



VILLAGE CHAT - DOBBS FERRY, September 17, 2024
10:00am Zoom

In attendance: Robert Yamuder (Dobbs Ferry Village Administrator), Shari Rosen Ascher (Dobbs Ferry Village Trustee and Westchester County Director of Policy & Programs for Small Businesses and Chambers of Commerce), 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 (Hudco), Nicole Chikunov (Parlor Dental), Valon Nikci (Link NY Realty), Kaitlyn Phillips (E.J. York)

Meeting Notes:

County Update:

- Partnered with Tourism Dept on September 17th for virtual program called "Reel Ready" so businesses can learn how the filming industry can be profitable for them, i.e how to become vendors, etc
- Workshop on Friday, September 20th on Succession Planning - Employee ownership and worker-owned co-ops as a way to keep your business going, which is especially important because most of the businesses in Westchester are owned by people over 55 years of age
- Job Fairs for workforce development
 - 5th Diverse Abilities job fair on 10/9 at Westchester County Convention Center
 - Virtual workshop for job readiness on 9/23 for attendees and a separate one for employers. Space still available for employers and resource providers who wants to join
 - Chamber MWBE event being planned, probably in November
 - County Hispanic Heritage Month celebration on 10/1
- County Survey for Latino/Hispanic community currently ongoing for needs assessment
- Encouraged everyone to sign up for The Catalyst newsletter, offered by Westchester County Office of Economic Development
- Anyone with questions or ideas for the Westchester County business community can reach out to Shari Rosen Ascher directly at sascher@westchestercountyny.gov

Village Update:

- Money has come through for downtown improvement grant. Dobbs Ferry will have to provide the County with monthly reports on how money is being spent and where they are in the process.

- 4 things they're working on with downtown improvement grant:
 - Updating tree wells (DPW to assess)
 - RFP to get design standards for village....Hopefully will go out mid-September
 - Facade improvement grant (up to \$5000 for business owners; business owners would need to match the \$5000). Applications go to the Buildings Department. Gotham offered Chamber members assistance with preparing drawings, application submissions, etc, at no cost
 - Improving the wifi
- Gould Park is open! Chamber would like to be informed of such events moving forward so Chamber reps can attend in support.
- Ferry Festa - 90 vendors as of 9/17/2024. Pending questions regarding inflatables, which is an insurance issue (additional expense for organizations), but not impossible; chamber members from other villages not participating as expected, despite a reduced fee. Registrations are still open. Anyone selling liquor at the Festa will need a one-day license from the NYS Liquor Authority
- Route 9 Consortium to make Route 9 a street instead of a road, to make it safer, with better crosswalks, etc; Chatter from Hastings that this is a waste of money for these studies, which is false. Villages do not pay for these studies (paid by NYS grants). Chamber should be active in the decisions that can affect how people move around the downtown. Dobbs Ferry is planning to use the Aqueduct as an alternate route for people walking and cycling to avoid the hills on Broadway. A Chamber Goal should be to have signage at the street intersections along the Aqueduct so people will know where businesses are located in the downtown. Next meeting on this will be on 9/19 in Tarrytown from 6-8pm. Village will send out information regarding this process to Chamber and others.
- Downtown Committee will continue to exist. Encourages all to follow Downtown Dobbs Ferry on IG.
- Village is in the early stages of applying for a NY Revitalization Initiative grant for further downtown improvements. Downtown committee will open a meeting to the public for folks to weigh in. Stay tuned

Chamber update:

- Golf update: 32 golfers, 50+ people attended the 19th hole event, had volunteers from Gigi's Playhouse.
- 9/25 Chamber Networking & General Meeting at Atria Woodlands in Ardsley
- 9/25 Ribbon cutting ceremony for Club Car Grill
- 9/27 Chamber Classroom Session - SEO 101 for Small Business w/Rich Lamendola from Brandbliss; Series is for members only
- 10/18 Chamber Halloween Block Party in Irvington; taking place at the OCA parking lot by the Main Street School. Businesses will set up tables; will include a beer garden, food, costume contests, and theater performances by Rivertowns Playhouse (Rain date 10/19 from 5-7pm);
- Women's Social - Date TBD, aiming for mid-November
- 12/14 Chamber Holiday Trolley

