

5/12/26

Council of Neighborhood Associations – May Meeting.

Attendance:

Michael Dalton, Shawn Woodford, Michael Sanchez, Anthony Fiorenza, Bob Friscia, Tom Osbeck, Howard Waldman, Lea Waldman, Eli Khazzam.

Agenda:

1. The new Leader of the White Plains Business Improvement District (BID)

Guest Speaker: Eli Khazzam, Executive Director of the BID

Pres. Dalton introduced guest speaker Eli Khazzam to the attending members. Director Khazzam began his remarks by reviewing his 30 years of service in the public and non-profit sectors. He spent 11 years in the NJ Economic Development Authority, 1.5 years in Hallandale, Florida's Community Redevelopment Office. He served several years in Washington, D.C.'s Innovation District. Most recently he served as Vice-President of Economic Development at the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation. He has been the Executive Director of the White Plains BID for 6 weeks.

Director Khazzam explained that the BID is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation that offers supplemental services to its 142 member properties & businesses. Those 142 members occupy 5.9 million square feet of space in the downtown of White Plains. The supplemental services the BID provides to its members include marketing and promotion of the member businesses, sponsored events, streetscape improvements, sidewalk cleaning & beautification, special events and advocacy on behalf of member businesses. The BID is funded by a "tax" levied by its members...which is then paid to the BID. The member business are the "body" which votes on the "tax" amount members pay. The operating budget of the BID is approximately \$900k.

The Business Improvement District (BID) is focused on the downtown White Plains. The downtown area of the BID is approximately bounded to the north by Barker Ave, to the east by North Broadway, to the south by Rutherford Ave and to the west by Court St. & Martin Luther King Blvd.

The BID includes approximately 3000 households...5000 – 6000 people.

The BID does not offer Tax Abatements or Tax Incentives. It is not an "Enterprise Zone".

Director Khazim described the "Challenges" he sees for the BID and its members:

1. A 4% increase in costs has led to reduced spending.
2. Absorbing the new housing being built in the downtown
3. Changing mobility...e-Bikes

4. Marketplace driven by social media...many small merchants are not on social media.
5. Homelessness
6. On-Line versus Brick & Mortar retailing
7. Consumer spending shift from small to big box stores
8. Parking
9. Downtown White Plains is considered expensive compared to other suburban towns...but more affordable than NYC.

Director Khazim described the “Opportunities” he sees for the BID and its members:

1. Attracting more “experiential” retail and restaurant businesses
2. The continued boom of downtown residential construction will increase the population and bring more customers to downtown retailers and businesses.
3. The restaurants continue to be key drivers of increased business in the downtown.
4. White Plains is a “transportation hub” in Westchester...I-287 & Metro North
5. White Plains has a very diverse job market.
6. Although White Plains is becoming more urban...open space is nearby

Director Khazim described the what he believes the “Next Generation BID” should look like. The BID will use information technologies to improve efficiency and expand the reach of its brand to a wider audience. The BID will expand its portfolio of “experiential” events and support more educational programming.

2. Q & A

M. Dalton commented that there still seems to be a high retail store vacancy rate in the downtown...perhaps as much as 25%. He asked E. Khazzam what he thought the downtown retail shop vacancy rate was in the BID? E. Khazzam replied that the downtown retail shop vacancy rate was between 20-25%. E. Khazzam went on to say that downtown needs to attract retailers & restaurateurs who can provide a unique “in-store” products or services that cannot be bought on-line.

Many CNA members remarked that the downtown area is simply not inviting. Many commented on the lack of diversity of shops...there are too many nail salons, barber shops. Most commented that they did not like parking in the City’s garages and the aggressive parking enforcement drive folks to other towns and villages. E. Khazaam agreed that the aggressive parking enforcement does dissuade folks from visiting the downtown. It was suggested that the BID and CAN team up to make the case to the City needs to reform its parking enforcement.

Director Khazzam concluded his presentation at 8:22. Pres. Dalton thanked Director Khazzam for being the CNA's guest speaker.

3. CNA Scholarship award

- **Daystelin Garcia** will be awarded the CNA's \$300 scholarship award at the High School's Awards Night on May 14th.
- Pres. Dalton will attend the Awards Night and present the scholarship award.

4. CNA "Prototype" Website

M. Dalton presented the updated "prototype" of the CNA's new website to the members. He also provided the members with the URL for the prototype of new website enabling the members to navigate the prototype website on their cell phones during his presentation.

