

**Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement Board Meeting Minutes May  
22, 2025**

Meeting called to order

Attendees: Attendees – Janay Green, Ravi Bayanker, Matt Ross, Paul Kimport, Henry Siebert, Greg Root, Michelle Claffey, Marc Collazzo, Scott Nistico, Max Thalheimer, Bianca DiPietro, Josh Olivo, and Lee Jones.

Marc welcomed everybody to the pre–Memorial Day edition of the Fishtown, Kensington area, BID board meeting.

April 2025 Board Meeting Minutes Approved – Kathy motioned for approval and Lee Second.

1. Budget and Financial Report
  - a. Balance (as of 5/22/2025): \$ 78,671.17  
Live nation paid \$50,000 of the \$100,000 annual commitment through the CDC tax program.
  - b. BID Assessment Collections to Date: (1/1/2025 to 5/22/2025):  
\$311,124.85
  - c. April Collections: \$38,424.73

All Late Billing Notice Mailings Sent at the end of April. Marc noted he would start filing appropriate liens starting with the largest.

Matt - raised concerns about collections being down year over year.

Marc responded that some of the differences can be explained by strong collections of assessments from previous years. In addition, the NID has been working to collect the properties that joined the BID through reauthorization. The Executive Team has been aggressively working to contact delinquent property owners, especially for the larger parcels, many of whom committed to pay in full by the end of June 2025.

Matt - Looking at the numbers through April I don't know if May was higher last year. Comparing it to last year's cash balance.

Marc - said he sent the materials over a year over year comparison. He confirmed we are down 23%.

Matt - found the old 2024, we had 156,000 at the end of April last year and expressed concern that we're at 105,000 at the end of April this year. Matt then question of the BID would need to manage expenses in quarter 3 this year, as opposed to quarter 4 in 2024.

Marc confirmed that the BID will not take on any additional debt in 2025. Expenses have remained consistent, and all invoices have been paid to date. Capital project costs were funded by grant awards.

Matt - questioned if the Impact Loan balance was \$0

Marc - confirmed that Impact loan from 2024 was paid in full.

Financial Report Approved - Matt motioned to approve and Janay approved.

Janay Opening Statement:

- Thanked Matt for his budget questions and review so that we are all on the same page. She then welcomed the group and thanked them for attending and for being awesome.
- Mentioned the Saint will be hosting 4th of July party for third year in a row.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

### **Front & Girard**

Marc confirmed that things are progressing on schedule for our activation on the east side of the El Stop at Front Street and Girard Avenue (1200 North Front Street). This is the first phase of our intersection activation. Marc forwarded the BID's Certificate of Insurance to SEPTA for the previously approved plans. Since the City of Philadelphia owns the land, the BID and the City Law Department are finalizing the terms of an Agreement of Use. We should have the final permits approved now, then fabrication and installation should take two to three weeks thereafter. The goal is to begin installation by the end of June 2025.

Marc reminded the Board that Phase I of this project was funded by a Local Share Account Grant award of \$72,500.00. The remaining intersections at Front and Girard were funded in 2024 by a Statewide Local Share Account (through PIDC) in the amount of \$175,000, which will be used for “installing additional aesthetic light, improving the crosswalks, things of that nature”. Marc confirmed that the Dollar Tree (31 West Girard Avenue) has been sold and will become a mixed-use building. In addition, the building of the former JJ Mallon’s was sold to the owner of Rittenhouse Deli, who open his store on the street level and convert the upper levels to “nice apartments”. These will enhance our project and improve the quality of life for everybody in that corner.

Janay - Do they have an idea of their hours that they would be in operation or the deli?

Marc - Not yet. The only thing I do know is, in talking to the owner, is that the business is normally open for breakfast, lunch, and they go through dinner. Our ambassadors are going to be there to provide assistance.

### **Welcome Center (Front and Girard)**

Marc confirmed that the Fishtown Ambassadors will work at the Welcome Center (Phase I discussed above) and the initial schedule will focus on “high profile, highly trafficked” hours so as keep traffic moving and really make this a comfortable, welcoming Transportation Center. Marc confirmed his excitement for the project and that it is shared by the City of Philadelphia and SEPTA.

### **The Frankford Avenue Connector**

The Frankford Avenue Connector project has been approved through the HUD portal so that we can draw down from the \$750,000.00 in funding. We send them the invoice for what we're doing, and HUD forwards the funds. Marc is working with PORT Urbanism to get an updated final cost proposal to begin the fabrication of the letter seats for the plaza.

### **Shackamaxon Street Neighbors**

We've shared this with several of our businesses surrounding Frankford Avenue and Shackamaxon Street, as well as the Board of the Fishtown Neighbors Association. Moreover, we shared the concepts with the residents on Shackamaxon, and Marc (along with Brandon Biederman of PORT Urbanism) will be meeting with the residents on that block on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to obtain their input before hosting public meetings. The initial feedback was very positive, and we want to review some of the traffic components and/or safety measures that we're taking to show that there will be no adverse effects on their block. Once we get the updated fabrication costs for the

Letter Seats, we will order them as they take about 10-12 months to fabricate. So, we would probably get started on building the plaza first, and then put those in. We thrilled to be able to finally get started.

### **Vision Plan**

Marc - We want to thank Josh, Greg and some of our Martha Street stakeholders for their input. The group decided that Martha Street pedestrian walkway part of Vision Plan II should focus on the history of the 2400 block of Martha Street with a classic archway with practical components. Marc sent the group's thoughts to ISA architects. In fact, Marc was speaking with them today, at 4pm with the goal of completing Vision Plan II in time to file a multimodal transportation grant by July 31, 2025. The Vision Plan II will also include the area around the Roundabout (Frankford Avenue and York Street), the 1300 block of Lee Street, and East Girard Avenue (from Berks Street to Frankford Avenue). Marc confirmed that the BID is incorporating FNA's pollinator garden project into our plans at Frankford Avenue and York Street. The City of Philadelphia gave us both permissions to be able to do things in and around the roundabout. We got our permission back in 2022 and gave the BID funding to clean the area. The City then allowed FNA to build a garden in the area by the gas station. We did not want to affect the work done by FNA, and held a great meeting with ISA Architects to incorporate that garden concept into that one near the gas station.

Marc - Once we have the finalized designs on everything, I will get that back to everyone. Our goal is for a multi-modal grant filing on July 31.

### **Business Outreach Update**

Max - we did our Shop and Stroll weekend at the end of April. It was a chance, just like we did for our restaurants with Stouts and Snouts, to do something that was very "pedestrian shopper centric". So, we had a weekend on Saturday and Sunday the 26th and 27th with 21 of our shops and retailers offering specials for people to come out shop on Sunday, which was, thank goodness, was such a beautiful day. We brought out the return of the trolley car to take people and families around. We had different live performers outside, musicians playing the guitar, a keyboardist, and singer. We had a face painter that we put by Minnow Lane for the kids. It was a great day. The best part about it was that all of the retailers told us how great a weekend that they have, so we were really thrilled to do it. We're going to be doing more like that.

Marc - We want to thank Max. Max put a lot of the legwork into it.

Marc - The BID launched triumphant third season of Fishtown Taps. As everybody knows, our Taps happy hour that we do on Tuesdays from 5 to 7pm, where we

encourage all of our bars restaurants to open up, have \$5 beer specials, \$6 wine, \$7 mixed drink and mocktail specials. 28 currently, that's great, which is several more than we had last year. I love to see it that is kicking off on May 27 we will be out and about. We always like to do an event where we go out, if you check the newsletter that'll be coming out tomorrow morning, we've already had almost 10 or more media hits, from radio stations to TV, to print, highlighting that it's starting. So it's a pretty significant thing. We do a influencer kickoff, where we break off with several social media influencers, and each of us go to their three places, and they post that they're there with their drinks. And it gets a lot of publicity. We encourage everyone to come out, try it, and enjoy. It's become a great tradition. And I think Lee from Punchline is on. We are working on a concept, and the key is working on maybe a, what we're going to call Taps after Dark, so that after taps ends at seven o'clock, punch line Brooklyn Bowl are looking to do like a activation on, you know, the street in front of the Fillmore where They'll continue that you can hang outside, sit, listen to some music, and that would go for another several hours. I think it'll be a lot of fun. We can also there'll be some food there. We're going to you finally be able to utilize all of that equipment we bought for the food truck market. So it's a nice thing. Thank you, Lee, for even looking into that. I know it's nothing solidified yet, but I think it would be a great addition. Lee Jones, anything you want to add to that?

Lee Jones - No, like you said, it's in the works, so, but we're excited to try and help and get back to the community.

Marc - Max brought this to me, and we thought, what's another way in the summertime we can kind of do something a little neat to help really, kind of the unique blend of food, spaces, clothing, etc. So Max, you want to talk about the wedding stroll that we're putting together?

### **Wedding Stroll "Fishtown"**

Max - absolutely, as some may be aware, this is, this is an event that old city has been running for quite some time to to a pretty good level of success. My fiancé and I went out to Old City. We participated in their wedding stroll, which was put on by the the Old City District down there and had a wonderful time. They had, I think 30 to 40 vendors participating. Seemed like there was a lot of people walking around as far as the patrons go. Essentially, the goal is to allow any and all businesses that could have anything to do with a wedding, be that, you know, a venue for the wedding itself, or for, you know, opening things up to the welcome party, bridal shower, smaller events that are sort of in the same orbit, along with, you know, any sort of wedding attire, flowers, you know, paper goods, etc. We have a lot of businesses on the retail side that could be very much involved in the planning of someone's big day. So we're already getting a

solid response on that from some key stakeholders here in the neighborhood. I think the planning meeting is already on the calendar. We're very optimistic that we'll be able to do that. It's something that the press seems to eat up. So there's no reason that we should be able to get good publicity for it. It should be yet another thing to bring people here to Fishtown.

Marc - thanks to Max and the team for putting this together. The district encourages participation in community events and emphasizes the importance of collaboration and support among local businesses and residents.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

Motion carried - meeting adjourned at 11:47am.