



CALLICOON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

2023 Monthly Member Meeting | 09.26.23 MINUTES

Meeting date | time 09/26/2023 | 6:30 pm | Meeting location Callicoon Depot, Callicoon, NY + Zoom

Meeting called by:	Nicole Vallance , President	Timekeeper:	n/a
Facilitator:	Nicole Vallance , President	Call to Order	6:35 pm by Nicole Vallance
Note taker:	Roy Harris , Co-, Secretary	Adjourned	8:13 pm by Nicole Vallance

Attendance: Officers: Nicole Vallance, *President*; Zach Scheitlin, *Vice President*; Roy Harris, *Co-Secretary*; Lily Smith, *Co-Secretary (zoom)*. **Executive Board Members:** Rosie DeCristofaro; Thong Keokham(Zoom), Rebecca Tharp. **Absent:** Tom Dent, Treasurer & Rachel Littman (Executive Board Member). **Guests:** Gina Fenton, Genia Brodyn, Michael Levine, Karen Detorri, John Dettori, Charity Greene (Zoom), Not Verified: Joann Clark (Zoom) Terry (Zoom), Bari (Zoom) &

AGENDA TOPICS

Agenda topic President's Report | Presenter Nicole Vallance

- Call to order (pass sign in sheet)

Agenda topic Secretary's Report | Presenter Lily Smith and Roy Harris

- **Motion to approve 07.25.23 Minutes (Rosie) 2nd (Rebecca) All approved.**
- **Membership Survey:** Roy discussed the survey that he has worked on the survey- to hear from the Callicoon businesses concerning small business needs.
 - Suggestions: Gina- follow up phone calls
 - John D- only 7-10 questions maximum and try to think of an incentive to get the businesses to want to participate
 - Rosie- in the past when we did it we only got a 10% feedback
 - Rebecca: look at the top 10 issues
 - Gina: Which events do you like? Make it multiple choice
 - Roy: will redo the survey with all of the great suggestions and hope to get you by the next meeting
 - Karen: volunteered to print them and have one of their staff go to the stores and try to get them filled out, if they did not do it online

Agenda topic Treasurer's Report | Presenter Nicole Tom was absent

- Treasurer was away. We will discuss the Treasures report with everyone on October.

Agenda topic Train Depot Update | Presenter Nicole Vallance (Wendee Greene could not attend but will send comments)

- **Town Hall Recap** | The meeting was well attended and we thought, a success.
 - o Mike stated many people were upset at the meeting and walked out because they didn't have their questions answered.
 - (NV) I'm not sure what you are talking about . All questions were answered. It seemed well attended and we've had good feedback.

- (NV) The format used in the meeting is typical of professional panel discussions. Every question was answered, with additional time given at the end for anyone to stand up and verbally ask questions. The meeting was only concluded after all questions were answered.
 - We explained this format in advance. and asked anyone to submit questions in advance if they like. (we received 1 email)
 - In the meeting, cards are readily available for anyone to submit as many questions as they'd like, these were all collected by volunteers and given to the moderator , the moderator organized them grouping repeat questions and then posed the questions to the panel at multiple intervals during the meeting.
 - Every question was answered, with additional time given at the end for anyone to stand up and verbally ask questions.
 - (RH: people were told they can hand in their questions before or during the meeting and at the end of the meeting there was time left and questions were opened up whomever wanted to ask them
- Mike Levine: What about the Concerned Citizens4Depot anonymous email. I also received meeting minutes from the Byway meeting and notes on the Town hall and have questions.
 - (NV) The 'notes' shared in the CC4D emails were created by the Concerned Citizens4Depot Group and contained some inaccurate information. - These were not official minutes.
 - Karen/Genia: Just want to make sure it's clear this new group is not the same 'Concerned Citizens' that submitted a letter earlier this year. We all signed our names. Some took our names off. (Genia)
 - Thank you for confirming. Yes, we are aware it is a separate individual or group. The earlier group that submitted a signed letter at the March CBA Meeting (and subsequently received a detailed response) listed their names. Several folk have reached out to make sure we know they are not affiliated with the other group.
 - Mike: Those emails said that a lot of problems that have to be resolved are not answered-such as was not told about the grant being lost.
 - (NV) Those are emails from an anonymous group and a lot of the info they are sharing is inaccurate. (intentionally or unintentionally) We are happy to answer any question brought to us at a meeting, or any signed communication looking for more information on our work. Our first responsibility is to our members, but we also want to make sure the public has correct information.
 - (NV) It is completely untrue that anything was being hidden. Losing the USDA Grant was very unfortunate and while we were incredibly disappointed, the CBA **has** discussed it multiple times. We have an obligation to inform our members of what is happening and we did. We first discussed the grant's expiration in our March CBA public meeting, (the first meeting after we received notice) - we discussed it during subsequent meetings – AND it was discussed again at the August 1st Town Hall. It was also answered in a response to a letter submitted by the original Concerned Citizens Group. (the letter and responses were included with record in those months meeting minutes) . Please see the public minutes on the website.
 - The 2019 USDA RDBG Grant (for furniture & fixtures) became subject to the GONE Act and the funds expired. It needed to be spent and closed by Feb 28th. There were multiple issues.
 - 2.5 years of quarterly reports were not filed with the USDA by a former Depot Committee & CDI member who was in charge of it and it didn't come to light until summer 22.'

