

## Baltimore Downtown Restoration Committee

### Annual Report 2020

The BDRC is a non-profit organization run by volunteers. Monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM. Committees meet as needed on various schedules. Due to the ongoing pandemic, many of the BDRC's traditional programs and events had to be postponed, reimagined, or cancelled this year. Cancellations included the craft beer/mead tasting "An Evening at the Opera House", the elementary school choir's holiday concert, Cardio Drumming classes, the Christmas movie/holiday event at the Opera House, several concerts, square dances, and plays, along with Opera House rentals. However, there were still successes to share.



- The BDRC's Board adopted a new mission and vision statement.
- Over the winter, new audio equipment was installed in the Victoria Opera House. The equipment will dramatically improve sound quality for theater productions, concerts, etc. The Victoria Players Children's Theater was awarded a grant from the George and Dollie L. Zimpfer Memorial Fund of the Fairfield County Foundation to purchase the equipment.
- Renovation of the Victoria Opera House (VOH) continued with missing sections of floor in the balcony being replaced with salvaged lumber. New seats were installed in the auditorium space, providing more spacious, cushioned seating for the first time in history. The seating arrangement is flexible, allowing for small groupings, a double aisle theater arrangement, or a center aisle "wedding" set up.
- The BDRC applied for funding to replace the VOH's aging original windows in 2020 through the State of Ohio's capital funding budget, but due to the pandemic, no action has been taken at the state level.
- The BDRC continued its tradition of purchasing flags and erecting them on utility poles on arterial streets. Ace Hardware of Baltimore provided generous support through "round-up" weekends on major holidays, enabling customers to round their invoices up for charity. Renewed attention to pole mounted holiday decorations within the Village may lead to enhancement of that program and partnership for 2021.
- The Baltimore Farmers' Market is held outdoors at Ace Hardware, and had a very successful season. New leadership took over this program mid-year, and has done great work. The year ended with a sold-out Holiday Market featuring many local crafts, arts, treats, and other products. Food trucks were a weekly, popular feature this year. Work is already underway to plan the 2021 season.
- The BDRC partnered with the Baltimore Museum and the Village Tree Commission to plant two trees for Arbor Day on museum grounds, assisted by local Cub Scouts. A grant application for new street trees was submitted, but no response has been received to date.
- The Mommy and Me Tea event held in partnership with the Griley House, went virtual, with take-home tea kits assembled for participants.

- A gingerbread house decorating contest also went virtual in December. Kits were sent home with entrants and voting on Facebook determined the winners.
- The BDRC website underwent major renovation. The new website is a huge improvement.
- The Victoria Players Children's Theater underwent a rebirth of sorts with new leadership and a pivot to virtual productions. Their first virtual production "Super Happy Awesome News" premiered to rave reviews and thousands of views. This was followed at the end of the year by Duets and Duets II in partnership with the Millersport Community Theater.
- The BDRC organized and promoted the Baltimore Community Yard Sale in early June, a popular outdoor, socially distanced event.
- The BDRC's annual Trick or Treat at the VOH was reimagined, and instead of bringing hundreds of children through the VOH, candy was sent down long chutes to eager children on the sidewalk below.
- Visit Fairfield County organized a bus tour of the Baltimore area in August. The VOH was part of the tour, and a socially distanced group was given a tour of the last historic opera house in Fairfield County.
- The Membership Committee under new leadership spent months revising membership levels, membership and marketing literature, and sponsorship opportunities. Look for a major public outreach and promotion initiative in 2021.

In summary, the BDRC had a remarkably busy and successful year considering the huge curve ball thrown our way by the pandemic. Programming for 2021 remains uncertain for the same reason, but we will adapt as needed, and we plan to get back up to speed rapidly as conditions permit.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Cothrel, Director

BDRC

srcothrel@gmail.com