

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

January 14, 2022

8:30 A.M. – Virtually via GoToMeeting

In attendance: Jace McColley, Jay Muldoon, Jenny Lai, Lynne Mueller, Jason Delia, Moshe Atzbi, Gary Tilbor. Guest: Dan Cea (arrived after meeting started). Not present: Eric Berger, Jacquie Zuvich, Diana Callinan, Bobbie Theivakumaran, and Stuart Schooler. Staff: Isaac Kremer.

Jay Muldoon opened the meeting. Minutes were reviewed and a motion was made to approve the December meeting minutes. Motion passed. Aron and Jason abstained.

There were no additions to the agenda.

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger was not present. Jay Muldoon reported:

- Jay welcomed Jason to Board who will be filling Linda Koskoski's seat as Borough Council member Trustee. Jay thanked Linda for her service and also former Councilmember Sheri-Rose Rubin.
- Social Media Policy update was reviewed and discussed. Motion by Lynne, second by Gary. Motion approved.
- Question about "implied or implicit permission" to add emails was raised. Isaac explained and responded that it was taken directly from Constant Contact's policy which we use for our email newsletter distribution.

Nominating Team Report

Aron Mandel reported:

- Vacant seat for Kabab Factory (term ending December 31, 2026).
- Received three nominations.
- Bobbie and Aron did interviews with each nominee.
- Joanne Cruz was strongest nominee. Twice won awards from MDA. During interview demonstrated deep understanding of MDA, goals, and how it runs. Has working relationship with many businesses in town. Her business model is collaborating with other businesses. Previous interest in being board member.
- Jay said encouraging that have three nominees interested is serving as Trustees.
- Lynne asked about Chamber Trustee position in light Chamber dissolving. Their office is now closed, and all operations are scheduled to cease sometime this year.
- Possible to amend by-laws, do a call for nominations for vacated Chamber seat, or to select from last nominations. Executive committee and Nominating committee to discuss options and process and report at the February meeting with recommendation.
- Joanne nominated to Board. Motion from Aron, second Jason. All approved.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart Schooler was not present. Isaac Kremer reported:

- Net assets at end of year were \$63,311. This is less \$103,350 that had been planned for the reserve, but we ended the year in the black.
- A total of \$50,000 in reopening grants were taken from reserve in 2020 so we are working to replenish.

Secretary's Report

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- Newsletter continuing to have good open and impact, especially compared to prior years.
- Working on Main Street America Revitalization Professional certification this year.
- Main Street America Institute has online and on-demand courses for people interested in learning more.
- Written report provided in the meeting packet.

Arts Council Report

Lynne Mueller reported:

- Metuchen High School Jazz Ensemble Holiday Concert on Tuesday, December 21 on the Metuchen Plaza at 6 PM was a big success led by Band Director John Messenger and with nearly 100 people in the audience, including parents, town residents, MHS alumni and students.
- "Windows of Understanding" Art Project: -Artwork by 4 artists sponsored by 4 Berkshire – Hathaway real estate agents who have each contributed \$250 --will be displayed in the windows of Berkshire Hathaway at 564 Middlesex Avenue starting January 17th through the end of February 2022. More details at www.metuchenartscouncil.com Windows of Understanding, artwork display at 564 Middlesex Ave starts on Monday. For more info see metuchenartscouncil.com.

Parking Authority Report

Aron reported:

- Aron no longer on Parking Authority. New nominee needed.
- Started kiosk installation on New Street lot, ran out of concrete.
- Reorg meeting later this month and new representative to be named.

Team Reports

Public Art Team Report

Isaac Kremer reported:

- Met on January 13. Planning projects for 2022.
- Angie's Café project – painting is completed, fabric to be applied to the building once the weather permits. Celebration planned during Hispanic Heritage Month.

Organization Team

No report.

Grant Team

Gary Tilbor reported:

- Continue marketing campaign showing Before and After photos of storefront grant recipients.
- Have requests of over \$50,000 of grants, awaiting permits done to give grants out.
- Approved King Strength Performance grant for new sign.
- Heaters given out to businesses.
- Continuing blade sign project electric hook-ups.
- Discuss upcoming grant for MSNJ for \$75,000. Try \$20K promotions, \$20K storefront, and \$35K studies for Imagination Alley.
- Isaac added include strategic plan because fit in with program criteria.
- Jay said blade signs look great, hopes that more businesses install them.
- Saved money because not require stamped drawings as before – grateful to Borough.

Promotion Team

Bobbie Theivakumaran was not present. Dan Cea reported:

- Black History month promotion signs in windows with quotes from prominent black figures.
- Find your love promotion. Put love letters in mailboxes.
- Lunar New Year dragon dancers, cultural stations, and music. Feb 12, 11am Town Plaza.

Communications Team

Dan Cea reported:

- Google Ads did well, going to pause for Jan/Feb. Not have as much to send to website.
- Video filming for Valentine's Day/Find Your Love Downtown promotion will be done on Wed for early Feb release. Will highlight stores and bakeries for Valentine's theme.
- Will also film next "Day in the Life" business highlight video. Looking to feature a business that hasn't been done before, something more unusual/interesting. Thinking of Metuchen News: does screen printing, hub for Amazon.
- Moshe had idea about promoting love – like Jimmy Kimmel's read mean tweets.
- Jay suggested that service businesses be highlighted in the Day in the Life videos. Several businesses were suggested for consideration
- Jenny said Picture Perfect is planning a one-day only photo special with backdrop for Valentine's Day.

Old Business

None to report.

New Business

- Chamber cease all operations except gift certificate which run to end of year.
- CVS property – multiple parties looking at, not expected to be on the market long.
- Former Jewel Shop – working to get space filled.
- 1,200 sqft available on Middlesex Ave. in Jace's building

- Question about old Scottish Dog –
- Ribbon cutting for King Strength Performance, 2pm on Wed, Jan 19. Board members encouraged to attend.
- Lynne asked on newsletter – can add things now Chamber gone – Isaac advised to be cautious with changes. Jay said not want to turn ours into ads. Lynne asked about including events in the borough in the newsletter since Chamber’s newsletter is over.
- Annual Metuchen Thurs, Jan 20, 7:30pm. Most likely virtual. Please attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 am. Motion by Lynne, second Jenny.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, February 11, 2022, at 8: 30am. Location or virtual to be determined.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon