

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 13, 2026, 8:30 am
Senior Center, 15 Center Street t

Board in attendance: Joanne Cruz, Daniel Cea, Ian Fawcett, Laura Fiebert, Sean Massey, Jace C. McColley, Sean Yan, Linda Koskoski, Eric Berger, Jason Delia, Jennifer Zhu

Not attending: Luisania Moronta, Angie Quinonez, Frank Assuncao, Amar Singh,

Guests: Linda Koskoski, Jay Muldoon

Staff: Dawn Mackey, Linda Levine

Welcome:

Meeting called to order at 8:30 by ED Mackey

Secretary's Report

Meeting minutes for February were circulated before the meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Joanne Cruz.

Executive Director's Report - Dawn Mackey

Music Summer Series

Plans were discussed for a summer music series, including one larger concert and a smaller weekly series on Wednesdays, with Thursdays as a rain date. The series will be managed by a third party, with a small stipend provided for each act. There has already been strong interest from performers. Potential locations include the Plaza and Peterson Park. MDA will allocate a portion of art funding toward the series, with the Borough planning to match funds.

Budget

The proposed budget was shared, noting cost increases including added marketing support. Motion to approve by Ian Fawcett.

Master Plan

Initial discussions were positive, focusing on zoning considerations and opportunities to attract new businesses. Early ideas included high-end office space and a boutique hotel downtown. The meeting was productive, with more discussions planned.

Peterson Park / Transformation Grant

An opportunity to apply for \$100,000 in Transformation Grant funding was discussed. A vote was taken on applying for the grant and the resolution was adopted. A wishlist is being developed, including repainting the train bridge, park improvements, and a potential water feature.

Borough Update: Jason Delia

World Cup

An update was provided on potential World Cup funding. The Governor is distributing funds to support smaller towns. The Borough has not yet received confirmation but has strong plans in place if funding is awarded.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing requirements were reviewed, with planning underway for development over the next 10 years. Key locations discussed included:

- 1216 Pearl Street: Proposed mixed-use redevelopment (residential and retail) and alleyway closure to vehicle traffic
- 303 Amboy Avenue: Additional redevelopment opportunity across from the Arts District

Updates on specific locations included 1216 Pearl Street, where a redevelopment plan has been created for a mixed use building with apartments and retail, along with a proposal to close the alleyway to vehicle traffic. Additionally, 303 Amboy Avenue, located across from the Arts District, was noted as another area of focus.

Promotion Team / Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

Discussed plans for the first Wellness Weekend on April 11–12. The focus will be broader than just fitness, highlighting local businesses that don't typically get as much attention. This includes offerings across wellness categories such as yoga, stretching, nutrition, and overall emotional and spiritual well being. Participating businesses include places like StretchLab, Fresh Twist, Soul Bowls, and others.

Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

Outreach across committees for 2026 planning. Committees will meet quarterly and report back to one another, with a focus on increasing collaboration and alignment across teams.

Economic Vitality: Jason Muldoon

Reviewed Spark schedule. October and November will feature an artisan cotton candy and sweets concept focused on packaged foods. Updates also included repairs to the New Nails awning.

Communications Team: Joanne Cruz

Discussed bringing in additional support for social media, with interviews currently underway. Also planning for the MDA 10th anniversary campaign. Content will be submitted for 08840 Magazine, and Dan will be supporting with video production.

Design Team- Laura Fiebert

Spring Décor downtown

The Design Committee is exploring a “**Spring into Downtown**” campaign to refresh the district and encourage foot traffic. The idea includes adding floral garlands to the Metuchen “M” and decorating benches with spring elements to create welcoming, Instagrammable moments that encourage visitors to come downtown, take photos, and support local businesses. We are also exploring ways to encourage businesses to refresh their storefronts for the season.

Transformation Grant – Peterson Park sculpture

The remaining funds from the Transformation Grant that were allocated for the sculpture in Peterson Park need to be expended by May. Ian will be reaching out to the artist to obtain updated pricing and a timeline so we can move forward with the project and ensure the funds are used within the grant deadline.

Bench Refurbishment Project

The downtown benches are showing significant wear and are negatively affecting the overall aesthetic of the district. The team will gather pricing for both refurbishment and replacement options to determine the most effective approach. The goal is to complete improvements prior to the summer to elevate the downtown experience.

Treasurer’s Report: Ian Fawcett

The January 2026 financial report came in \$19K below average, likely influenced by seasonal factors. In

February only had Lunar New Year and Valentine's Day.

Ribbon Cutting Team

Greenhouse music had a soft opening. Still not ready for ribbon cutting. Former Lore Lash will be a restaurant. Lore Ceramic expending into former Genis Boni

9:20 Adjourn

The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, April 10, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Metuchen Senior Center, 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Laura Fiebert