

**Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, May 10, 2024, 8:30am**  
**Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street**

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

**Welcome:**

Meeting called to order at 8:35am.

**Chairperson's Report**

Chairperson Theivakumaran congratulated Executive Director Mackey who is a recipient of the 2024 Main Street America Revitalization Professional credential. The MSARP credential is the highest level of achievement offered through the Main Street America Institute, requiring dedication to completing a rigorous curriculum of online courses, readings, assignments, in-person workshops, and a challenging final exam - she joins 5 other recipients nationwide in this 2024 honor. She is just the 2nd recipient in the state to receive this accreditation in an unprecedented completion time of just 15 months. ED Mackey thanked the Board for supporting professional development.

**Secretary's Report**

Mr. Delia asked for the minutes of the April meeting to be approved. Moved by Mr. Massey, seconded by Ms. Loftus Suchan. Motion approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Mackey informed the Board that we are still in need of a volunteer for Treasurer.

**Executive Director's Report**

ED Mackey provided an update on the Main Street America conference that she and Ms. Koskoski attended. Seward Johnson was featuring a photo of the Forum Theater with Marilyn at their table. Ms. Mackey said that one of the big takeaways is that there are not that many GAMSAs winners and while it is no longer our year, we should continue to talk about the win and utilize it for promotions.

Discussion around rent increases and being mindful of not pricing the Downtown out of interesting businesses.

ED Mackey gave an update on the Resource Fair to take place on June 12th from 3 - 6. NJEDA staff will be there to discuss their programs and resources. Both money and non-monetary resources are available.

Discussion on storefront grant program as well as the NJ Transformation grant program for 2025. It was confirmed that it will become available at the end of this summer and we should be ready to go with a proposal as soon as it is released.

**Borough Update**

Mr. Delia was looking for feedback on the monthly "car shows" that occur on Main Street in Downtown. He was hoping to have some sales data to compare a car show day with a typical weekday.

**Arts Council Report**

Ms. Loftus Suchan told the Board that the Arts Council is working on more diverse programming. Included in that is the upcoming Porchfest. So far they have 8 houses and 2 performers lined up. Porchfest is scheduled for September 21st.

### **Promotion Team**

Chairperson Theivakumaran reported that the promotions team had a good month. They've been focusing on doing smaller promotions more often. She gave an update on how "Downtown Loves Moms" went. Planning is underway for the annual pre-prom on the plaza. This event showcases beauty businesses.

Juneteenth and Pride coming up back to back weeks in June followed by Kids Takeover on the last day of school. Trying Pride this year on a Friday night instead of a Saturday. Theme is "When You See Me". Juneteenth will feature a funk band, drum line, breakdancers, DJ, etc. That will be June 15th.

### **Economic Vitality / Organization Team**

Mr. Muldoon gave an update on the parking cards he has been working on. They are finalized and 1000 have been printed. They will be distributed to businesses.

The committee has been talking about the NJEDA programs that are available. There is a lot of money available. Both in the form of loans and grants. Committee will be helping with outreach to businesses who may qualify for these programs.

### **Communications Team**

Mr. Cea said that the social media content going out and the response has been consistent with prior months. Pastry Lu was featured on News 12. Using old footage a promotion for pre-prom was produced with Brandon Uhlig's help. There was a request for photos from Jersey Best as well as NJ Media. They'll be using these photos to feature us in upcoming magazine issue and at an upcoming conference.

### **Public Art Team**

No report

### **Ribbon Cutting Team**

On Tuesday May 14th at 11 am Atlantic Health will be celebrating their 1 year anniversary. At 4pm on June 12th Rising Hearts Studio will have their ribbon cutting.

### **Old Business**

A discussion was had on connecting the main Downtown to the theater and future arts district. The Board was asked to keep considering ideas around this topic.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:39am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, June 14, 2024, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jason Delia