

COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKING GROUP
Friday, 02/05/2021 - 8 a.m., via Zoom Meeting

In Attendance: Council President Jack O'Brien, Council Vice President Noni West, Councilmen Ben Bell, Joe Flood, and Joe Frederick, Mayor Ron Strouse, and Borough Manager John Davis.

Long Term Goals. Get the public willing to patronize - discourse, outreach, education, relaxing restrictions on outdoor / sidewalk dining. Longer term: how to anticipate and accommodate future conditions as COVID becomes manageable, but not eradicated. 2021: continue the 2020 practices that were successful to benefit retail, restaurants, residents, cultural institutions, social service non-profits, some of which may operate a retail storefront. Cultural institutions can partner with retail/restaurants for street closures, etc. Message our businesses that we are working with them to provide sustainability.

Restaurant Week Concept. Suggesting 2/23-2/28/2021. \$30 fixed price for 3 courses and whatever the restaurant wants do beyond that is up to them. Would encompass all restaurants in the Borough, not just downtown, and would be under the context of being safe and primarily take out. Paul Boger is checking with a couple of his restaurant clients to get feedback on concept. Based on that, if positive, would contact entire restaurant base and ask to sign on. Would use the same type of landing page created by Paul Boger where the responses are downloaded and the page builds itself.

If Restaurant Week comes together, it would be progressive promotion: the first week we would do generic publicity while the restaurants decide their menus and get it on their website, and then as we get closer to the event, we would then push out the page with the links, etc. We would also get Visit Bucks County to publicize as well. Perhaps get media attention.

John will get an email out with results of Paul Boger's findings.

Street Closure Plans. Previously did East State, West State, North Main, and South Main. Idea of closing down just Main Street or just State Street was discussed. Doing just all of one would open more opportunities for those businesses because of the rotating nature of it, including if didn't happen due to weather. This would work for Main Street, but not sure about State Street because the two blocks that participate are not contiguous. Need to discuss if there's any value in closing Donaldson or Printer's Alley to enhance closing State Street.

Retailers are either closed or closing and it's then their issue of do they want to stay open or don't be bothered. There has been no push back against it.

Set up for closures is costly because of overtime. Volunteers help with that, but there's only so much they can do.

Reminder that we're still obligated to do what we can to ensure public health, including masking, and make sure that's part of our messaging.

Public consensus is that people want the street closures to continue when things "go back to normal." That will present challenges with alcohol sales, crowd size, etc. since right now we have Covid restrictions that take care of a lot of that.

Do not need to a resolution to supporting the Pennsylvania Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act of 2021, since there has already been a second round of CARES funding. We push it out, but it's on the businesses to do on their own.

Future discussions:

- Street closures schedule.
- When will sidewalk dining start? We're prepared when the restaurants want to do it.
- Long term curbside spaces - maybe 10 would disappear. Need to look at lost revenue.
- Safety issues with people outside eating and cars driving by. If going to continue long-term, consider insurance requirements and physical requirements. The fee for sidewalk dining right now is like \$50, but if talking long term and they're taking money from the parking space, they may need to pay that, but not now during the emergency situation. If long term, would also get DVHT to weigh in and give guidance.

Meeting adjourned (Flood-West) 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Ament, Executive Assistant
Doylestown Borough