

Belmont Business Improvement District

Winter 2021 Newsletter



BELMONT BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



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Looking Ahead

First and foremost, the Belmont BID would like to wish you a Happy New Year! 2020 was a challenging year for all of us, but we are resilient community, and we are hopeful that better days are ahead. We will persevere, together, as we have, through this difficult time. With the changing year, the Belmont BID is undergoing its own changes as well. Our former Executive Director, Philip Marino, has stepped down from his position, and taken on a new role as Director of Refuse & Recycling in Yorktown, NY. The BID wishes him the best of luck, and thanks him for his years of service on our behalf. Phil's departure left the role of Executive Director open, and after careful consideration and review, the BID is proud to announce the promotion of Alyssa Tucker to Executive Director. Alyssa joined the Belmont BID seven years ago, and she has significantly advanced and streamlined our organization. Her marketing background has been instrumental in helping plan and execute neighborhood events, working on promotional efforts, and managing our social media accounts and websites. Furthermore, she coordinates activities with city agencies, ensures the BID is compliant with city and state law, and manages our administrative duties and financials. As we continue to face the challenges of COVID-19, she works closely with the city in learning and then updating members on the ever-changing rules and regulations businesses must follow. These are just some of the tasks that she will continue to do in her new role. The BID believes her reliability, dedication to our members, and passion for the community will continue to serve us well, and we offer her our congratulations.

As the BID looks ahead, we are committed to helping the neighborhood overcome the challenges that the pandemic has created. Our goal is to ensure there is constant, meaningful communication between us and our members. This includes, but is not limited to, keeping members informed on updating regulations, and sharing helpful business opportunities, and resources for legal, financial, and marketing assistance from public and private entities. The BID will continue to provide private security and private sanitation services. However, these are only supplemental services. Reporting incidents to 911, filing police reports, and sweeping your storefront, are necessary for all our members, particularly as our workers face an increased workload due to city budget cuts. These city-wide cuts have reduced street sweeping and basket collections, and the BID cannot alone keep our curbside and sidewalks clean.

The BID has no plans to slow down our marketing and promotional efforts. Members are encouraged to share noteworthy stories and new business practices for potential coverage. We are also looking forward to continuing our partnership with Summer Garden Foods, a company known nationally for its Italian specialty food products. In our fiscal year ending June, 2020, the contribution amount from the Little Italy in the Bronx product line of sauces, pastas, gnocchi, and vinegar was \$59,105.40. These funds help preserve and advance the traditions of our community, and support the work of the BID. Each product label pays homage to neighborhood, and national recognition like this will help develop our national brand and advance the neighborhood as a destination for great authentic Italian food, products, and dining.

The BID continues to be here to support our members, and to promote and expand the economic wellbeing of the business community, and the community at large, by promoting our Bronx Little Italy brand, our strong ethnic heritage, and by leveraging the mercantile, social, political and cultural assets within and around our community.

Year in Review

During a very challenging year, the BID continued to be grateful to our many partners, and elected officials, particularly Congressman Ritchie Torres, Captain Joseph Tompkins Commander of the 48th Precinct, John Sanchez Executive Director of Community Planning Board 6, and all the agencies that serve our community. We also appreciate the support we receive from the Bronx Zoo, Fordham University, the New York Botanical Garden and SBH Health System.

The BID exists to support and enhance both our business community and the community at large. Despite the difficulties brought on by COVID-19, we have accomplished a lot in the past year.

During this unprecedented time, the BID was in constant communication with our members and kept them informed and assisted them with information from the city and the state regarding reopening guidelines and regulations, multiple Federal, State, and City grants and loans, plus various services available to them through public and private entities. We also distributed over 80,000 face masks free of charge.

Throughout the year, the BID maintained its private security presence seven days a week. In addition to public safety and security tasks, which includes, but is not limited to, deterring panhandlers, mitigating traffic, and reporting homeless individuals, illegal vending, and security and safety issues, they also reminded visitors of the importance of social

Distancing. Our private sanitation team continued their work of street and curb sweeping, litter basket maintenance, and shoveling snow. Their routine was also updated to include sanitizing high touch areas throughout the district.

Due to the Governor's Executive Order, and recommendations by elected health officials, we held off on hosting beloved community events. However, we were able to introduce Piazza Di Belmont once outdoor dining was permitted. The program created a dedicated outdoor dining space on Arthur Avenue four evenings a week. Week after week our eateries welcomed guests to the al fresco dining plan that incorporated temporary street closures. It truly brought spirit back to our streets. To kick off the holiday season, our holiday lighting display dazzled our visitors coming to shop, dine, and conduct business in the district. We streamed the countdown and lighting of our 25-foot Christmas



tree to over a quarter of a million of our social media followers. Our acapella carolers, The Jolly Holidays, strolled through the neighborhood leading up to Christmas singing classic holiday tunes. We were fortunate to still be able to sponsor special events like Turkeys for Thanksgiving Giveaway and Back to School Giveaway with former Councilman Torres, and Christmas donation events for the 48th Precinct, as well as, Community Board 6. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, we hosted our inaugural Little Italy in the Bronx Restaurant Week which offered diners promotions on delectable lunches and dinners. During a financially challenging year for our local businesses, the BID chose to not start a new 2020 banner program, but instead extended the 2019 banner program and covered the cost of renewing the permits for the past year.

