

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

July 14, 2017

7:30 A.M.

In attendance: Eric Berger, Anthony Campisi, Chris Flynn, Jay Muldoon, Stuart Schooler, Grace Shackney, Leon Schwartz, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Gary Tilbor, Dottie Winhold. Not present: Dianna Callinan, Peg Inglese, Michelle Schutz. Staff: Isaac Kremer. Guests: Donna Harris.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Eric Berger, MDA Board Chair.

The minutes from the June, 2017 board meeting were approved.

There were no additions to the agenda provided.

Eric Berger, MDA Board Chair, reviewed the issues and options regarding the new planters and irrigation system. The vendor was sending a replacement irrigation unit this week.

Chris Flynn gave an update on the marketing plan for 4th quarter. It will be a multi-channel campaign utilizing cable TV, social media and digital platforms. It will run from Sept through Dec, 2017. Following the Board meeting the team was meeting with Altice (Cablevision) and Central Jersey in Motion regarding the campaign. The focus of the campaign is to position Downtown Metuchen as a desirable destination for the entire family highlighting all Metuchen has to offer.

Donna Harris reviewed her Strategic Plan which was distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. She highlighted the Main Street Refresh which shifts the focus of activities from the traditional four Main St teams to Transformation Strategies. The MDA has identified two Transformation Strategies – Family & Kids and Innovation/Entrepreneurship. Going forward the MDA will identify projects aligned with the two Transformation Strategies and volunteers will be organized to support the projects and initiatives. A discussion followed Donna's presentation –

Eric Berger mentioned that we need to balance the amount of projects and budget between the two Transformation Strategies.

Bobbie Theivakumaran asked how the two strategies fold into each other and how we migrate from the Four Point Approach to the new approach. Donna stated that in addition to the teams supporting the two Transformation Strategies, there will be another team focused on "cross platform or getting things done" issues. Each team will be led by a Chair person.

Isaac Kremer mentioned that there will still be a focus on the four points, but the MDA work will be organized around the Transformation Strategies. The four points aren't going away, we're just changing how we organize to achieve results.

Donna stated that the Strategic Plan is a 5 year view and not everything. The Communications Team will be critical since it needs to tie all activities together. There was also a discussion about the role of historic preservation including the benefits and challenges. Donna also stressed the importance of raising additional funds beyond the assessment fees and Borough contribution. She believes that over the next five years the MDA's budget needs to be \$500k in order to do all the projects identified.

Donna is awaiting Kennedy Smith's final report and recommendations and plans to finalize her plan and attend the next Board meeting. The Board agreed to not share the plan externally until it is final and a communication plans have been developed.

Main Street Bridge Painting – Jay Muldoon stated the Jennifer Maier and Nora Pagel are working with the contractor to finalize the painting which is anticipated to be done this summer.

Old Business – there was no Old Business.

New Business – Grace Shackney discussed an AARP grant for placemaking and pop-up projects, possibly a parklet somewhere downtown or in one of the alleys. It could be an area for small outdoor performances.

Anthony Campisi mentioned the issues with the poles that were placed in the no parking zones at two intersections. It is making it difficult for deliveries to be made. Grace Shackney mentioned painting the pavement at these intersections and the crosswalks. Jay Muldoon indicated that he thought the cones would come down once the Parking Enforcement is in place. These issues can be addressed by the Parking Team.

Motion to adjourn was made and passed. Meeting concluded at 8:45am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, August 11, 2017, at 8am at Hailey's.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon