

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

Board in attendance: Joanne Cruz, Daniel Cea, Ian Fawcett, Laura Fiebert, Sean Massey, Eric Berger, Jason Muldoon, Sean Yan, Frank Assuncao

Not attending: Luisania Moronta, Angie Quinonez, Amar Singh, Linda Koskoski, Jace C. McColley, Jennifer Zhu, Jason Delia, Linda Levine

Staff: Dawn Mackey

Welcome:

Meeting called to order at 8:37 by ED Mackey

Chairperson Report - Joanne Cruz

Nothing to report

Secretary's Report

Meeting minutes for May were circulated before the meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Sean Massey, seconded Ian Fawcett

Executive Director's Report - Dawn Mackey

Business Development Update:

Discussions continue regarding several downtown properties and prospective tenants. Efforts are underway to fill available commercial spaces, including the former Angie's location. Leasing activity remains ongoing at multiple properties, though some prospective tenants continue to work through franchise and approval processes.

Gift Card Program:

The district gift card contract is moving forward.

10th Anniversary Initiative:

Planning continues for the MDA's 10th Anniversary celebration. A video is being developed to highlight downtown improvements and milestones, with interviews being conducted with local businesses.

Public Art & Recognition:

The board discussed potential locations for the placement of the GAMSAs plaque.

Middlesex Water Project Update:

The Main Street project and Middlesex Water project will no longer be coordinated together. Water utility work is expected to take place this summer during overnight hours (9:00 PM–6:00 AM). One block of Amboy Avenue will remain closed at a time during construction. Message boards will be installed approximately two weeks before work begins, and the MDA will communicate project updates to affected businesses.

Borough Update: Jason Delia

An ordinance was introduced authorizing the Borough to acquire the small parcel of property located between the Forum Theater and the former gas station site from University Radiology. This acquisition is intended to support future planning and redevelopment efforts in the area.

Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran**Board seats:**

Two board vacancies for business owner seats were filled following the nomination and interview process. Notices were distributed requesting nominations by April 22, and five candidates were interviewed. Following a board vote, Nunzio and Josh were elected to fill the vacant seats. A motion to approve their appointments was made and passed.

Volunteer Opportunities:

A call for volunteers was made, emphasizing that available opportunities require only a light time commitment.

Branding Discussion:

The board reviewed proposed branding concepts, including designs for the district gift card and the MDA's 10th Anniversary medallion. Ian expressed concerns that some of the concepts felt too unconventional. Discussion also included budget considerations for the anniversary medallion. Sean will reach out to his contacts for additional input and resources. The board agreed that a comprehensive brand kit is needed to support future marketing and design efforts.

Economic Vitality: Jason Muldoon

See attached Economic Vitality Committee minutes for additional details.

Spark Program Update:

Due to a last-minute cancellation in June, The Adornable's residency has been extended through June 23. Vintage and Record will occupy the space during the final week of June.

Promotions Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran**Pride Celebration:**

The Pride event is scheduled for May 30. Entertainment will include a Queen tribute band.

World Cup Watch Party: The FIFA World Cup begins on June 12. Although a community grant opportunity was offered, the application required a fully developed \$100,000 project plan within a seven-day window, with up to \$50,000 in reimbursement funding available. Due to these requirements, the MDA did not apply. Plans are underway for a World Cup watch party in the plaza, and a temporary noise ordinance exemption has been approved for the event.

Kids Takeover: Kids Takeover is scheduled for June 25, the day after the last day of school. Resource constraints were discussed. All music and entertainment activities will take place in the Plaza rather than the Pocket Park, and programming must conclude by 8:00 PM.

Communications Team: Joanne Cruz

New social media manager has been onboarded. As part of the communications strategy, quarterly video content will be produced to highlight downtown activities, events, business updates, and other initiatives taking place throughout the district.

Design Team- Laura Fiebert

Two sets of benches have been sent out for refurbishment as part of the ongoing bench restoration project. Planning is also underway for spring beautification efforts. Outreach to Atlantic Health regarding replacing dead plants and shrubbery.

Treasurer's Report: Ian Fawcett

The March financials came in under budget. In April, approximately \$3,000 was paid as a deposit to secure the Queen tribute band for the upcoming Pride event.

Ribbon Cuttings:

A ribbon cutting for Fresh Twist is tentatively scheduled for May 28 at 5:00 PM.

Teddy will be celebrating the business's 10th anniversary on May 31 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

9:27 Adjourn

The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, June 12, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Metuchen Senior Center, 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Laura Fiebert