

METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE MINUTES

September 9, 2022

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

In attendance: Eric Berger, Jay Muldoon, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Gary Tilbor, Diana Callinan, Moshe Atzbi, Jenny Lai, Stuart Schooler, Jace McColley, Lynne Mueller, Jason Delia, and Joanne Cruz. Staff: Isaac Kremer.

Eric Berger opened the meeting. Motion was made to approve the August 2022 board meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Chairman's Report

Eric Berger shared the announcement that the MDA has been selected as a semi-finalist for the Great American Main Street award. Winners to be announced at the national Main Street conference in March in Boston. Metuchen would become only the 3rd NJ town to receive this honor if we are selected. Eric mentioned that is something that Isaac has worked towards since he joined the MDA. Isaac mentioned that this is a shared success along with the Board, member and volunteers.

Eric also reported that Isaac has accepted a new position with the Princeton Business Partnership and will be leaving the MDA on 9/30/2022. On behalf of the Board Eric thanked Isaac for his many accomplishments with the MDA. Bobbie announced that a get together for Isaac is planned for 9/29/2022 at Creative Twists.

Due to need for transition planning due to Isaac's resignation, the by-law revisions need further work and will be on the October meeting agenda.

Treasurer's Report

Financial statements were included in the Board meeting packet.

Executive Director's Report

Isaac Kremer provided a written report in the Board meeting packet.

Borough Update

Jason Delia reported:

The Borough Council is scheduled to consider the Cannabis licensing ordinance at their 9/12 meeting.

Jason explained what the ordinance would permit and the review/approval process.

The Mayor and Council will also be presenting a proclamation to Isaac in recognition of this contributions to the success of the MDA while serving as the Executive Director.

ED Search

Jay Muldoon reported:

Following the resignation of Isaac Kremer, a search committee was formed to hire a new Executive Director. The committee is comprised of the Executive Committee and Board members, Gary Tilbor and Diana Callinan. A job description has been written and posted on the MDA website as well as job boards

on the Main Street USA and NJ Main Street websites. The committee will review all resumes submitted and schedule interviews with qualified candidates.

Arts Council

Lynne Mueller reported:

1. MAC display at Heart Festival on 8/13 focused on change awareness. Festival is becoming more successful with each succeeding year.

Metuchen-based Lonesome Pines Band performed on the Plaza last Saturday 9/3/22 to a large crowd. Most people stayed for the whole 2 hours while the band performed their own Alt Country Rock and Ballads.

2. Central Jersey Jazz Festival – Metuchen --FREE Saturday evening at 6 PM September 10 – Metuchen Plaza. Latin Jazz Theme. Headliner band is Bobby Sanabria and Ascensión (nonet) with Vocalist Jennifer Jade Ledesna. Festival begins with 30 dancers from the Metuchen Dance Centre from 9 to 18 years of age and under the direction of Artistic Director Alessandra Valea perform 5 Latin jazz compositions, including a World Premiere of Dizzy Gillespie’s Manteca. Metuchen High School Jazz Ensemble (big band) performs at 7 PM and includes Latin Jazz in their repertoire! Bring chairs. Metuchen High School Auditorium if inclement weather.

3. Rotunda Gallery at Metuchen Borough Hall through the end of September: – “Menacing Nature” presented by 4 artists. Reception date to be advised.

4. Cornerstone Jazz Series at the Library - Sunday, October 16 at 3 PM FREE! Perth Amboy based, Latin Jazz Guitarist Alejandro Ataucusi and his Afro Peruvian Jazz Band “Forbidden Tropics” celebrate the release of their latest CD Peruvian Rhapsody.

5. Art Cycle Outdoor Gallery (Greenway Entrance) Update October 22 Ribbon Cutting. Artwork has been received from 11 artists and artists have been paid.

Promotion Team

Bobbie reported on upcoming events:

- Downtown Rumble wrestling on the Plaza on 9/17.
- Haunted Downtown on 10/29.
- Hispanic Heritage event planned in October
- Small Business Saturday on 11/26.

Public Art Team

Eric Berger reported:

- The team has not met since the last Board meeting.

Communications Team

Dan Cea reported:

- The next Merchants of Metuchen promotional video on Brewed Awakening was filmed 9/8.
- Ad Messenger will be used to promote Haunted Downtown.
- Eventbrite will be used for all upcoming events and will be boosted to take advantage of the wide reach.
- A new Google Ad campaign will run in September and October, and it will be evaluated to determine if anything needs to be altered.

Storefront Team

Gary Tibor reported:

Team has not met since last Board meeting. All funds for this year have been spent or committed so no new storefront grants will be approved.

Innovation Team

Jace McColley reported:

- Innovation grants have been awarded to DiCosmo Italian Ice and A&J Jewelers.

Old Business

- Jenny Lai and Diana Callinan reported on the upcoming ribbon cuttings for new business opening and business anniversaries that they are organizing. Board members are encouraged to attend the ribbon cuttings.

New Business

Maintenance of Imagination Alley: Diana and Jenny have taken on the responsibility of organizing the weekly cleaning of Imagination Alley. Dianne and Jen reported that they have created a Sign-Up Genius Page where anyone can sign up to help clean Imagination Alley:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4EAAA92EA3F85-imagination> They have also developed a sign which is posted in Imagination Alley, encouraging all to keep the area clean and suggesting people email picperfstudio@gmail.com in order to sign up to help clean the area.

Those who have cleaned the area recently include: Boy Scout Troop 17 Metuchen /Edison, Metuchen News Staff, Dan Cea and Dianne and Jen. A \$30,000 Main Street NJ grant has been achieved to develop new landscaping for the area. The point was raised about the importance of having movable furniture and included a concrete chess table. An AARP grant is supporting the redesign of the area.

Representatives from Arterial Landscape, www.arterialstreets.com, based in Montclair, NJ were present at the "Kids Take Over" event and are working on a design proposal for improving the Alley. Rich Mongelli, one of the property owners, is supportive of efforts to improve Imagination Alley.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 AM

The next Board meeting will be Friday, 10/14/2022 at 8:30am at The Hangout and Parlor at Hailey's.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon