

## **METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES**

**March 13, 2017**

**8:00 A.M.**

In attendance: Eric Berger, Jay Muldoon, Dottie Winhold, Leon Schwartz, Grace Shackney, Gary Tilbor, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Chris Flynn, Anthony Campisi. Not Present: Diana Callinan, Margaret Inglese, . Staff: Isaac Kremer, Executive Director. Guests: Jennifer Maier, Jan Margolis.

The Meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Eric Berger, MDA Board Chair.

The minutes from the February, 2017 meeting were approved.

Isaac Kremer, MDA Executive Director, shared his ED report which included updates from the four standing committees. He recognized Bobbie for developing works plans for the Promotions Committee projects and stressed the importance of having work plans for all projects. They will be a key part of the budget planning process for 2018. Isaac highlighted some upcoming events:

Volunteer training session – 4/22

Placemaking event – 4/29

Store front seminar – 4/18, 4/19

Main Street national conference in Pittsburgh – 5/1 (3 MDA reps to attend)

Strategic Plan goal setting meeting – 5/11, 6-9pm (30 people needed to attend)

Nominating Committee – Dottie Winhold presented 2 candidates to fill open Board seats: Michelle Schutz from What's the Scoop & Lollipop Land, and Stuart Schooler from The Maven Group. Motion made by Jay Muldoon, seconded by Gary Tilbor. Motion passed. Jan Margolis will work on a Board orientation for Michelle and Stuart.

Organization Committee – Jan Margolis talked about the upcoming Volunteer training and asked for suggestions from Board members. Jan talked about looking into possible grants from the Foundation Center of NY. Eric also mentioned applying for a grant from USA Today and if successful using the grant to purchase video projection system for the new plaza.

Design Committee – Grace Shackney reported plans to hire a Public Art consultant to advise the Design Committee. Cost could be between \$7000 – 10,000. She discussed the plans for the Community Build placemaking event on 4/29. The goal is to increase foot traffic downtown. Jay Muldoon mentioned concerns about liability and zoning. The Committee is aware and working to address those concerns. Work underway with Garden Club for spring and summer plantings. New planters are being ordered. Volunteers may be needed for plantings. Jan mentioned the Y's Togetherhood program for potential volunteers.

Economic Vitality – Jay Muldoon reported that the committee has been assisting Isaac in getting businesses owners to complete the survey which in input for the Market Analysis. He also stated that the committee has organized into task forces:

Market Analysis

Cultural Arts Planning

Business Recruitment & Support

Reinvestment Stats

Promotion – Bobbie Theivakumaran mentioned the great participation of restaurants for Restaurant Week starting on Sunday. The Retail promotion event for April was discussed. Eight businesses have expressed interest in being in the CRIT ad. The theme is “Make Saturday Special” – “Shop Small, Save Big” with retailers offering discounts, promotions, sidewalk sales, etc. Leon and Gary stated that they need help in contacting and lining up retailers. There was Promotions Committee meeting following the Board meeting.

Parking Committee – Eric reported that Nexus is offering first 3 hours free parking in the garage through 8/31/17. A parking validation system will be offered starting 9/1/17. Training on the validation system will be scheduled. Anthony Campisi discussed the need for 15 minute meter parking as well as an area for a loading zone. He also stated that the Parking Authority is looking into a low cost employee parking option.

The next Board meeting will be 4/14/17 at 8am at Hailey’s.

Meeting was adjourned.