

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

August 25, 2016

7:30 P.M.

In attendance: Eric Berger, Chris Crane, Margaret Inglese, Allison Inserro, Jan Margolis, Jay Muldoon, Mirjana Novkovic, Grace Shackney, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Dorothy Winhold, Deb Zupan. Not present: Chris Flynn.

Board President Eric Berger opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room, Metuchen Borough Hall.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Jan Margolis moved that the minutes from the July 28, 2016 be approved. The motion was seconded by Margaret Inglese and approved by all present.

MOTION TO JOIN THE METUCHEN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERSE:

Chris Crane moved that the Metuchen Downtown Alliance join the Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce. The motion was seconded by Jan Margolis and approved by all present.

NOMINATION OF TRUSTEE:

The Board discussed a recommendation from the Nominating Committee to elect Leon Schwartz, owner of Carpet Maven, to replace Barry Montalto on the Board. Jan Margolis so moved. The motion was seconded by Margaret Inglese and was approved by all present.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Organization Committee** – Report on the office set-up.
 - Chris Crane is talking to Seemore’s about obtaining a larger air conditioner. He was authorized by the Board to spend up to \$400.
 - Chris will also work on the bathroom exhaust fan and water pressure and get lightbulbs for the overhead track lights. Chris and Jay will finish the painting of the bathroom.
 - Dottie Winhold is arranging for a handyman to touch up the paint on the outside of the office doors.
 - Deb is arranging for the installation of the Wi-Fi and two phone lines.
 - We have donations of phones, a printer and a fax machine.
 - Chris will activate the office address (316 Main Street) at the post office. It was decided that we will take a post office box instead of having mail delivered directly to the office.
 - Peg will make café style curtains for the office windows. Deb will pick up the material.
- **Economic Development Committee** – Jay Muldoon reported the following:
 - This Committee had its first meeting at the end of July to discuss the purpose of the Committee.
 - Separately, Jay and Dottie met with the developers of the Whole Foods and Woodmont developments and had a conversation about retail mix.
 - Satellite tenants are expected to begin their fit-out in October, and Whole Foods is expected to commence their fit-out by the end of the calendar year.

- Renaissance Properties, the real estate developer of the Whole Foods site, will have a representative on the Economic Vitality Committee.
- **Design Committee** – Grace Shackney reported the following:
 - Street Cleaning: After interviewing two outside vendors, Grace and Jay met with Fred Hall from Metuchen’s DPW about cleaning up and maintaining the sidewalks in the District. Fred has already started power washing and weeding a section of the downtown. Fred proposed the follow:
 - Street sweeping twice a week at \$250 a week = \$13,000 a year.
 - Street sweeping three times a week at \$250 a week= \$19,550 a year.
 - Power washing all of the downtown area (4400 linear ft.) x \$1.00 a linear ft. = \$4,400. We can determine how often this should be done.

Upon Grace and Jay’s recommendation, a motion was made to accept Fred’s proposal and get started on the cleaning as soon as possible. The motion was seconded and approved by all present.

- Holiday Lighting: Grace and Bob Diken met with representatives of The Lighting League to discuss what could be done to enhance the holiday lighting on Main and New Streets. They will present a proposal to the Design Committee in September. Ideas discussed were wrapping the lamp posts with lights that could be programed to change color; projections of scenes on store windows; projections of snowflakes on the streets and sidewalks. Grace asked for a budget limit between \$10,000 and \$12,000. Those present expressed more comfort with a \$5,000 budget, but all agreed to consider the The Lighting League proposal.
 - Murals Up-date:
 - The MDA logo mural proposed for the old Danford’s building is on hold until permission is obtained from the new tenant.
 - The Chalkboard mural (alleyway leading to parking lot behind Main Street) - the building owner has refused the request for a “chalkboard” mural, but would not be opposed to a regular mural, subject to his approval of the content and design.
 - Committee member Judy Weinberg has set up a free on line Pinterest account for the Committee for storing public art ideas, research and examples.
 - MDA Logo – Jay presented an adjusted version of the logo suggested by the Design Committee that shares the color pallet of the Metuchen Borough signage and wayfinding program that is underway. He also shared examples of what the new signage will look like around town and gave an overview of the project. A motion was made to accept the logo changes. The motion was seconded and approved by those present.
 - Public Art Theme – The Design Committee has adopted the theme of “connecting people” when considering projects for public art in the District.
- **Promotions Committee** – Mirjana reported that the video promo for the Brass Lantern is complete. She showed the three minute promotional video. Once Brass Latern approves it, it will be put up on our website. Mirjana plans to do five more promotional member videos over the next month using her cameraman Gus who will be paid \$300 per video, which was approved by the Board. In addition, she will seek to use Metuchen

High School students as cameramen for additional videos, and will seek to have them given credit for their work in film class in lieu of being paid. Mirjana will put together 3 questions to be distributed to MDA members to streamline the video process, and member videos will be produced in order of the receipt of a response to the 3 questions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH:

Jan Margolis reported that over 100 applications were received. The Search Committee narrowed it down, first to 21 candidates, then to 6, and then to 4 who were called back for a second interview. Members of the Board and the District were invited to meet the last four candidates. Since Chris Crane and Grace Shackney met all four candidates, they were asked to join the committee.

The Search Committee made an offer (subject to Board approval) to the Isaac Kremer who is presently running a Main Street program in Middlesboro, Kentucky. After a long discussion about the selection process and Mr. Kremer's qualifications, a motion was made by Mirjana Novkovic to approve the hiring of Isaac Kremer as our Executive Director at \$72,000 a year including benefits (see attached offer letter and contract for salary and compensation breakdown.) The motion was seconded by Dottie Winhold and approved by those present.

Isaac's start date will be September 7. He will transition to Metuchen from Kentucky through the month of September, and will be in Metuchen full time beginning October 3.

Bobbie will work on crafting an announcement that will first go out to the MDA members and then out to the general public.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Eric reported that the accountant Mike Hronich prepared the MDA 501c(3) application, which was mailed to the IRS on August 23.
- The first meeting of the Parking Committee will be held on August 31st with Nexus and the Metuchen Parking Authority.
- Eric will send an email to the Board in an effort to find the best day and time for Board meetings.
- There is a Chamber networking meeting on September 20th at the Brown Stone at which Eric and Isaac will appear on behalf of the Chamber.
- The next MDA Board meeting is scheduled for September 8th, 7:30 p.m. at Borough Hall.
- The next MDA membership meeting was scheduled for September 27th, location TBA. Subsequent to the meeting, it was decided that the membership meeting would be moved to October.

All business being complete, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Submitted by:

Grace Shackney