



**When our businesses succeed so does our community**

***The Strasburg Business Alliance will foster economic growth and prosperity in the Strasburg community. The Alliance will positively and actively promote local businesses and community interests through networking, advocacy, events and education.***

## **Monthly Meeting**

Thursday, October 15, 2020  
Box Office Brewery 6 – 7pm

## **Participants**

Mary Beth Price, Alliance Chair, Box Office Brewery  
Abby Walters, Alliance Vice Chair, Sager Real Estate  
Amy Lee, Amy's Lush & Local Flowers  
Kathy Evans, Amy's Lush & Local Flowers  
Cassandra Mortimer, Drayer Physical Therapy  
Alice Muellerweiss, Anytime Fitness Strasburg and Hopewell House Bed & Breakfast  
Sue Haynes, Clementine Vintage and Skyline Paintball  
Doreen Ricard, One Stop Studio Shop  
Brandy Boies, Town of Strasburg and Lord Fairfax Community College  
Michelle Bixler, Town of Strasburg  
Sharon Baroncelli, Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce  
Kath Stanley, Alliance Secretary, Lydia's Clothes Closet

## **Notes from Meeting**

**New Officers:** Mary Beth Price stepped into the role of Chair, supported by Abby Walters our new Vice Chair. ***Note as decided at the February 17, 2020, meeting, positions are held for a minimum of one year.*** Thanks to both Mary Beth and Abby for filling these vacancies.

**Funding Opportunities:** The county is offering CARES funded grants to non-profit organizations. The maximum amount of the grant could be up to \$15,000, with no pay-back requirement. Doreen Ricard asked if the "Laundry Love" group would qualify for such a grant. The Laundry Love team provides funding for washing clothes at the laundromat one Wednesday each month. Sharon Baroncelli said yes, as long as they were an approved 503(c)(3) non-profit. Doreen will get back to the person who asked the question.

Sharon also said the County has expanded the criteria for the type of businesses that would be eligible for the County's CARES funding. The expansion includes home-based, agricultural and new businesses. Further the number of employees needed to qualify has been decreased to "0."

There was a question about the \$500,000 funding that would come from the State's Community Development Block Grant. Michelle Bixler said access to this funding source is perceived as very restrictive and she does not believe there have been many, if any, applications.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/505927776947479/Virginia> has been relaxing the requirements for "Rebuild VA" funding.

Michelle also mentioned the Small Business Center at Lord Fairfax Community College would be offering free courses to the first 60 businesses to apply. Courses would cover marketing, e-commerce, and finance. Michelle said more details would come out on this in the electronic Business Newsletter she sends out monthly. (NOTE: If your business does not get this newsletter in your email box, reach out to Michelle.)

### **Committee Updates:**

**Holiday Parade, December 5, 2020:** Marty White, Stovers Funeral Home, will be the lead on the parade for the Strasburg Business Alliance. Sharon met with Marty and Olivia Hilton and was pleased to see how much of the work done last year will be the blue print for this year. The only restrictions discussed at this initial meeting was to limit the number of people on the float and to require gloves be worn by those handing out candy. Sue Haynes suggested the judges be at ground level vice on Clementine's balcony. She thought having the judges at ground level would provide a better view of the floats and walkers. Sharon passed around a sign-up sheet for those who want to volunteer for helping out on the day of the parade from roughly 3:30 – 4:30.

The Town will take the lead for the tree lighting. Michelle said there would be the annual Hot Chocolate tasting from 2- 4 at Strasburg Square and the school carolers would sing then. Tree lightening would begin after the parade and when the sky had darkened. The theme for the day will be "Tis the Season."

There will be a "Frosty" decorating contest. Businesses would decorate their windows with a "snowman" theme. Judging and prizes would be on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Other activities include:

Open Late 'til 8 – Encouraging businesses to stay open on the day of the parade

Businesses usually closed on Saturday could have "Open Houses"

The Town will put out any sales or activities going on in businesses the day of the parade

Mistletoe Market – 10 – 2 at the Market Pavilion, Strasburg Square

Street Lights will be up by December 5<sup>th</sup>

**Festival in May, May 14 – 15:** Abby Walters is taking the lead on this and she said she has volunteers for most of the different activities for the festival as follows:

Parade – Marty White

Kid-Zone – Jody Neff

Craft Vendors – Patsy Moorehead

Pageant – Wendy Williams and Taylor Childs

Food Trucks/Vendors – Suzanne Matthews

Duck Race – Reach out to Joan Williams or Mari Ann Fowler

Pumps and Pints – Box Office Brewery

Meetings leading up to the festival will be at 2:00, the first Thursday of each month, at Box Office Brewery.

Sharon has purchased domain name of “StrasburgMayfest”, to include, .com and .org urls. A Facebook page will also be set up and communication will be starting in a month or two.

The Town will help with police, trash and other activities as needed.

A band will play outside at BB&T on Friday night. The parade and all vendor activities will be on Saturday. The festival will also tie into the carnival.

Should the event earn money, all will go to the County Chamber for use on future Strasburg Business Alliance Activity.

### **Other Activities:**

Sharon said if any business want to put something in the County or Strasburg “Welcome Bags” for new residents, they need to get 50 item(s) to the County Chamber by October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sharon will gladly pick up when she is in town too. The Town is thinking about developing a card to give to new residents, when they set up their water connection. The card would say visit the Visitor’s Center to get their “Welcome Bag.”

Sharon asked about the Town having a Facade Grant to defray costs of exterior improvement to Historic District buildings. Michelle said this is part of the Town’s Strategic Plan, but has yet to be prioritized. Assigning priority is a Town Council responsibility.

Sue Haynes will be speaking at the October 27<sup>th</sup> County Chamber Networking event about her experience with online selling. The event is at the Hampton Inn and more information is available in the Chamber’s weekly electronic newsletter.

There was discussion on interest in keeping businesses open on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, for trick or treaters. There was no expressed interest in doing this.

Mary Beth highlighted the new Chef at the Box Office Brewery.

Kath Stanley handed out flyers for Lydia's "Free-for-All" scheduled for Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Lydia's will be giving out coats and shoes, free of charge. Kath asked the businesses to pass the word and to put the flyer in their windows.

Brandy mentioned the Town would be announcing an ornament contest soon. The winning ornament would be placed on the Governor's tree in Richmond. All other ornaments would be placed on the Town's tree.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, Box Office Brewery 6 – 7pm

**Chair: Mary Beth Price**  
**Vice-Chair: Abby Walters**  
**Secretary: Kath Stanley, Lydia's Clothes Closet**  
**Chamber Liaison: Sharon Baroncelli, President/CEO**