

## **METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES**

**February 8, 2019**

**8:30 A.M.**

In attendance: Jay Muldoon, Stuart Schooler, Diana Callinan, Leon Schwartz, Eric Berger (via phone), Linda Koskoski, Gary Tilbor, Michelle Schutz, Mark Harris, Sue Fitzgerald. Jamie Gordon. Not present: Chris Flynn, Bobbie Theivakumaran. Staff: Isaac Kremer. Guest: Sheri-Rose Rubin

Stuart Schooler opened the meeting as Eric Berger was away but participated via phone. With several new Board member present, everyone introduced themselves to the group. Motion was made to approve the January board meeting minutes. Motion passed.

### **Chairman's Report**

Eric Berger reported:

- Parking Committee will be meeting later this month. Eric mentioned the recent memo from the Police Chief regarding parking enforcement and the continued need for downtown employees to not tie up Main St parking places by feeding the meters. Eric stated that it seems enforcement is working since more spaces seem to be available during the day. Jay Muldoon stated that the Parking Authority is working to launch the mobile payment option by end of February and would work with the MDA on the communications plan to rollout the app.
- Public Art Committee is being led by Linda LaStella and will be focusing on efforts to educate the public about public art. On 2/26 the Committee will be hosting a public art seminar at Mariachi's.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Stuart Schooler reported:

- The 2017 financial audit has been completed and submitted to the Borough. The auditor is now working on the 2018 audit.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Isaac Kremer reported:

- MDA awarded a \$5000 grant from Middlesex County to support the storefront improvements
- Update on storefront and Innovation grants – a grant request was received from See-More Appliances. Before the Board considered the request, Gary Tilbor and Leon Schwartz stepped out of the meeting. See-More's is doing \$50,000 worth of improvements and is asking for a grant of \$3795 which would be used primarily for new flooring. After a discussion, the Board postponed making a decision on the request and would ask Gary to consider including some signage or storefront improvement in the project. Isaac agreed to provide feedback to Gary.

### **Metuchen Chamber Update**

Leon Schwartz reported:

- The Chamber is working on projects to better support businesses and members located around the Forum, Amboy Ave and south Main St. areas.

- The Chamber is also working on a new edition of their Welcome Kit for new residents and businesses are welcome to submit information and offers for the kits.

### **Communications Team**

Jay Muldoon reported:

- The MDA's latest commercial, the restaurant themed "Metuchen's Got It" has been very well received. It is running on the Comcast system in neighboring towns and being widely viewed on social media platforms. It has over 20,000 views and has been shared over 105 times. In February it will also run on NJ Monthly's website home page.
- The Team will be working on the next spot which will continue to leverage the "Metuchen's Got It" theme.
- Sheri-Rose Rubin asked how the commercial is being measured. Jay replied that the commercial is really more about brand building and creating awareness of downtown Metuchen with various audiences. It does not have a "call to action" which could be measured.
- Isaac also shared information about the total impressions that all of the MDA's advertising has created.

### **Promotion Team**

Sue Fitzgerald reported:

- Valentine's Day themed "Feel the Love" promotion with several businesses "cross promoting" or collaborating on offers, for example Scottish Dog & Optique Unique
- Upcoming events include Mother Day, Pre-Prom, Kids Takeover and Father's Day

### **Technology Team**

- (Report submitted in writing)

### **Storefront Team**

- (Report submitted in writing)

### **Old Business**

None to report.

### **New Business**

- Jay Muldoon explained why Councilmembers Linda Kosksoki and Sheri-Rose Rubin are attending Board meetings. The MDA by-laws state that there will be one Councilmember serving on the MDA Board as a voting member who is appointed by the Mayor. Linda Koskoski is the appointed Councilmember and Sheri-Rose, as an alternate, will cover meetings when Linda cannot attend. Both are welcome to attend Board meetings, but only one can cast a vote at Board meetings. Linda Koskoski will cast the vote when in attendance and Sheri-Rose will vote when attending in Linda's absence.

- Stuart Schooler proposed the idea of a municipal seasonal ice rink being created at Trailhead Park. It would operate from November – March each year serving hockey clubs and recreational skaters. Westfield has a similar rink. The Board discussed the idea and a majority of them thought it could be a draw for the downtown and bring visitors to the town. Next step is to talk to Nancy Goldberg, Recreation Director.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, March 8, 2019 at 8:30am at Hailey's.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon