

## **METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES**

**August 11, 2017**

**8:00 A.M.**

In attendance: Eric Berger, Dottie Winhold, Leon Schwartz, Stuart Schooler (via phone), Chris Flynn, Peg Inglese. Not present: Diana Callinan, Anthony Campisi, Jay Muldoon, Grace Schackney, Michelle Schutz, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Gary Tilbor. Staff: Isaac Kremer. Guest: Donna Harris, Jan Margolis.

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

Lacking a quorum, the approval of the minutes from the July, 2017 board meeting were postpone until the September meeting.

There were no additions to the agenda provided.

Isaac reported that he has used the slow summer period to work on finalizing the Strategic Plan. He thanked Donna for her work. He presented reinvestment stats going back to January, 2016. Last year 26 new businesses opened in the District and we have already exceeded that in 2017. \$80,000 worth of volunteer hours in 2016 and on track for same or more this year. Nancy Zerbe working on historic façade guidelines. Isaac looking on MDA general design guidelines and on a program for matching grants up to \$5,000 per property for façade improvements. Hoping to do at least 5 grants by end of year. This will help to spread the MDA design vision of District. Isaac and Jim Constantine will do 3 hour presentation at conference in Winnipeg, September 12-15. IOBY crowdfunding campaign successful and shooting for quarterly meeting in new plaza at end of September at which Strategic Plan will be introduced.

Eric reported that CVS coming in for Planning Board approval on August 17. MDA working to get market space on New Street which will tie Whole Foods and Main Street together and have symbiotic relationship with Town Plaza. Leon asked that existing merchants get preference for leasing market spots.

Donna presented Strategic Plan. Additions made in innovation section based upon Kennedy comments as well as comments from Elaine Edgcomb and Grace Shackney. Elaine will lead Innovation Team. Bobbie will lead Family Friendly Team. Donna urged to take time filling roles with right people rather than rushing just to fill them.

Donna stressed that this is a living document that will need to be revised over time. Document needs illustration to make it more visually pleasing before presenting to public. Conclusion from Kennedy's Market Analysis should also be distributed to public. Both should be on MDA website. Merchants should be visited for 1-on-1 meetings to explain how it applies to them and how it can improve their bottom line. A presentation should be made to Council in mid-September and both documents given in Council in advance of that meeting. Will also be presented at quarterly meeting in new plaza behind La Rosa as noted above. Jan pointed out that could be used to aid in MDA fundraising. Applications need

to be made to banks by end of September. Chris Flynn moved to adopt Strategic Plan which was seconded by Peg. All present voted in favor as did Stuart remotely plus Diana, Jay, Anthony and Grace voted in favor via e-mail prior to the meeting. Strategic Plan adopted by unanimous vote.

Eric reported that bridge painting expected by no later than end of September. Revisions to stencil caused brief delay.

Eric reminded all present that Town Plaza will be on-line by end of year and need planning to begin.

Isaac asked those present which team they wish to work on going forward:

- Dottie wants to work with thirty-somethings on Creative Task Force under Innovation Team;
- Jan wants to work on Investor Campaign under Getting It Done Team;
- Leon also wants to work on Creative Task Force under Innovation Team;
- Peg also wants to work on Investor Campaign under Getting It Done Team;
- Chris wants to work on communication and tech task forces under Innovation Team;
- Eric wants to work on Parking and Zoning Task Forces under Getting It Done Team;
- Grace, while not present, has an interest in the Public Art task force;
- Michelle, while not present, has an interest in Family Friendly Team.

Communications Team – Chris Flynn gave a report on the upcoming media campaign. Three-prong approach: (1) TV cartoon spot about family experience. Will be shown on News 12 and other appropriate channels; (2) digital fencing that sends 30 days of messages if person passes through fenced area; (3) Central Jersey in Motion which boosts social media presence. All drive traffic to MDA website so vital that site be kept up-to-date. Central Jersey in Motion will give 25% discount to MDA Full Members so \$95 per month. Central Jersey in Motion will do 90 minute seminar in September for MDA members. Chris made motion (Peg second) to approve Central Jersey in Motion contract which was approved (quorum existed because Stuart on phone). Motion carried unanimously.

New Business – Renaissance and Main Street merchants unhappy that placemaking project at Lake Ave not being done in their area of the downtown. Isaac explained how this is a model that we want to apply in other areas of the downtown.

Leon raised that the Trustees were chosen for their experience and expertise which is not being utilized due to a lack of time for brainstorming. Eric recognized that initially Board meeting were only team reports and brainstorming, while now there is none, and that a happy medium needs to be found.

Chris from Contacts InMotion gave brief summary of services.

Motion to adjourn was made and passed. Meeting concluded at 9:30am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, October 13, 2017, at 8:30am at Hailey's.

Submitted by Eric Berger