

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

May 8, 2020

8:30 A.M. – held via teleconference

In attendance: Eric Berger, Jay Muldoon, Stuart Schooler, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Leon Schwartz, Mark Harris, Gary Tilbor, Diana Callinan, Mo Atzbi, Linda Koskoski, Sheri Rose Rubin, Sue Fitzgerald, and Gary Wade. Not present: Jenny Lai. Staff: Isaac Kremer.

Eric Berger opened the meeting. Motion was made to approve the April, 2020 board meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger had no report.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart Schooler had no report.

Secretary's Report

Jay Muldoon reported:

- Joint efforts of the MDA, Chamber and Borough to support restaurants and retailers re-opening by enabling outdoor dining and sales once current restrictions are loosened by the Governor. Areas being considered include expanded use of sidewalks and right of way, public and private parking lots, alleyways and the closing of New St from Main St to Pearl St on weekends. Action to be taken at May 26 Borough Council meeting.
- Discussion followed his report – continued use of curbside pickup & delivery, curbside ordering so patrons don't have to enter the premise, request that use of temporary awnings be permitted.

Executive Director's Report

Isaac Kremer provided a written report which was distributed to the Board.

- The MDA has applied for a \$17,437 Payroll Protection Program forgivable loan in the 2nd round of funding. Discussion was held among Board members. The idea was to relocate payroll money in budget if grant is received to programs that directly support businesses. Suggestions were made to spend money on PPE and other items businesses will need in order to operate safely.

Public Art Team Report

Eric Berger reported:

- A virtual public meeting will be scheduled to review the proposed mural from Jonathan Horowitz for the wall at See-More Appliance. This mural is funded by a grant from Middlesex County Cultural Arts Trust Fund.
- Plans for a sculpture on the Plaza are on hold until 2021. The team is discussing other projects including descriptive plaques for the Steve Power's murals.

Promotion Team Report

Bobbie reported:

- Most previously scheduled events for 2020 have been cancelled.
- The "You've Got a Friend in Me" video was released.
- MDA partnering with Project Graduation to honor MHS Class of 2020 with 4 banners over Main St.

Parking Team Report

Gary Wade reported:

- Parking is plentiful during the stay at home order.
- Boxcar is using the Halsey St lot for weekly delivery and pickup of produce and grocery items.
- Concern expressed about the reduced contribution to the Borough from the Parking Authority due to extreme drop in parking revenues. Might this impact the Borough's contribution to the MDA budget?
- Parking study remains on hold until parking volume returns.

Communications Team Report

Diana Callinan reported:

- Next video has been shot by Brandon. Team need to meet following the Board meeting to decide on edits. The video features dry cleaners/tailors who are open for business and also making masks for front line workers.
- Team is also looking at ValPak offer to promote businesses when they reopen.
- Video and promotions will be developed once businesses are able to re-open.

Chamber Report

Leon Schwartz reported:

- Chamber is offering a series of webinars on “Restarting Your Business.”

Arts Council Report

Mark Harris reported:

- Arts Council has not met recently. They will schedule a virtual meeting in the future.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, June 12, 2020 at 8:30am via teleconference.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon