

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

December 11, 2020

8:30 A.M. – held via teleconference

In attendance: Eric Berger, Jay Muldoon, Stuart Schooler, Bobbie Theivakumaran , Gary Tilbor, Diana Callinan, Mark Harris, Jenny Lai, Moshe Atzbi, Jacquie Zuvich, Linda Koskoski, Mansi Khandelwal and Gary Wade. Staff: Isaac Kremer. Guest: Sheri-Rose Rubin.

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

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger reported:

- Businesses have all experienced challenges this year, but with the COVID 19 vaccine on its way, things should improve in 2021. Until then we need to do everything we can to support our member businesses. The winter will be especially difficult.
- Reported on the activities of the two groups working to fill open Board seats and expiring Board seats. Jenny and Diana had been working to fill the open Property Owner and Business Owner seats. Eric and Mo had been working on the expiring Board terms. Following discussion regarding the Board seats and potential candidates for the seats, as to the vacant seats:
 - Open Business Owner Seat: Mansi Khandelwal - filled following the November meeting.
 - Open Property Owner Seat: Jace McColley has agreed to join the MDA Board.
 - These vacant seats were filled by unanimous Board vote.
- All current Board members whose terms are expiring have been nominated to serve another four-year term:
 - Property Owners: Stuart Schooler, Gary Tilbor
 - Business Owners: Jenny Lai, Diana Callinan
 - Resident: Bobbie Theivakumaran
- This slate will be provided to Full Members to vote on.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart Schooler reported:

- He is working with Isaac on the 2021 budget and a draft of the budget will be shared with the Board prior to the January, 2021 Board meeting at which time it needs to be considered for adoption.
- We have received the 2019 audit and that will be shared with the Board who needs to review and accept the report.
- The Board needs to determine how the \$150,00 EIDL low interest loan should be used. A committee consisting of Moshe, Eric, and Bobbie will discuss and make recommendation to the Board.

Secretary's Report

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- MDA grant program for MDA businesses has been funded by the Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Recovery Grant. That grant is to be used to help MDA and MDA businesses deal with COVID-19 related expenses.
- To date \$295,958 has been received from Main Street NJ (the second highest amount in NJ) and grants have been paid out to a first round of businesses.
- A second round of grants will be considered by the three-member team overseeing the grants.
- The MDA and other Main St. programs had been contacted by NJ DCA who inquired as to whether there were additional requests for funding beyond the grant that was provided. There is the possibility that DCA may release additional funds to the MDA.
- Isaac also reported that Kara M. has volunteered to help identify and approach corporations and foundation for grants for the MDA and member businesses. Kara is a Metuchen resident with experience in development and securing grants.

Public Art Team Report

Eric Berger reported:

- The team is being led by three co-chairs.
- Plans are being developed for 2021 and the team is working with Brandon Uhlig to complete a video of public art in town.

Nominating Team Report

Jenny Lai reported:

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Promotion Team Report

Bobbie reported:

- Small Business Saturday went well with several businesses reporting significant sales increases. Similar SBS promotional offers are planned for the weekend before Christmas. The "Love It or List It" Gingerbread House contest will be held again. Entries can be dropped off at What's the Scoop.
- The MDA is also promoting the Holiday gift guide and is running a campaign on social media highlighting MDA business owners.
- No public gathering celebration is planned for New Year's Eve due to COVID-19 restrictions. Dinner packages to go will be offered by restaurants that will include a confetti canon from the MDA so that families can celebrate at home. A community celebration from home is planned for 7:00pm New Year's Eve.

- The MDA will need to promote take out and to go orders during the winter months for our restaurants and businesses.

Parking Team Report

No report.

Communications Team Report

No report.

Innovation Team Report

No report.

Storefront Team Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- The Metuchen Nail Spa will receive a Storefront grant for their new sign and that Bernie Hetzel is working with owners of Angie's Café to help improve their storefront.

Chamber Report

No report.

Arts Council Report

Mark Harris reported:

- Louis Armstrong Jazz video produced by Metuchen Media and that the performers are planning to come to Metuchen High once COVID-19 restrictions end.
- Currently there are works by four artists on display for purchase at Boyt's through January.

Old Business

- Jenny reported that her headshots for job seekers program is over and 30 people were served by the program.

New Business

- Diana announced that there will be weekly COVID testing at Friends of the Family that are open to the public on Fridays from 12-7pm
- Eric reviewed the process he went through to get his PPP loan forgiven and answered questions from other business owners about the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, January 8, 2020 at 8:30am virtually via Gotomeeting.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon