

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

June 8, 2018

8:30 A.M.

In attendance: Eric Berger, Chris Flynn, Stuart Schooler, Jay Muldoon, Diana Callinan, Anthony Campisi, Robert Diken, Michelle Schutz, Leon Schwartz, Bobbie Theivakumaran. Not present: Margaret Inglese, Gary Tilbor, Dottie Winhold. Staff: Isaac Kremer. Guests: Linda Koskoski, Elaine Edgcomb

Eric Berger opened the meeting. Motion was made to approve the May board meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger reported:

- Agreement with CVS still awaiting signature by building owner.
- Update on public artist, Stephen Powers, was provided. Mr. Powers was hoping to get more feedback following the Member Meeting he attended and was unsure of the level of interest. Sharon reaffirmed our interest and commitment to the project. He will send a final proposal with costs and timing.
- Video contract: Eric updated the Board on discussions with Brandon Uhlig who is being hired by the Borough to manage Borough digital and video communications. He has proposed to produce videos and commercials for the MDA as an independent contractor. Motion was made to approve contract with Brandon to produce videos for the MDA at an annual rate of \$10,000. Motion passed.

Executive Director Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- Mural at Imagination Alley by Ed Wetzel is on track. One remaining issue with the building landlord needs to be resolved.
- Planning for Small Business Saturday in November is underway. A sub-team was formed and will meet this June to work on ideas and plans for the event. Metuchen HS students may be available to help with planning and execution.
- Street pianos that were recently donated are being painted. The Sportsplex and Hailey's are interested in getting one at their locations.
- Isaac has submitted a grant proposal to Gannett for public art. Grants will be awarded in the following amounts: \$25K, \$50K, \$100K. If MDA is awarded a grant, it could be used to fund the Steve Powers mural project, acquire staging, sound equipment, etc. Decision is expected 6/25.

Treasurer Report

Stuart Schooler reported:

- Stuart will provide the semi-annual Financial report at the July meeting.
- He reported that the cash reserves are OK at this time.

Communication Team

Chris Flynn reported:

- The MDA commercial from last year has been taken down by Altice. Once Brandon Uhlig produces a new one Altice will run it.
- The banners on Altice are driving traffic to MDA website. There were 53,000 impressions in May with a click through rate between 1.5 – 2% which is the industry standard. The Pearl St. parking garage is the #1 location identified by our geo-fencing app.

Promotion Team

Bobbie Theivakumaran reported:

- The Downtown Loves Moms event on 5/12 was a success with businesses reporting increased over same day last year.
- Pre-Prom event was a slow build but turned out great. Well attended by kids on their way to the Prom and by their friends and families. The feedback was very positive. It succeeded on many levels.
- Upcoming events include:
 - June – 2nd annual Kids Takeover Downtown
 - Swing Dance on 7/13
 - Shakespeare on the Plaza on 8/25, 8/26 - Romeo & Juliet by Dragonfly Arts.
 - Professional wrestling event on 9/15
- Downtown Directory of all MDA businesses printed and being mailed and distributed to 4600 area households.

Innovation Team

Elaine Edgcomb reported:

- The Business Recruitment team is developing information to be put on the MDA website. They met with Ariel Rutland, who did the MDA directory graphics, to create the graphics for the web and social media piece.
- Interactive Marketing Workshop, a series of three supported by a grant from SCORE, will be held on 6/27, 7/11, and 7/25 at the First Presbyterian Social Center. Registration is required and seats were filling up. Flyer was distributed and Jay Muldoon is going to get it on the Borough website.
- Isaac and Elaine attended a presentation by MHS entrepreneurship students on proposed website improvements for local businesses. Some of the students are interested in working over the summer with local businesses on their websites and helping with social media.

Getting it Done Team

Isaac Kremer reported:

- Mural at Imagination Alley by Ed Wetzel is on track. One remaining issue with the building landlord needs to be resolved.

- Due to work and time commitments Allison Inserro needs to step down as the Borough Council rep on the MDA and leader of the Getting It Done Committee. Linda Koskoski will replace Allison. Isaac thanked Allison for her service as a founding member of the Board and noted that she will be missed.
- Golden Broom Award still needs to be presented to Scottish Dog. Linda will follow-up with Allison on this.

Old Business

Bob Diken reported that MetFest is tomorrow and things are looking good, including the weather. Letters were sent to Main St businesses to make them aware of the schedule, closing of Main St, activities and parking options. Isaac recognized Bob and the MetFest Committee for their efforts to include businesses in the event and addressing the concerns of some businesses.

New Business

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, July 13, 2018 at 8:30am at Hailey's.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon