

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 14, 2025, 8:30am
Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street

Board in attendance: Frank Assuncao, Dan Cea, Joanne Cruz, Jason Delia, Ian Fawcett, Laura Feibert, Linda Koskoski (ex officio), Luisania Moronta, Amar Singh, Sean Yan, Jennifer Zhu.

Not attending: Sean Massey, Jace C. McColley, Angie Quinonez,

Guests: Jay Muldoon

Staff: Dawn Mackey, Linda Levine

Welcome: The meeting was called to order by Ms. Cruz at 8:36am.

Chairperson's Report

Ms. Cruz provided updates:

- Continuing work on a streamlined marketing plan in collaboration with Mr. Cea.
- Transitioning into the Chair role and focusing on strengthening connections with business owners.

Secretary's Report

Meeting minutes for February were circulated prior to the meeting.

- Motion to approve by Mr. Cea, seconded by Mr. Fawcett. Motion approved.

Executive Director's Report

ED Mackey updated the Board on the following:

- Transformation Grant:
 - MDA is eligible for \$30,000 this year.
 - Expressed appreciation for Board members' assistance in compiling the required information.
 - Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis, with priority given to those who did not receive funding last year.
 - MDA has worked closely with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on the application.
 - The Design Team will discuss specific project requests.
 - Ms. Moronta asked about the timeline for grant decisions; Ms. Mackey hopes to receive an update before the next Board meeting.
- Main Street Conference:
 - Scheduled to take place in Philadelphia this year.
 - Considered the most valuable conference for MDA, with participation from state officials, economic development specialists, and DCA representatives.
- Networking Event:
 - MDA will host a networking event at Angie's on Friday, March 21, at 8:00am.
 - Representatives from SCORE (Small Business Administration) will be attending.
- 450 Main Street – Incubator Space:
 - The Board discussed creating a 150 sq. ft. incubator space for small businesses.
 - Businesses could apply or be hand-selected to test the market, operate for a single day, or participate in seasonal activations.
 - The space would remain dynamic to keep interest high and align with slower retail periods.
 - Monthly cost to the MDA would be set at \$500.
 - The Economic Vitality Team will take the lead on execution, with oversight from Ms. Mackey.

- The Board unanimously supported the initiative.
- Upcoming Businesses:
 - Discussion of potential businesses opening in Metuchen.

Borough Update

Mr. Delia provided updates on key borough projects:

- **Gulton Site:** Participated in a tour of the property and discussed the live/work units that are coming to the space with the Board.
- **HoneyStash:** On the agenda for the Community Redevelopment Committee (CRC).

Promotion Team

- National Small Business Week will take place from May 4–11.

Organization Team

Mr. Delia reported:

- The by-law rules around entering into a contract for the 450 Main incubator space were discussed and fulfilled.
- Sign-up sheet for board members participating in committees.
- Organization Committee to be conducting quarterly meetings of the committee chairs.
- Review of the Board contract and conflict of interest policies.

Economic Vitality

Mr. Muldoon provided updates:

- The team will meet immediately after this Board meeting.
- Will play a key role in executing the incubator space project.
- Continuing efforts to support the Out to Lunch campaign, connecting restaurants with local office workers.

Communications Team

Mr. Cea provided updates:

- **Out to Lunch Campaign:**
 - Social media campaign featuring restaurant lunch specials, posted every other day.
 - Mr. Cea leads outreach efforts to gather promotions from local restaurants.
- **2025 Marketing Schedule:**
 - Finalizing the schedule and approval process for upcoming communications.
 - Ms. Mackey thanked Mr. Cea for his continued efforts.

Design Team

Ms. Feibert reported:

- **Transformation Grant Projects:**
 - Plans to upgrade the final downtown alleyway to match the existing cobblestone pathways.
 - Potential public art installation or sculpture for a public space in town, pending funding availability.
 - Collaboration with the Borough on placement and logistics.

- Mr. Cea suggested artist ChrisRWK as a possible contributor.

Old Business

No old business to report.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:28am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, April 11, 2025, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jason Delia