

**Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, April 11, 2025, 8:30am**  
**Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street**

**Board in attendance:** Dan Cea, Joanne Cruz, Jason Delia, Ian Fawcett, Laura Feibert, Jace C. McColley, Amar Singh, Sean Yan, Jennifer Zhu.

**Not attending:** Frank Assuncao, Sean Massey, Luisania Moronta, Angie Quinonez

**Guests:** Linda Koskoski, Eric Berger

**Staff:** Dawn Mackey, Linda Levine

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

**Chairperson's Report**

Ms. Cruz reported on the following:

- **Main Street Now Conference:** She was thrilled to attend the conference in Philadelphia alongside Ms. Mackey, Mr. Cea and Ms. Koskoski. Lots of great networking opportunities and sessions.
- **Social Media Class:** Scheduled for April 22nd. Reach out to ED Mackey for more information.

**Secretary's Report**

Meeting minutes for March were circulated prior to the meeting.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Mr. Cea, seconded by Mr. Fawcett. Motion approved.

**Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Mackey updated the Board on the following:

- **Main Street Conference:** Attended with Ms. Cruz, Mr. Cea, and Ms. Koskoski. Shared that many challenges Metuchen faces are common to other communities. She attended the NJ Downtown Professional dinner and spoke with Gina from the DCA. Noted that Main Street funding was cut in half by the state (from \$1.5M to \$750k), which impacts the Transformation Grant program. There may be a petition effort to address this.
- **Popup Space:** Received positive feedback about the space at the conference. Attended a session on "From Popup to Anchor" and spoke with a peer from another state who shared lessons learned.
- **Dunellen Panel:** Participated in a panel discussion as Dunellen explores forming a Special Improvement District. The visit elevated Metuchen's reputation as a leader among SIDs.
- **New Business:** A new business has signed and details will be shared at the next meeting.
- **Torino / Deli Delight:** Torino's new look, funded by a Transformation Grant, was highlighted. There are remaining funds that may be used for basic improvements (paint and window treatments) at the Deli Delight space to uplift the block.

**Borough Update**

Mr. Delia provided updates:

- **HoneyStash:** CRC approved their annual license. Soft opening set for May 5th; grand opening May 17th. Ms. Mackey to meet with them next week to discuss opening plans
- **Forum Development:** A question was raised about what ongoing work at The Forum means for current nearby businesses. ED Mackey is actively gathering information and considering timing and impact.

### **Promotion Team / Organization Team**

Mr. Cea reported on behalf of Ms. Theivakumaran that they are coordinating efforts for National Small Business Week. Plans are also underway for Mother's Day, Pre-Prom, and Pride Month events and promotions.

### **Economic Vitality**

Latest Economic Vitality meeting minutes were circulated. The team focused most of their recent meeting discussing the popup lease, naming, and ongoing strategy for the space.

### **Communications Team**

Mr. Cea reported:

- **Conference Takeaways:** Marketing strategies were validated. Noted the potential of influencer partnerships, which are already being explored. Other districts have significantly larger marketing budgets.
- **Communications Team Meeting:** The first meeting is scheduled for later this month. A number of new team members are joining.
- **Mother's Day Video:** Working with Brandon to follow a Metuchen mom through a day downtown as a promotional feature.

### **Design Team**

Ms. Feibert reported:

- **Possible New Mural:** Exploring a mural opportunity on the wall across from the train station. Ms. Cruz and Mr. Delia connected the team with artist Marco Santini, who is now in touch with Ms. Mackey. The goal is a bright, vibrant installation. Next steps include finalizing the vision and securing building owner approval.

### **Ribbon Cutting Team**

ED Mackey informed the board of two upcoming ribbon cuttings:

- **KB Kitchens Bath & Beyond:** May 3rd at 12pm - 407 Main Street Suite 208
- **Friends of Metuchen Arts:** April 25th at 3pm - 415A Main Street

Meeting was adjourned at 9:08am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, May 9, 2025, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jason Delia