

**METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES**  
**April 8, 2022**  
**8:30 A.M. – The Hangout and Parlor at Hailey's, 15 Station Place**

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

Bobbie Theivakumaran the meeting. Minutes were reviewed. Amended to reflect Eric Berger not being in attendance at the March meeting. Motion made to approve the amended minutes, seconded. Motion passed.

There were no additions to the agenda.

**Chairman's Report**

Since Eric was available only by phone, Bobbie Theivakumaran reported:

- Ribbon cutting for Suite Metuchen, an event venue, to be scheduled in the next two weeks
- Upcoming construction work – New Street Parking Lot paving starts April 18 weather depending. Need to get communications to impacted businesses and residents. Discussion held regarding alternate parking plans. Manasquan Bank construction to begin in May.

**Treasurer's Report**

No report.

**Secretary's Report**

No report.

**Executive Director's Report**

Isaac Kremer reported.

- A written report was provided in the meeting packet.
- He shared details on the \$75,000 Main St NJ grant the MDA was recently awarded.
- He also talked about the grant application submitted to the Sustain and Serve program requesting \$720,720 for meals prepared by local restaurants impacted by the pandemic.
- The meals would be provided over 26 weeks to homeless shelters, food banks, and nonprofits serving those in need.

**Borough Council Report**

Jason Delia reported:

- New Street Parking Lot paving to start April 18.
- Parking Authority agreed to provide two spaces in the Center St commuter lot by the Senior Center to be used for the AARP demonstration project, if the grant request is approved.
- Details of the project plan with a sketch of the improvement to be made at the corner utilizing the parking spaces was provided in the meeting packet.

**Arts Council Report**

Lynne Mueller reported:

- “Windows of Understanding” (WOU) April 23.-- Earth Day Celebration at Newark Museum. Metuchen Arts Council representatives will share a table with representatives from Highland Park Arts Council and coordinate kids’ arts and crafts activities on behalf of Windows of Understanding. A video that includes selected art works from the Windows of Understanding Public Art Project will be shown. <http://www.windowsofunderstanding.org>
- International Jazz Day FREE Concert April 30 at 2 PM featuring Mike Lee Quartet at Metuchen Library, a collaboration between Metuchen Arts Council and Metuchen Library. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/3p9jhu9a>
- Sound and Soul FREE Concert May 15 at 3:30 PM at- Metuchen High School. Presented by New Jersey Symphony Chamber Players and Count Basie Center Gospel Choir. Funded by PSEG Foundation Register at <http://www.njsymphony.org/soundandsoul>
- Artist’s Table at Farmer’s Market Local artists have been offered the opportunity to participate in an “artist’s” table to market his/her/their artwork. One artist per Saturday. Bookings for 14 Saturday market days are already assigned.

### **Parking Authority Report**

No report.

### **Team Reports**

#### **Organization Team**

No report.

#### **Grant Team**

Gary Tilbor reported:

- Met March 7, 2022
- Marketing campaign of before and after on MDA funded projects continues
- Matching grants for 2022 - \$67,000 of requests and \$61,250 of funding available.
  - Brewed Awakening awning permits are submitted and under review and new tables and chairs are installed.
  - Rita's, Suite Metuchen and Hair Loft sign design is complete and permits will be submitted this week.
  - Painting for Suite Metuchen, New Pearl, Dante Zeller, and Orchid is being scheduled as soon as temperature are warm enough.
  - Newmarket blade sign, getting permits.
  - Working with other prospects.
- Discussion held regarding MDA budget for storefront program and how grant money for storefronts can be administered.

#### **Promotion Team**

Bobbie Theivakumaran reported:

- Upcoming promotions:
  - National Small Business Week, May 1-7. Retail promotions being planned similar to promotions used in Restaurant Week.
  - Spring Bazaar, May 21
  - Pre-Prom, May 26
  - Breakdancing Competition, Sat, June 4

- Juneteenth, Sat, June 18 or 19
- Kids Take Over, last day of school in June
- July Restaurant Week, dates TBD

### **Communications Team**

Dan Cea reported:

- Preparing for 'Love Metuchen' Campaign: Video, Advertising, social media push, etc. to support rollout of Yiftee gift card program.
- March Video –Pyramid Vitamin video released April 1. (reach of 2,300+ people)

### **Innovation Team**

Jace McColley was not at the meeting so Isaac Kremer reported:

- Team met on Monday, February 28.
- Rescheduling the MDA Member Meeting from April 19. Discussion held and suggestion was made to hold the meeting on 5/3 at Suite Metuchen.
- Yiftee (Metuchen Downtown Dollars) launches May 1, working to get businesses to sign up to accept the eGift card before then. So far 11 businesses have registered.
- The team will work to help businesses register. Handout was distributed at the meeting with details on the Yiftee program.

### **Public Art Team Report**

Isaac Kremer reported:

- Met on Thursday, April 7.
- Angie's Café project – mural painting underway soon for June completion. Date for public dedication TBD.
- Working on defining a major project for 2022. Hopes to do murals on construction fences when Manasquan Bank construction starts.

### **Old Business**

None to report.

### **New Business**

- Jason Delia announced plans for an outdoor concert by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra at the Plaza on July 2. Event to be underwritten by Hackensack Meridian Health.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 am. Motion by Lynne, second Jenny.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, May 13, 2022, at 8: 30 am at The Hangout and Parlor at Hailey's on Station Place.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon