

## METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

September 8, 2016

7:30 P.M.

In attendance: Eric Berger, Joe Cascio, Chris Crane, Margaret Inglese, Jan Margolis, Ruchir Mewawla, Jay Muldoon, Leon Schwartz, Grace Shackney, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Deb Zupan. Not present: Allison Inserro, Chris Flynn, Dottie Winhold, Mirjana Novkovic. Staff: Isaac Kremer, Executive Director. Guests: Jennifer Maier, Borough Administrator.

Board President Eric Berger opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room, Metuchen Borough Hall.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 28, 2016:

Jay Muldoon moved that the minutes from July 28<sup>th</sup> be approved. The motion seconded by Peg Inglese. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Nominating Committee –**
  - Joe Cascio introduced new Trustee, Leon Schwartz, owner of Carpet Maven. Leon was welcomed by all.
  - Joe distributed a spread sheet with current committee volunteers. He suggested setting a limit on the size of each committee and creating a form letter to go with the volunteer application.
- **Organization Committee –** Chris Crane recommended getting a UPS mail box for the MDA. The first two months would be free. By doing so we would be supporting a District business. Jan Margolis moved to set up the UPS mail box. Leon Schwartz seconded the motion. All present approved.
- **Economic Development Committee –** Jay Muldoon reported that this Committee had its first introductory meeting. The second meeting is scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> at Dorothy Winhold's office.
- **Design Committee –** Grace Shackney and Jay Muldoon reported that an agreement has been made with the Metuchen Department of Public Works to power wash the District's sidewalks and to have the sidewalks swept twice a week.
- **Promotions Committee –** Bobbie Theivakumaran reported the following:
  - The MDA will have a booth at the Country Fair. Bobbie asked Trustees to sign up to cover one or two hours throughout the day. Our booth will be next to the Chamber of Commerce booth in front of the Metuchen Savings Bank offices.
  - The Masons will have a "Best Pizza in Metuchen" event on October 7<sup>th</sup>. For \$10 you can sample tastings from all the pizza purveyors in Metuchen and cast your vote for the best. The money collected will go toward the Mason's scholarship program.
  - The merchants' video questionnaire will be sent out tomorrow. As the answers come in, video sessions will be scheduled.
  - UNICEF Trick or Treat boxes will be given out to children by retailers. Notes will go out to the schools with instructions. Wells Fargo will be the collection site for the boxes.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Eric and the Board welcomed Isaac Kremer to his first meeting of the MDA Board. Isaac outlined his approach to managing the District which included, inviting people to love the place they live, filling empty storefronts using the 4 points of the Main Street USA approach, determining market needs through assessment, understanding assets and creative place making (driving transformation by using artists). His first steps include drafting the 2017 budget and bringing in the Heritage Consulting Project which will give us \$12,000 of free technical services and strategic plan development.

### OTHER BUSINESS:

- **The Parking Committee** – Eric Berger and Jay Muldoon reported that this committee had its first meeting. The Committee is made up of representatives from the Parking Authority, Nexus and MDA business owners. They will work with Nexus to set up a merchant validation program that will allow District business employees to park in the deck for a discounted rate. They will test an on-line validation system with Novita employees. There was discussion about the importance of consistent enforcement of meter parking violations. The Parking Committee will meet again in October.
- **Plaza programming and other public space design** - Isaac Kremer will create a policy for programming the new plaza in the Woodmont development. Isaac also will work on some ideas for utilizing unused public spaces for “parklets.”
- The next **membership meeting** will be on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Franklin School.
- Committee Assignments: Now that the Executive Director Search Committee has finished its work, Jan Margolis will be joining the Organization Committee.
- Projector Purchase – All present agreed that Joe Cascio should look into the purchase of a projector for PowerPoint presentations.

All business being completed, a motion to adjourn was made by Peg Ingles and seconded by Joe Cascio. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Grace Shackney