- o Secondly, the budget had to be updated. Both of these items were brought to the attention of the CDI last summer and they retroactively filed the reports and updated the budget.
- o Change of Representative and Miscommunications. Our prior USDA Contact told the CDI (& UDSB + CBA representatives) in a September 2022 phone call that the reports and new budget **were Accepted**. I personally was not able to be on this call, but Rosie DeCristofaro, Richard Lowe and Wendee Greene and others were all present and heard the same thing. Unfortunately, that representative then retired, and our new rep, (who was aware of the situation) went on maternity leave the following month. No one was aware of any requirement to spend the money quickly, as construction had been delayed. (the grant was secured pre covid) & there was no construction to this point and we hadn't purchased furniture/fixtures. In February the CDI was notified that the grant would expire and the USDA suggested they submit it again as the CDi as the same entity can not submit the same request twice. The CBA would have tried to submit a grant for other expenses, but only had 2-3 days notice until the grant deadline. (additionally this year USDA grant deadline moved from March 31st to March 1st - so that didn't help)
 - Mike:- wants to know if we have a letter stating why the grant was lost and why?
 - I spoke to our reps via phone on February 28 to see if anything could be done.
- **DASNY Update** | (NV)
 - o **SEQRA** | As reported at last meeting, we have received sign off on our SEQR requirements, which allowed us to start the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) Review.
 - o **SHPO** | We received a letter outlining their conditions on August 8 and the CBA replied with a letter accepting terms. We have now cleared these 2 review requirements.
 - o **Next Steps:** We will need to update our financial records for them and file the paperwork for the Grant Disbursement Agreement. (this is the last step)
 - The final docs require either building plans with line item budget or requesting a conditional approval. (with plans provided for approval once ready) Creating plans upfront would be ideal and we may be able to do this if we find an architect on our timeline. We would be able to access the remaining Silver Feather Funds to do this if necessary. Otherwise, we could request the conditional /preliminary approval and use funds directly from the DASNY Grant..
 - We are interviewing architects presently - met with 2 last week at the CDI's request and Wendee has reached out to several more.
 - The only silver lining re: USDA Grant Expiration is, the project is no longer required to follow Federal bidding standards (requiring RFP & public bidding process + other policy requirements for WMOBs , etc.) The DASNY EDP standards allows us to use our own internal procurement policy to select vendors, so it will be a far quicker and less complicated process.
 - Mike Levine - So you will use all of the \$50K silver feather money.
 - It's an option - and it's probably closer to \$47K now - though I dont have the balance on me now. I can get an update for the next meeting.
 - o **Rumors of delays** | At our last meeting Wendee shared information from our local legislator George Conklin, stating he had heard that DASNY Grants were on a 3 year Delay.
 - Rosie: Our legislator told us about the DASNY grant -he came back with the estimate of 3 years
 - (NV) After that meeting, I followed up with our DASNY representative and she confirmed this is not true. While there are departments that are experiencing delays, these are related to other

programs. Her Department has not experienced lengthy delays at this time. I followed up via email (ccing CDI + UDSB) confirming her statements so we have this in writing.

- Gina: CBA must get in line with the grants as we proceed-does not take a long time
 - (NV) Unfortunately it does, even when you reply right away, everything takes a while to get processed. (3- 6 months with 6 months being more likely)
 - Genia: It's true. Everything takes a while with the government.
 - (NV) Also the CBA starting early this year returned to administering all funds in its name directly (while keeping both partners looped in) and taking a more active role in the project's development.
- Mike: Does the scenic byway want to pull out of the Depot? My minutes from last month said they were giving you a letter.
- (NV) At last night's UDSB meeting their Board voted unanimously to reaffirm its commitment to the project and to abandon further discussion of other locations.
- There was some discussion in the previous meeting minutes about some few board members wanting to explore the Byway's needs and options. Richard Lowe said he would investigate what was possible and if appropriate draft a letter to the CBA. This letter did not come.
 - I attended last night's meeting to address these concerns, bringing up the extensive work and incredible commitment over many years given to this project by the team in Callicoon and we are pleased by the result of the final vote. The Byway's Minutes when published will likely include this.
- **Stage Rebuild Project** | Job Corp has generously partnered with the CBA and CDI to handle the project build as part of their work study program. The students will receive real world instruction by a qualified instructor, who will ensure all work is carried out to the plans according to our Architect and Engineer. Jim Burden of Lakewood Designs has consulted with the CDI as a volunteer and created plans, these plans and the site were evaluated by our engineer Wess Illing (our hired professional) and all documents and our engineers letter was provided to our town Code Enforcer and Town Planning board.
 - All agreements have been signed, with all appropriate licenses and insurances being confirmed. The CBA is listed as an additional insured on the Job Corps policy and all appropriate paperwork is on file.
 - This partnership has substantially reduced the cost of the repair project and we are very grateful.
 - We have received a large donation of materials from Matthew Hofer of Hofer Log & Lumber, who have furnished all rough wood for the stage/loading dock as a gift to the community. This is an immense help and we are very grateful to Hofer Lumber for their contribution.
- Genis: when will the deck be finished?
 - Nicole: we were told that if they receive the wood this week, it can be completed by ArtWalk.
- Mike: upset about stage is being named after Brian Sykes -said he does not think the stage should be named after him
- Nicole: We are also looking into writing additional grants for for Water Mitigation plan. (NPS Grant)

