From: Lark
To: Max DeJarnatt
Subject: PBIA Board intro letter
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Hello PBIA Board-

My name is Anne Gavzer and I am the owner of Lark on 5th SW. We are a women's clothing and accessories boutique.

I had a similar shop in Seattle's Belltown for 23 years called Endless Knot.

I signed a lease in December, moved to Olympia in March and had high hopes of opening my shop in April. Oh well. That didn't exactly work out.

Though I am new to the downtown business scene I have been peripherally connected to Olympia for many years. I went to Evergreen in the early 1980's. I still have many friends here from those days. But perhaps most importantly my husband of 11 years lives here. When we got together I stayed in Seattle for my business. He wasn't leaving Olympia for Seattle (ever!) and he was equally and deeply connected in Olympia. He is an original (and still on staff) collective staff member at Oly Food Coop. So back to Olympia I finally came.

People warned me about opening a business downtown. I heard many folks say that they never go downtown anymore. They complained about the homeless population, parking fees, dirty streets....whatever. I understand these concerns but they are not enough to dissuade me. Downtown is the only place I would want to be. I can't imagine being in a mall or some other sterile locale.

As a shop owner in Belltown for so many years I feel well versed in the dynamics of operating in a neighborhood with multiple and sometimes conflicting needs and perspectives. Downtown Olympia has many of the same challenges and charms as my location in Belltown.

I am interested in serving on the PBIA board for several reasons. I look forward to the opportunity to connect with other independent business owners. I'd like to be part of the discussion on how to make downtown less scary to people. I'd like to work with people who are addressing the issues of homelessness in a compassionate and thoughtful way.

Business is super tough these days, and like most of us I am really struggling to make a go of it. Opening a new shop in the midst of a pandemic was definitely not one of the challenges I was prepared to take on, on top of the "downtown issues". But I feel very committed to finding my way thru and perhaps I can be helpful to others doing the same.

Thanks for considering me for your Board.

Anne Gavzer

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