- Update Neighborhood Map to be "active". Link neighborhoods on map to thumbnail photos of the active neighborhood members & neighborhood websites.
- Update the Local Events page to feature 8 current events "curated" by AI from the City's & Library's events webpages. Events page will dynamically remove past events and update for new events taking place in the City.
- Add a Community Posting page to the website for the posting of events or activities. The goal is to share useful civic, neighborhood, and community updates — not classifieds, advertising, or personal listings. All submissions are reviewed by algorithm before anything is posted to ensure the submission follows posting guidelines.
- Move Agenda & Meeting Minutes archive to follow Local Events posting page.
- The Join the CNA page...which includes the Neighborhood Association workshop materials developed last year...to follow the Agenda page.
- The About page to follow the Join the CNA page.
- Update Contact page. Revise contact to "info@wp-cna.org" mailbox. (not personal mailbox). Include message dialogue box on Contact page to replace map of City.

M. Dalton was asked how much it cost to produce the "prototype" website? He replied that he and Mr. Kushman had donated their time to designing and building the website...there is no cost.

At the conclusion of M. Dalton's presentation of the "prototype" CNA website...he called for a vote to replace the current WP-CNA website with the "prototype" website. The vote by the members present was unanimous in favor of replacing the existing website with the "prototype" website. M. Dalton explained that the "prototype" website will still need some

work to ensure that all its page's function as properly. He expects the transition to the "prototype" website to be completed by the June 9th meeting.

5. Treasurer's report – Tom Osbeck

- Gedney Farms, North Street, Fisher Hill & Oak Ridge have paid their \$50 dues for 2026.
- GoDaddy's \$259.13 annual website hosting fee was paid on 2/6/26.
- The \$300 WP Scholarship Award was paid on 4/24/26.
- The current bank account balance at Key Bank is \$1261.21

An important reminder....

The CNA voted in February to increase the member dues to \$50 for 2026.

If you have not had a chance to mail your \$50 dues payment to Treasurer Osbeck...please take a moment and do so. Thank you.

Mail your payment to:

Tom Osbeck
48 Rockledge Ave
White Plains, NY 10601

6. Downtown Revitalization Project – Train Station Clocktower

- M. Dalton has learned that the DRI grant of \$10 million for 13 projects in White Plains is apparently linked to White Plains developing a "Strategic Investment Plan" to revitalize its downtown with up to \$300,000 in planning funds from the \$10 million DRI grant.
- From the City's website (<https://white-plains-dri.npvoorhis.com>) *"The Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) will examine local assets and opportunities to identify economic development, transportation, housing, and community projects that align with White Plains' vision for downtown revitalization and that are poised for implementation. The Plan will also guide the investment of DRI grant funds in revitalization projects that will advance the community's vision and that can leverage and expand upon the state's \$10 million investment."*
- To date...none of the 13 projects in the \$10 million grant have been started.
- The City has decided to have Westchester Arts ask local artists for proposals to redesign the Train Station Clocktower.
- At the same time.... the City has begun the process of figuring out the current cost of repairing the central clock mechanism that works all 4 clock faces.

7. Mayor Brasch – Private & Public Parking Garage Report

M. Dalton met with Mayor Brasch and Chief of Staff Karen Pasquale to discuss the findings of the Mayor's examination of the inspection procedures for both private and public garages in the City.

- The City has worked with 96 private garage owners to ensure that they are aware of and are now complying with the triennial reporting requirements for performing structural inspections of their garages.
- The City is also requiring all private garage owners to obtain “operating permits” that reflect that the garage owner is complying with the structural inspection program. Failure to comply with the program requirements will result in revocation of the garage “operating permit.”
- The City’s public garages have all been inspected to ensure they can be operated “safely”. That said...the below parking garage at the Library will require repairs costing over \$2 million. All City owned parking garages are now going through structure inspection and repair assessments.
- The City has increased DPW’s budget for public parking garage repairs from \$1 million to \$3 million.
- <https://www.cityofwhiteplains.com/m/newsflash/home/detail/2167>
- <https://www.cityofwhiteplains.com/DocumentCenter/View/12221/PR--f-Parking-Garage-Inspection-Program-Update-05042026>

8. June Meeting

- Capelli Organization – President Bruce Berg and Mark Weingarten (Land use Council) will be updating CNA on the developer’s progress.
- LMHA Museum
- Neighborhood Association Workshop

Pres. Dalton thanked all the attendees...and closed the meeting at 9:00pm.