[Secretary's Note: During this part of the meeting there were many unfortunate interruptions from the zoom call with people on it who did not identify themselves- there was cursing unfortunately and harassment to some of the board members]

Agenda topic Marketing Committee | Presenter Zach Scheitlin

- **Social Media**

- o Zach- Sarah Halpern hired to take over Social Media- has a marketing and social media background
 - Genia: We need to have someone keep the website updated and things posted on the website - will she do it?
 - Nicole: While she has experience working with websites, the role will mainly be social media. (Instagram and Facebook)
 - Karen D- Will she be coming to the businesses?
 - Zach: yes and will get in touch with the businesses before she come.
 - Genis: should not only be the businesses on lower main street
 - Sarah has been provided with a list of contact for all member businesses and will be working to promote all.
- o Roy: discussed how he is going to try to get STR's (AirBnbs) involved and join the CBA-reaching out to them-Genis: People have a perception the only CBA members on on Main Street

Agenda topic Beautification Committee | Presenter *Nicole Vallance*

- **Nicole:**talking about lumber costs and benefits-talked about the planters etc
- Karen D - will possibly assist in beautification - she did a great job in getting store owners to take pride in their front of the storefronts getting rid of weeds, etc
- Mike- why don't we plant something that will come back every year (perennial)
- Mike- in front of Lee's hardware store- a bush was taken away that was there for years
- Karen D- discussed how in Roscoe the beautification has happened
- Nicole- volunteers needed and we should order baskets in November for next year
- Rosie- Binghamton has beautiful baskets that are not that expensive - she will find out the price and is willing to go there and bring them back for the town of Callicoon
- Nicole: we will arrange planting days with some of the youth organization
- Gena- how about Cornell Cooperative in Liberty? was supposed to help us one year
- John D- talked about getting everyone in town involved- how do we do it? through a grant? possibly develop a program to get the whole town involved- the competitive part of it?
- Rosie- talked about Sullivan Renaissance-put money into different categories talked about trying for a \$20,000 grant
- Gena: possibly competition of every store decorates their own and have a competition for the best
- Genis- each business has to do their part- a no brainer
- Roy- we need to help to create a "Culture of Change" in the town and to look at ideas how we can do that and empower all the businesses to be part of it
- John D- storefronts should be featured on social media
- Gena: a lot of people do not want to do it for nothing \
- Gena: very few business owners come to the monthly meetings
- Karen D- said when the survey is ready will have someone from the Creek House make copies and go to business owners who did not send in on line
- Karen DF- asked about the map in town- Nicole and Roy- its ready Roy picked it up and Nicole replacing the map on lower Main Street and the map by the Farmers Market will be replaced when the wasp nest is gone

- **ArtWalk**
 - Zach explaining Artwalk will be a 3 day event this year- October 6-8, 2023
 - Because Narrowsburg is having Logging Days on Saturday this year, we will have Artwalk on 3 days. Will start on Friday and Sunday will be the big event. Don't want to compete with Logging days in Narrowsburg on Saturday
 - John D asked about are we advertising it- Rebecca stated signs will be going up soon
 - Rebecca: programming is solidified, Sunday is the big event day music scheduled 11:30- 8 PM
 - Tell Me Your Secret postcards to be unveiled
 - Workshops will be scheduled
 - Asking for an ArtCrawl Friday so businesses hopefully will stay open later on Friday-gives community an opportunity to see everything before others come in
 - will be some social media- radio ads etc Zach and Rebecca
 - Karen D asked what about printed materials? Rebecca stated they are coming very soon
- **Handbag Bingo:** Nicole looking for help
- **Tree Lighting: Saturday, November 25th**
 - Gina- says needs a decorating committee \cannot be here for the lighting
 - Roy- mentioned once again offering to donate 2 or 3 green and red laser lights that can be used for the tree or the town
 - Roy mentioned to test before -last year did not work- Nicole stated they did test
 - Roy- discussed possibly having people and kids bring their own decorations ornaments for the lower part of the tree
- **Dickens on the Delaware: December 9th**
 - Mike gave a pantomime suggestion
 - Nicole- needs to put a call out for volunteers
- **Casino Night is postponed till next Spring 2024**

NEXT MEETING - October 24th, 2023: 6:30pm Executive meeting / 5:30pm member meeting

MEETING CLOSING - Motion to Adjourn (Rosie) at 8:10 pm, 2nd (Roy). Approved Unanimously.