengthen the downtown while addressing the needs of the community.
- Jessica Galen provided updates from Downtown Committee -They are currently working on different promotion ideas, i.e. creating business profiles of local businesses. Businesses should be on the lookout for more information on that. New initiative - "Meet the Trustees". First one will be on March 9th at 10am at Climbing Wolf. Series will take place every 4-6 weeks. Invited other businesses to host future "Meet the Trustees"

events. Jessica to email the details to be added to the Chamber's community calendar. The Downtown Committee has other events that they will be working on to bring folks to the downtown, i.e. First Fridays, etc.

- River Arts Music Crawl will take place on the first Saturday in June -trying to streamline efforts and want to work with Chamber and Village. Idea for street closure with a stage on Cedar during the River Arts Music Crawl during the first Saturday in June.
- Phoenicia Flea meeting took place on February 27th. They are interested in working with the village, looking at the same weekend as the River Arts Music Crawl. Interest in bringing a high-end antiques market to the waterfront. Would complement phoenicia flea. Nothing concrete as of yet.
- Update from Hudco - Hudco landlord is interested in clearing the footpath from the building to the train station so that it is walkable again. Mayor will follow up on information that may be required for this to happen.
- Chamber updates: Link is now available for businesses to self-submit business newsletter links to our Chamber newsletters. Discount guide is being worked on. Businesses can submit discounts if interested in participating. Overview of 2024 Chamber Events: Taste Local in April or May; Member Appreciation Party on April 3rd, Women's Social in March/April. Chamber meeting cadence will be every other month. Membership fee schedule has been updated. Sponsorship packages have been simplified. Added "For Members" section to the website. Newest initiative - Chamber Classroom Series for members only.
- Ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 8th for Somos Bilingues