

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

July 10, 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, Jenny Lai and Gary Wade. Guest: SheriRose Rubin. Staff: Isaac Kremer.

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

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger reported:

- The MDA had applied for COVID-19 related emergency loan from the SBA. The terms of the loan are: \$150,000, 30- year term, 2.75% interest rate. No pre-payment penalty. No payment required for the first year. No personal guarantee required. No restrictions on how the loan can be used.
- The SBA had granted MDA's application but withdrew it before the Board could consider the loan (no deadline was specified in the offer). There is an opportunity to appeal the rejection. After discussing the loan, potential uses of the funds and having questions answered, the Board supported Eric filing an appeal to SBA.
- Eric also gave an update regarding the Metuchen Mirror's OPRA requests. Following last month's Board meeting a letter was sent to the Mirror reflecting the MDA's position that it is not a public entity and therefore not subject to OPRA. The MDA then received a letter from the Mirror's attorney threatening litigation if the MDA did not comply with the Mirror's OPRA requests. The MDA Executive Committee then hired OPRA legal counsel. After conferring, MDA's OPRA counsel responded to the Mirror's attorney stating that the MDA would provide the requested documents, although MDA's position on the inapplicability of OPRA had not changed.
- Due to the volume of documents, MDA requested a 2- week extension until July 24, 2020, which was agreed to by the Mirror. On the advice of Sheri-Rose Rubin, who is an employment attorney and Board Trustee, due to the extremely long days of sorting and printing documents, and the stress placed upon Isaac by the Mirror personal attacks, the Executive Committee offered, and Isaac accepted, a mental health week off.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart Schooler reported:

- He is reevaluating MDA's bookkeeping needs.
- Stuart and Isaac will be revising the budget to reflect COVID-19 related costs and adjustments

Secretary's Report

No report.

Executive Director's Report

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

Public Art Team Report

No report.

Promotion Team Report

Bobbie reported:

- The outdoor dining program was going well.
- The Team is planning another "Golden Ticket" promotion in support of a food donation drive for local food pantry by MCFOODS on July 27.
- The large, red M sculpture, created by Robert Russo, has been installed on the Plaza.

Parking Team Report

No report.

Communications Team Report

No report.

Chamber Report

Leon Schwartz reported:

- The Chamber has launched their new website.
- They also have an on-line auction running to raise funds to support the front-line operations at JFK Hospital.

Arts Council Report

Mark Harris reported:

- the Metuchen Arts Council is looking to re-start their classes at the Senior center that were put on hold due to COVID-19.
- They are also launching a program for artwork from local artists to be displayed and sold at Boyt's.
- Music for diners on New St will start on Saturday, July 25.

Old Business

None

New Business

- Diana suggested that the MDA look at adding vendors or music on weekends when New St is closed. Mark stated that live music will be starting on Saturday nights on New St. Hailey's has music on weekends at their Station PI locations.
- It was noted that we need to avoid gathering of large crowds downtown in order to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, August 7, 2020 at 8:30am via teleconference.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon