

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

October 9, 2020

8:30 A.M. – Station Place Parking Lot

In attendance: Eric Berger, Jay Muldoon, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Jenny Lai, Mark Harris, Linda Koskoski, Moshe Atzbi, Gary Tilbor, Stuart Schooler, Leon Schwartz (by phone). Not present: Diana Callinan, Gary Wade. Staff: Isaac Kremer.

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

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger reported:

- Provided a brief update regarding communications with the Metuchen Mirror publisher.
- Shared information about a Downtown Morristown program that provides rental assistance to businesses. It uses private funds to pay two months' rent for eligible businesses. Payments are made to directly to the landlord by the downtown management organization.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart Schooler reported:

- Provided a revised budget for the current year reflecting the adjustments made due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Updated expenses were reflected through August 31st.
- A question was asked regarding repayment of PPE funds received. No word has been received so far from the Federal government or lenders regarding repayment, but PPP loan is expected to be forgiven, i.e. no obligation to repay the money.

Secretary's Report

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- A written report which was distributed to the Board.
- The MDA has purchased 65 electric heaters to help businesses through the upcoming cold weather months. Heaters have been installed at three restaurants so far and more will be done in the coming weeks.
- Stuart Schooler suggested that businesses be surveyed to see what their needs are regarding the wiring and installation of the heaters.
- The MDA is also helping to source fireproof tents for businesses that meet State code for wind and snow load.

- Isaac is finalizing a grant to Main Street New Jersey due on October 16th that will support programs to help businesses with outdoor dining & retail, creation of on-line stores and some employee costs for businesses.
- Isaac asked for a team of three volunteers to review business grant requests if the MDA receives funding from Main Street New Jersey. Jenny Lai and Gary Tilbor volunteered, and Leon will get back to Eric on serving.

Public Art Team Report

Eric Berger reported:

- A video is being planned that will highlight the various public art around town.
- Representatives of the Public Art team will be included in the interviews to be conducted by the Theatre Consultant hired by the Borough for the Forum Theater.

Nominating Team Report

Jenny Lai reported:

- Potential Property Owner and Business Owner names were provided to Jenny Lai for consideration of the Board openings. Any other suggestions can be given to Jenny or Diana Callinan.

Promotion Team Report

Bobbie reported:

- The “Photos for Job Seekers” program still has slots available. Anyone interested can contact Jenny Lai.
- Halloween “Boo Card” promotion is being implemented where people can buy “gifts” for friends and family at downtown businesses. Recipients can redeem or collect their gift at the businesses after they are “booed.”
- A Halloween Plaza Takeover to benefit the Food Pantry is planned for 10/30.
- Plans are being made for Small Businesses Saturday and Holiday promotions. The goal is to start earlier with promoting the offers compared to prior years.
- Stuart Schooler suggested hosting drive-in movies at the Sportsplex. Concerns were expressed about the logistics and manpower to host drive-in movies and the coming cold weather.

Parking Team Report

No report.

Communications Team Report

No report.

Innovation Team Report

Isaac reported:

- Lots of success with Clover Food delivery platform for on-line sales.

Storefront Team Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- New signs have been installed at A&J Jewelers and Papillon.
- Signs were made by Metuchen based business in downtown District, Blue Parachute.

Chamber Report

No report.

Arts Council Report

Mark Harris reported:

- Metuchen Arts Exchange classes have begun on-line
- Mignolo Dance *Manifested Destiny* will be November 14 and 15 in the Pearl Street Deck.
- *Best of Bollywood* concert with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra was November 6.
- The first three *TinyX* installations will happen soon.
- *Born in Quarantine* virtual exhibit is online at Galerie Westerhoff and Metuchen Media.
- Boyt's Merch Mart continues.
- Isaac mentioned how encouraging it was to see artists in Metuchen supporting the newly opened Papillon & Company.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Closed meeting discussion regarding employee annual review.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, November 13, 2020 at 8:30am in the Station Place Parking Lot beneath the Hailey's tent.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon