

BOARD MEETING NOTES (taken by L. Levine)

Friday October 10th, 8:30 am

Meeting attendees:

Dawn Mackey
Joanne Cruz
Amar Singh
Jenn Zhu
Linda Koskoski
Ian Fawcett
Sean Massey
Sean Yan
Eric Berger
Linda Levine

Meeting attendee (via phone):

Jason Delia

Not in attendance

Bobbie Theivakumaran
Jace McColley
Jay Muldoon
Luisania Moronta
Dan Cea
Laura Fiebert
Angie Quinonez

Chairperson Report: Joanne Cruz

Worked on various committees and with ED. Swift event and related media very successful, Downtown was alive, gave notice to borough, featured by News 12.

Holiday campaigns are under discussion.

Holiday parking will be happening; to be reported further.

Secretary's Report: Jason Delia (absent)

September Minutes – motion made by Sean Massey, seconded by Ian Fawcett. Approved.

Executive Director Report: Dawn Mackey

Audit – completed, revealed accounting matters to be considered for future, potential need to update accountant services with a non-profit specialist

Transformation Grant final 2024 project Deli Delight Convenience store on New St. Building owner shared 50% contribution toward front façade update.

Downtown Conference – Dawn invited to be a Panel Guest on Oct 23 at the 2025 Downtown NJ Economic Development and Placemaking conference in Flemington, NJ

Blaustein Invitation – Blaustein school invited/nominated Metuchen for award of excellence 2025 great places in NJ.

Application has been submitted.

New business updates

1. Comic book store at Bonney's building, 2nd floor, worked with borough for consideration of variances that may have been needed. Determined to be an office space surrounded by collectibles. Future ribbon cutting date to be announced.
2. September Networking Event @Lore Ceramics – well received and attended by current and new businesses, promoted great dialogs. Ongoing business request from existing restaurant business for free parking at lunch in Downtown.
3. Valet parking – ED had recent conversation with mgmt at Nexus Parking Deck to assure current validation and discount programs are available and readily communicated to businesses, including 50% discounts, adding links to business websites, etc. Valet parking is not currently available; Dawn to update new restaurant on options. Reminders to be issued to businesses, including store owners/staff should not use metered spaces.
4. Design space at Frank's property progressing well, looking beautifully upgraded
5. Spa Experience to move into old Smoker's Haven. Interior refreshing required and underway
6. Salad House – should be opening in a few weeks
7. Fresh Twist – interior progress continues, interior space is unrecognizable as prior tenant
8. "M" update – the plaza M will be removed, refreshed by the artist, and modified slightly to be less "climbable" for safety considerations. Will be returned and secured in place as important iconic Downtown Metuchen visual element

Borough Update: Jason Delia (absent)

ED presentation for Borough rep - Holiday parking was approved by the administration and will commence Wednesday November 26th 2025 (prior to Small Business Saturday) and go until January 1st 2026. We will bag all the meters downtown except for the 15 minute parking which should remain. Businesses will have to monitor for no abuse.

Discussion regarding status of Main Street renovations/improvements – Linda K advised possible Spring 2026 target timelines, to be considered along with other renovations (bridge by High School). Conversation that MDA will provide best possible, robust communication to the businesses with rollout plans impacting disruption throughout the business district.

Promotion Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

ED presentation that Metuchen Pops and Taylor Swift – both events successful and positive for the Downtown. Events were dynamic, had lots of reach, and were well attended.

Haunted Downtown – October 25th 11 am to 4pm, Back to the Future theme (40 years of Back to the Future), with a DeLorean car

Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran – Removing Bobbie from Bank adding Treasurer. Board voted to remove Bobbie Theivakumaran and replace with Ian Fawcett. Motion made by Sean Massey, seconded by Amar Singh. Approved.

Economic Vitality: Jay Muldoon

Econ Vitality Committee September meeting minutes were provided. ED presented that the committee has voted to approve storefront grants 2025 to (1) FK Living (new expanded location) and (2) Acting Out.

Communications Team: Dan Cea (absent)

Heavy month for marketing Downtown events (Sidewalk Sale, Downtown Rumble, Metuchen Pops and Life of a Showgirl).

Submitted an Ad in the October 08840 magazine for Haunted Downtown.

Captured media for two new murals for future posts.

Reel for FK Living Ribbon Cutting.

Influence event – contact were good, but deemed not enough value to repeat in a group influence format. Still, the influencers individually help to extend reach beyond MDA

Design Team: Laura Fiebert

ED presentation that Design team has met and discussed the smaller 2025 Transformation Grant and use of the funding, especially in light of delays to Peterson Park renovations moving to 2026. Potential statue to be acquired for park reno; purchase and move, or delay purchase?

Additional consideration by Design committee to review and recommend paint for updated New St Deli Delight storefront.

New mural at Bonney's very well received

Treasurer: Ian Fawcett

Focus on budget - spending versus budget, cursory review 2025 looking appropriate. Will use details for planning 2026 budget.

Ribbon Cuttings

Acting Out - Sunday October 26th, Broadway performers will be in attendance, estimated timing of cutting 2:00 pm. Confirmed timing will be announced ASAP.

9:30 Adjourn