Throughout the year, the Belmont BID continued to work with our strategic public relations and communications agency, Nicholas & Lence Communications (NLC). Through our work with NLC, we continue to increase awareness of the Bronx Little Italy brand and garner positive press coverage. Our numerous stories secured a tremendous amount of coverage on national and local networks, plus online and print publications. With the help of NLC, the BID also hosted press conferences throughout the year, highlighting important matters in the district like allowing indoor dining in NYC, and announcing the new and expanded businesses in the district, despite the challenging year.

In 2020 the BID updated and maintained our website to feature the most up to date information on the status of our local businesses and the additional services they were offering. This became very helpful for customers looking for delivery and curbside pickup options. We continued our work on increasing our social media presence through vibrant posts highlighting our members on our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube accounts.

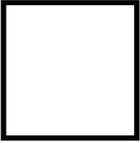
Finally, throughout the year, the BID continued our work with city agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Transportation on traffic flow and parking which are critical to our business community and its ability to flourish, the State Liquor Authority regarding supporting and/or opposing liquor licenses for local establishments, and the Department of Small Business Services on advocating for our members.

Annual Meeting

On Friday, January 8th, the BID held its annual meeting. The meeting allows the BID to review the year, share plans for the upcoming year, distribute our financial audit, answer any questions, and most importantly, hold the elections for our board of directors. The board is now comprised of: Peter Madonia (Chairman), Richard Liberatore (Vice-Chairman), Frank Franz (Treasurer), Celeste Calabro (Secretary), Anthony Artuso, Joseph Clarke, John Colangelo, Scott Frankland, David Rose and Edward Teitel. Others include Angelos Kontos from the Mayor's Office, Rafael Roger from the Borough President's Office, The Council Member and Comptroller representative seats are currently in a transitional phase.

A Note from the Executive Director

I am grateful and excited to serve the Belmont Business Improvement District as its new Executive Director. I thank the Board of Directors for allowing me the opportunity to oversee the BID's daily operations and work with our members on various issues impacting the district. I would also like to thank Philip Marino. I learned an extraordinary amount from working with him, he was a fantastic mentor and a great friend.



Belmont Business Improvement District
PO Box 580-203
Mt. Carmel Station
Bronx, NY 10458

In my seven years as Assistant Director of the BID, I have worked very hard and learned a tremendous amount about our unique community. I have put a lot of effort into making the neighborhood a great place to work, visit, and live. None of this will change, in fact I will double down on my efforts. I believe my work, particularly on our promotional efforts and events, and assistance to our members, has shown the passion I have for this community. I will continue to bring that passion and my strong work ethic into everything I do in my role as Executive Director.

I will be here to help the neighborhood face the challenges that the pandemic has created. I will keep members up to date with regulations, guidelines, and available public and private assistance, and connect them with helpful resources. I will listen to our members, advocate on their behalf, and work with City agencies to address the needs of our businesses and community.

This past year our neighborhood received an astounding amount of national and local coverage in a great variety of publications. Reminding the public that we are here and open for business will now be more important than ever. I will continue to collect stories and business happenings, and plan press releases and events, as the promotional work with our strategic communications and PR agency, Nicholas and Lence Communications, continues. I will carry on my work on increasing our social media presence through vibrant posts on our accounts. Further, I will ensure our website remains an informative and useful tool for the public and our members.

The BID will continue to provide supplemental services like security and sanitation to our members. As a result of citywide budget cuts, our private sanitation workers have had to work harder than ever, particularly as they deal with an increase in litter in the streets and illegal dumping on our sidewalks. I will ensure they are working efficiently as they continue to balance an increased workload. I will oversee the work of our private security guards as they continue to manage the many security issues we face as a community. Our security cameras have continued to be beneficial to the BID, and we plan to expand our camera coverage in the coming years. Our recordings have proven to be a helpful resource to the Police Department as well, as they have used our footage for multiple investigations.

As I reflect on the past few weeks in the district, Christmas in the neighborhood didn't look like it normally does, but we tried as best we could to create a festive atmosphere. Most importantly, our members showed their resiliency and continued to highlight their specialty products and services. As I saw people shopping and dining outside in the cold weather, I am thankful for our loyal customers. The work we all do in the coming months and year will not be easy, but I am positive that our neighborhood will continue to persevere for future generations to come. I am proud to be in a community that will continue to serve the families and people who have supported the neighborhood over our long history, and I know you all are as well.