

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 12, 2023, 8:30am
Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street

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

Welcome

Executive Director Dawn Mackey called the meeting to order at 8:32.

Vice Chair Gary Tilbor declared a quorum was present. Minutes from the April Board meeting were reviewed, and a motion was made to approve the minutes by Mr. Massey, seconded by Ms. Loftus Suchan. Motion passed.

Chairperson's Report

No report.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Jason Delia thanked Jay Muldoon for recording the minutes for the April meeting.

Treasurer's Report

No report

Executive Director's Report

ED Mackey informed the Board of a new grant opportunity from the NJEDA. The Main St 2023 Transformation Grant funds up to \$27k. Submission is required by the beginning of June which is not a lot of time to identify a project and complete the application. These grants are often used to fund courtyard improvements, public art, and placemaking. ED Mackey is considering a popup placemaking idea in the alley between Tribos and Menya. Open to other suggestions.

Ms. Mackey discussed her desire to start an economic vitality committee. Asked the group for volunteers who might be interested in grant writing.

Vice Chair Tilbor asked for an update on Imagination Alley. Mr. Schooler asked about placemaking opportunities south of the train station. ED Mackey discussed her plans and hopes for that area. ED Mackey has also been in discussions with Borough Administrator Perilstein about improvements that could be made on Main St south of the train station. More to come on that including opportunities for more street trees in that area.

An update on the pocket park was given. We still need time to transfer the deed. Once that is done there are plans for a rapid response to activate the space. Ms. Callinan asked about the beer garden concept.

Borough Update

Mr. Delia gave a short update on the process for cannabis applications. The Borough continues to have discussions with the Parking Authority and the deck on improving parking management downtown.

Arts Council Report

Ms. Loftus Suchan updated the board on a dance festival event coming June 4th on the plaza. The Arts Council will be focusing on planning summer activities this month.

Organization Team

No Report.

Storefront Team

No report.

Promotion Team

Chairperson Theivakumaran was absent but Ms. Mackey gave a short promotion team update. The date for the wrestling has been moved to October. ED Mackey and Mr. Cea both gave updates on the upcoming June events. Ms. Callianan suggested promoting those events at day care centers.

Communications Team

Mr. Cea informed the board that he continues to push out pictures with store owners posing with the GAMS award to social media. The Main St organization contacted us to let us know how much they like that we're doing that campaign. There will be an advertisement for Downtown in Middlesex Magazine soon. NJ Transit ads coming very soon on various platforms will be going up soon. There is a new video coming soon that features a roundtable of residents talking about what they like about downtown. Also another video coming for Atlantic Health. Finally he will continue to promote all of the June events across various websites.

Innovation Team

Mr. McColley informed the board that he has some vendors who want to put together a presentation on cybersecurity for the businesses. He will work with ED Mackey to find an appropriate time.

Public Art Team

Mr. Berger discussed the Forum Theater poster contest. Winners have been selected and he described the plan for changing out the designs throughout the summer. An unveiling will be held on June 17th at 3. ED Mackey has approached Atlantic Health about adding a mural on their garbage enclosure which they were open to doing.

Ribbon Cutting Team

Ms. Lai and Ms. Callinan informed the board that there are no ribbon cuttings scheduled for May. Atlantic Health would like to have theirs after June 17th. June 9th Rose & Root will likely have their cutting but still waiting on the Mayor to approve.

Old Business

ED Mackey updated the board on her ongoing conversations with the author of the Kavi doll book. Looking to bring her to town in September.

New Business

None

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, June 9, 2023, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jason Delia