

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

November 9, 2018

8:30 A.M.

In attendance: Eric Berger, Chris Flynn, Bob Diken, Diana Callinan, Michelle Schutz, Dottie Winhold, Gary Tilbor, Leon Schwartz. Guest: Elaine Edgcomb. By phone: Stuart Schooler. Not present: Bobbie Theivakumaran, Linda Koskoski, Jay Muldoon, Peg Inglese.

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

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger reported:

- Public art generating a lot of buzz.
- Team talking about next steps, looking for owners to work with.
- At Chamber meeting yesterday.
- New MetFest format, event on plaza, concert next day. Art during Restaurant Week. Something in fall. Add on to other events that are happening.
- Isaac mentioned "with" and "for". How better for more to do special events "with" businesses where have opportunities for mutual gain.
- How appeal more to fine art crowd. Some businesses enjoyed street close.
- Business owners mentioned how four days was nice.
- Streamline ability to volunteer make happen on plaza area, Saturday of Restaurant Week. Put up big tent. Sunday have rock show there using same venue.
- In conjunction with Gallery Walk, fine art event at St. Luke's.
- Michelle asked if would be closing Main Street for MetFest? Bob answered no. Michelle concerned that Main St becoming dead, no foot traffic, secondary to Town Plaza.
- Bob needs MDA involve as a partner at this point.
- How make special events benefit businesses in town?

Parking

- Repairs being done in Newark on rail lines, less trains, less riders because trains overcrowded and not convenient times. Deck now has 20-30 spaces open where full before. Construction through mid-Jan.
- Meters in, app not running. Can press buttons and get 10-15 minutes free parking.
- Deck is briefly closed 7:30am to 10am timeframe.

Treasurer Report

Stuart Schooler reported:

- No report.

Executive Director Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- SBS businesses specials being collected.
- Have trolley going around. Trying to get elves. Reach out to High School. Stuart can get elf.
- DJ at Carpet Maven II, by Cachet have speaker with holiday music.
- Call to volunteers to put out balloons.
- 10 pop-up shops at Cai's.
- Promotions for businesses run for the full day.
- Eric underscored how need businesses to be involved earlier on in the planning process.

Communication Team

Chris Flynn reported:

- Looking to partner with Comcast similar to Altice.
- Hits all networks that are popular.
- Can work together with Brandon Uhlig on developing future videos.
- If Cablevision customer, will not see what we run, unless watching News12.
- At 3pm today will discuss what is our message, selling people to come down here.
- Now that have public art, new businesses – what is our message to put out in 5 words or less.

Promotion Team

Bobbie Theivakumaran reported:

- No report.

Innovation Team

Elaine Edgcomb reported:

- Livestream of Google webcast on ways to use business listing to boost sales.
- Working with students to help businesses, including on a Nifty Gifty shopping guide.
- Have 3 downtown fellows and looking to get other businesses involved.
- New version of recruitment card completed and included in packet, also posted on website.
- Trying to create a package as a place to install businesses and use as handouts for those who contact MDA or whom we go and visit.
- RevUp – part of REIT, bring in pop-up businesses for a few months or year or more. Keep all stores occupy all the time.
- If know getting vacant, share with MDA.

Getting it Done Team

- No report.

Nominating Team

Eric Berger reported:

- We have four nominations, Eric and Chris want to continue.
- Talking with Chamber, trying to have more businesses in District continue.
- Five nominations for four seats.
- Will review slate and present for vote next month.

Old Business

None to report.

New Business

- Sponsorship. Leon asked where sponsorship program stands. We are continuing to work to develop it. We need sponsorship to cover part of \$43,000 in non-assessment monies to continue funding Alliance at current levels.
- Diana shared concern business owners being slighted, with sidewalk work taking away a lot of business. Concerned about parking too.
- Michelle had equipment break and felt no one was available to ask her how she was doing.
- In the future updates on Storefront and Innovation grants will be made at Board meetings.
- As a matter of policy if a property owner asks a unit to be listed under Available Properties on the website, MDA will make the business aware the property is being listed.
- Elaine mentioned how MDA can and should look into how to be more responsive when businesses have emergencies.
- Michelle asked for a sign on New St at the corner by The Greek with names of businesses down the street.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, December 14, 2018 at 8:30am at Hailey's.

Submitted by Isaac Kremer