

**Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, April 21, 2023, 8:30am**  
**Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street**

**In attendance:** Dan Cea, Joanne Cruz, Jenny Lai, Jay Muldoon, Angie Quinonez, Amar Singh, Meg Loftus Suchan, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Diana Callinan, Gary Tilbor, Jace McColley, Stuart Schooler, Eric Berger. **Not attending** Jason Delia, Sean Massey, **Staff:** Dawn Mackey

**Welcome:** Bobbie Theivakumara called the meeting to order and provided a brief update: GASMA win was recognized and will be celebrated throughout the year. Annual audit is wrapping up. We are entering the very busy Spring season with many upcoming events.

Minutes from the March Board meeting were reviewed, and a motion was made to approve the minutes by Mr. Tilbor, seconded by Ms. Loftus Suchan. Motion passed.

### **Secretary's Report**

No report

### **Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Mackey provided an update on the following:

- Grants: two grant applications were submitted this month for \$50,000 each - AARP & TMobile. Both grants seek funding for a proposed pocket park on Main St. Decision on both grants expected in June. Dawn is working on a Humanities grant opportunity that would fund a panel discussion event with the author of the "back story" of Kavi, the 2023 American Girl doll "from Metuchen." The discussion would highlight the themes of inclusion and representation.
- GAMSMA win - we continue to receive lots of media attention and inquiries from towns throughout the country looking for information on how we did. An interview with PBS Channel 13 was done this week and will air on Saturday at 10:30am. All eyes will continue to be on Metuchen so all businesses should be ready and have their places of business looking good.
- The MDA budget was approved at the last Borough Council meeting.

### **Treasurer's Report**

No report

### **Borough Update**

Mr. Delia was not present. Ms. Mackey shared the following:

- The Borough received cannabis applications from seven (7) prospective retailers. The review committee is now reviewing the applications to recommend three (3) licenses to be awarded.
- Parking - meetings have been held with the Parking Authority, Nexus Parking, MDA, MPD and Borough officials to address the downtown parking situation on multiple fronts. The goal is to create a comprehensive set of recommendations and changes to improve the parking situation. Enforcement will be part of the plan.

### **Arts Council Report**

Ms. Loftus Suchan informed the Board about two upcoming events. The Library will be hosting another Cornerstone Jazz session on 4/30 at 2pm and a Jazz ensemble at the Parlor at Haileys on 5/17 - tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door.

## **Organization Team**

No Report.

## **Storefront Team**

No report.

## **Promotion Team**

Ms. Theivakumaran reported that Mother's Day offers from member businesses are needed to be included in the upcoming promotion.

Here are the upcoming events being planned:

Pre-Prom on the Plaza - 5/25

Pride on the Plaza with Metuchen HRC and student groups from MHS and Edgar School - 6/3

GAMSA Celebration Funhouse - 6/10

Juneteenth - 6/17

Kids Takeover Downtown - last day of school in June

## **Communications Team**

Mr. Cea reported:

- The GAMSA celebration video was the most shared MDA video yet with over 320 shares
- A video is being planned that will feature a round table discussion on downtown residents
- Posters and digital ads at NJTransit stations on the Northeast corridor line will run from May - July featuring Metuchen as a destination highlighting our GAMSA win. These are being provided at no cost to the MDA.
- The ongoing "Pride to be part of Metuchen" campaign continues with photos of local business owners holding the GAMSA plaque. It is generating lots of likes. Over 70 businesses to be shown.
- The GAMSA win continues to generate lots of media articles and TV spots about Metuchen.
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Brandon Uhlig and Mr. Cea are working on putting together a celebration video for the award. This will be set to go out the day of the announcement. They need as many people to participate in the video as possible on March 18th from 10 - 12.

## **Innovation Team**

Jace McColley hopes to regroup and relaunch the team.

## **Public Art Team Team**

Mr. Berger informed the Board that six (6) posters have been selected for the poster frames at the Forum Theatre that will be displayed through the summer. Launch event being planned in June.

The team is working on mural opportunities with the property owner of the Starbucks coming to Middlesex Ave and the owner of the convenience store on New St.

## **Ribbon Cutting Team**

Ms. Lai informed the Board of upcoming ribbon cuttings:

- Latin Port this Saturday 4/22 at 12 noon
- Others are being scheduled

## **Old Business**

No old business to report.

**New Business**

No new business.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, May 12, 2023, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jay Muldoon