

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

June 10, 2022

8:30 A.M. – The Hangout and Parlor at Hailey's, 15 Station Place

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

Eric Berger opened the meeting. Minutes were reviewed and a motion was made to approve the May meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger reported:

- A team has been formed to help businesses take advantage of the funding available from NJEDA, including a representative from Manasquan Bank.
- MDA is supporting the Borough's New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concert on July 2 by acting as a pass-through of funding from Hackensack Meridian Health's (HMH) \$50,000 donation to pay for the concert.
- Concern has been expressed about the delay in receiving the check from HMH.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart Schooler reported:

- The Borough's annual contribution is expected after adoption of the Borough's budget and should be received by the end of June.
- The next payment of the SID assessment will be in August. The MDA has received the two SID assessment payments so far this year.
- Payments follow the Borough's quarterly tax payment schedule.
- Isaac reported an additional \$279K of account receivables are expected before year end – including Q3 and Q4 SID Assessment, Borough contribution, and grant proceeds.

Secretary's Report

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Isaac Kremer submitted written report. Isaac reported:

Borough Update

Jason Delia reported:

- Jason, Todd Pagel and Isaac Kremer led a session at the Main Street Now conference on "Lean Startup Approach to Getting Stuff Done on Main Street", highlighting initiatives and improvements made by the MDA in Metuchen.

Arts Council Report

Jenny Lai provided the report in Lynne Mueller's absence:

- ArtCycle Outdoor Gallery at the Greenway. Call for Artists has resulted in 15 registered artists. Juried unique outdoor show. Metuchen Arts Council provides artists with old traffic signs to create artwork which raises awareness of the importance of local land preservation for recreation. The exhibit opens on October 22 at the Main Trailhead of the Greenway in Metuchen.
- Rise Up Chorus Concert June 12, 2022 at 5 PM at Metuchen High School will include selections from past 5 seasons and Journeys, a new commission by MHS graduate Gerald Custer.
- Metuchen High School (MHS) Advanced Students Exhibit June 4 – 16 at Bowery Art Collective
- "Are we FIDDLING while the World Burns?" exhibit continues through June 17 at Rotunda Gallery – Borough Hall
- MHS Band Director John Messenger Jazz Quintet Concert – Tuesday, June 28 at 7 PM outdoors at the Library produced by Friends of Metuchen Arts with Metuchen Jazz and Metuchen Arts Council
- Metuchen Arts Council Chamber Music Concert—Thursday, July 28 at 7 PM outdoors at the Library and sponsored by Westerhoff School of Music and Art

Team Reports

Grant Team

Gary Tilbor reported:

Met May 3, 2022

- Met June 6, 2022.
- Marketing campaign of before and after on MDA funded project
- Matching grants for 2022 - \$67,000 of requests and \$89,250 of funding available.
 - Permits for Suite Metuchen and Needle and Thread cleaners secured.
 - Painting for Suite Metuchen, New Pearl, Dante Zeller, and Orchid is complete.
 - Newmarket, Runner's High and Greek on Main blade signs – finalizing design and getting permits.
 - Working with other prospects.

Promotion Team

Bobbie Theivakumaran reported:

- Spring Bazaar on May 21 had strong volunteer turnout and help appreciated including MHS students.
- Pre-Prom on May 26 was a fun, well attended event - big success with participation from MDA district businesses including Carpet Maven II, Tiny Town, and Creative Twist Events.
- Upcoming Events:
 - Breakdancing Competition, Sat, June 4
 - Juneteenth, Sat, June 18
 - Kids Take Over, Tues, June 21

- Pride on the Plaza June 25, working with HRC and Metuchen HS, Edgar school student groups
- July Restaurant Week, dates TBD
- Movie nights are planned for July & August

Communications Team

Dan Cea reported:

- Video for Downtown Dollars gift card featuring Joel Branch and Linda Levine well received.
- Pre-Prom video from last year revised and run again to promote Prom related businesses, salons, etc.
- Small ad placed in the July issue of 08840 magazine which is distributed to Metuchen households.

Innovation Team

Jace McColley reported:

- Creating charts of businesses to benchmark websites, social media, etc.
- Creating screening form for consultant when referring business to MDA grant.

Public Art Team Report

Eric Berger reported:

- Met on Tuesday, June 7.
- Angie's Cafe mural is completed and dedication is scheduled for June 18.
- The pianos that were painted last year will be put out this summer downtown.

Old Business

- No old business to report.

New Business

- Artie Flaherty is being promoted to Police Chief, following retirement of Chief Irizarry.
- A question was asked regarding construction of the new Manasquan Bank. Demolition and construction should begin following the July 4th holiday. Removal of asbestos is underway.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, July 8, 2022, at 8: 30am at Hailey's Parlor at 15 Station Place.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon.