

New Deal Café Board of Directors Meeting (online)
Monday, November 30, 2020

MINUTES

Attendees

Board of Directors: Michael Hartman (President), Mark Cheater (secretary), Dorian Winterfeld (treasurer), Diana McFadden, Aileen Kroll

Audit Committee: Mike Stark, Carla Monardes, Jay Bellamy

Staff: Amethyst Dwyer

FONDCA: Peter May

Visitors: Connie Davis, Lynn Orrin, Bill Jones, Susan Harris, Ray Zamuto, Tom Jones, Johanna Goderre, Dave Whiteman, Tom LeaMond, Nancy Melandry, Karen Gregoire, Greg Meyer, LaWann Stribling, Brenda Sterling, John Campanile, Maria Silvia

Call to order – 6:31 pm

Approval of minutes of 10/28/20 board meeting

Dorian W. / Diana McF – 2nd / approved unanimously

Reports

President: We are moving forward and looking for a new restaurant operator. We are also exploring potential renovation and/or maintenance projects, such as ceiling tiles, floors, painting, organizing the basement. We welcome suggestions and volunteers for these projects. We are also looking at ways to minimize our ongoing costs (e.g., turning off heating and refrigerators) while the Cafe is temporarily closed. The board is also working vigorously on a strategy and budget for the future, with an eye toward re-opening as soon as feasible. The board is continuing to investigate options for holding an annual meeting.

Treasurer: Reviewed the Cafe's bank balances, which total about \$174,000--the majority of which is federal government relief loans that are restricted and we are trying not to spend unless absolutely necessary. Pointed out that the Cafe still has about \$80,000 in outstanding debt owed to members.

Audit Committee: Working on a Letter to the Editor of the Greenbelt News Review to correct published inaccuracies around the circumstances of DC Vegan's departure. Also started work on an annual report.

Bar and Music Manager: Amethyst Dwyer said that the Cafe remains unable to offer live entertainment due to county Covid 19 restrictions. November beer and wine sales totalled \$1,178, which is less than 6% of sales from Nov. 2019. Amethyst noted that she had started her job as bar manager 10 years ago yesterday, and announced that she was retiring from the position and 'passing on the torch,' but staying on as music manager. The board offered their sincere thanks to Amethyst for her decade of hard work and her many contributions to the Cafe's success.

FONDCA: Peter May said FONDCA's planned meeting had been delayed, so there was nothing to report, but noted that FONDCA would be willing to assist with a floor restoration project in the Cafe.

Old Business [none]

New Business

Changes at the Cafe: Board member Aileen Kroll briefly outlined the reasons for DC Vegan's departure. She stressed that the DC Vegan's contract violations stretched back for more than a year (well before the pandemic started) and that the board had patiently tried every avenue to get those violations corrected, including suggesting mediation, but that DC Vegan rebuffed all those attempts and ultimately decided to break their contract and leave.

She and other board members noted that the Cafe is run by volunteers, and the board needs help and input on its search for a new food vendor (as well as on cleaning, organizing and renovation projects). Michael Hartman pointed out that the board is consulting food industry experts for advice and assistance in the vendor search, and wants to spread a wide net to potential contractors, and welcomed member help.

Cafe member Lynn Orrin introduced Brenda Sterling, the owner of B&B Occasions, a food service and catering company based in Laurel. Brenda gave a brief overview of her business, and expressed her interest in the Cafe food vendor job. LaWann Stribling, owner of Strib'ble Treats in Greenbelt, talked about her interest in learning how to operate a food service business, and asked if the board had considered the idea of making the Cafe a food hall that hosted food and craft pop-ups, to help people with start-up businesses. The board asked her to provide more information on her proposal.

Next Meeting: Originally scheduled for Dec. 28, rescheduled for Jan. 4.

Adjourned at 7:33pm

Submitted 1/3/21 by M. Cheater