

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

November 10, 2017

8:00 A.M.

In attendance: Eric Berger, Allison Inserro, Jay Muldoon, Leon Schwartz, Grace Shackney, Bobbie Theivakumaran, , Michelle Schutz, Gary Tilbor, Stuart Schooler on phone, Chris Flynn, Dianna Callinan, Anthony Campisi. Not present: Peg Inglese. Staff: Isaac Kremer. Guest: Elaine Edgcomb, Chair, Innovation Team, Allan Tennant, Edward Jones.

Eric Berger, MDA Board Chair, opened the meeting. Motion was made to approve the September minutes. Motion passed. Eric provided an update on the lease arrangement with CVS which permits the MDA to conduct two Market Days/week on the sidewalk along New St adjacent to the VCS building. CVS will donate funding for streetscape tables and chairs which the MDA will be responsible for maintaining. Motion was made to approve the lease. Motion passed.

Executive Director Report

Isaac Kremer reported on a very busy month.

- Planning for Small Business Saturday (SBS) – advertising, business owner offers, volunteers for the day, welcome table at Cai's Café, and post event party at Brass Lantern.
- Nice article in the Metuchen Mirror, ad listing all MDA business members. SBS ad will also run in the Crit.
- Printed copies of the summary of the Strategic Plan were distributed. Jay to give copies to Mayor and Borough Council members.
- Information shared about a pedestrian and vehicular counting system which would provide real time data on measuring visitor traffic in the district. Sensors would be placed throughout the District which would count traffic. Discussion was held on merits and benefits of investing in the system. Consensus was MDA should focus on attracting visitors and shoppers to District businesses rather than measuring them at this point.
- Allan Tenant from Edward Jones addressed the Board regarding Edward Jones's donation for the placemaking project at the "La Rosa" strip mall renovation. He talked about Edward Jones and his personal commitment to giving back to the communities they serve. Isaac thanked him for his involvement and presented him a gift in appreciation for their support of the pilot project.

Chris Flynn reported that the MDA commercial is running on cable and started on News 12 on Nov. 2. It will run through early January, 2018. He expected to get the dashboard report that week. He asked business members to think of, and provide, content for continuing series on Central Jersey In Motion. A home improvement themed piece was suggested.

Bobbie Theivakumaran reported on a very successful and well attended Haunted Downtown event on October 28. Plans are underway for big Plaza Opening and New Year's Eve celebration.

Elaine Edgcomb gave a report from the Innovation Team.

- Storefront Consultants – 90 minute presentation given to 24 attended held at Brewed Awakening. Individual sessions held with 8 businesses. Reports with recommendations to be

available in a couple weeks. Matching grant program available to help businesses implement recommendations from the consultants.

- Tech Team has been formed and is working on three initiatives: helping businesses promote their SBS promotions via social media, tips for getting businesses appear in searches during holiday season, and holding one on one consulting sessions with business to better address their social media efforts and opportunities.

Allison Inserro gave an update on the plans for Downtown Holiday lighting and asked for volunteers to help with Holiday planters on Nov. 18. A fundraising appeal letter is being developed seeking donations to the MDA from Board members and targeted residents. A volunteer team meeting is being planned.

2018 proposed budget was shared and Isaac and Eric led a discussion of the plan.

- Reserve and contingency amounts were discussed. Stuart offered to assist with budget and balance sheet.
- More money needs to be allocated for Marketing and Plaza programming.
- Budget will be revised based on Board discussion and will be presented prior to December Board meeting.
- Isaac will also provide a YE 2017 view including budget vs. actual numbers and the projected surplus for 2017.

New Business

There was no new business to report.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25am.

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

Submitted by Jay Muldoon