

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 12, 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, Jace C. McColley, Jennifer Zhu, Jason Delia, Nunzio Moudatsos, Josh Khan
Absent: Luisania Moronta, Linda Koskoski, Frank Assuncao

Staff: Dawn Mackey, Linda Levine

Welcome:

Meeting called to order at 8:34 by ED Mackey

Chairperson Report - Joanne Cruz
Nothing to report

Secretary's Report

The meeting minutes for June were circulated prior to the meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Dan Cea, seconded Jace C. McColley

Executive Director's Report - Dawn Mackey

Storefront Mastery Workshop Recap (May 15)

Hosted an educational workshop at Duke's focused on storefront best practices and strategies to support local business owners.

Storefront Vacancies

The borough currently has only two vacant storefronts. Discussion included the possibility of implementing a vacancy tax for commercial properties that have remained vacant for two years or longer.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem / Main Street America (June 24)

The upcoming event will run from 9:00–11:00 a.m. and will include a think tank discussion, district tour, and networking opportunities. Invitations will be sent soon.

10-Year Anniversary Video

The commemorative video is nearly complete. The goal is to showcase key milestones, highlight community impact, and capture the progress made over the past decade.

Borough Update: Jason Delia

International Soccer Tournament Watch Party

The MDA was contacted by FIFA regarding branding guidelines for the event. Because attendance is expected to be under 1,000 people and no admission fee is being charged, a formal application was not required. However, FIFA branding, including the official logo and trophy imagery, cannot be used. The watch party will begin at 8:00 p.m. with inflatable games and family activities, followed by the match screening at 9:00 p.m. An official oversized soccer ball will be available as a photo opportunity.

Downtown Master Plan

The completed master plan has been submitted by the planner to the Planning Board and will move to a public hearing in the coming weeks.

Grove Bridge & Water Infrastructure Projects

The Grove Avenue bridge near the high school will be closed June 25 through August 31, with detours in place. A separate water infrastructure project will operate nightly from 6:00–9:00 p.m. and is expected to continue for 4–6 months, with the potential for temporary water service disruptions.

Parking Authority & Nixle Initiative

Discussed strategies to encourage continued downtown visitation during construction. One proposal is for the MDA to purchase 1,000 QR code parking passes to distribute to businesses. The codes would provide free parking in the municipal deck, with the MDA paying only for codes that are activated, helping offset the impact of construction and potential water disruptions. Motion to approve up to \$3,000 for QR codes made by Joanne Cruz and seconded by Dan Cea.

Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

New Board Member Introductions

Nunzio Moudatsos and Josh Khan were introduced as new members of the board.

Economic Vitality: Jason Muldoon

Gift Card Program

The board discussed transitioning to an MDA-branded Visa gift card program. The anticipated implementation timeline is approximately 10 weeks and includes card design, onboarding participating businesses, and securing a potential sponsor to offset startup costs. Cards could be drop-shipped directly, with designated office hours at the MDA office for in-person purchases. Additional outreach opportunities include partnering with the PTO for teacher gifts and engaging local realtors to help increase program awareness.

Spark Programming

Upcoming Spark events include a Vintage & Vinyl activation scheduled for late June through July, followed by a Slime-themed event planned for August and September.

Promotions Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

World Cup Watch Party

Final preparations are underway for the community watch party, which will feature family-friendly activities before the match and opportunities for residents to gather downtown.

Juneteenth Celebration

Planning continues for the community's Juneteenth observance, with event details and programming moving forward.

Kids Takeover

Preparations are on track for the annual Kids Takeover event, bringing interactive activities and family programming to downtown Metuchen.

America 250 Celebration

Planning is underway for the America's 250 celebration, which will feature a procession down Main Street, a cannon, horses, inflatable attractions on the Plaza, and live music from **5:00–7:00 p.m.**

Communications Team: Joanne Cruz

Ongoing Promotional Campaigns

Discussed creating recurring promotions, such as "**Grads & Dads**," to generate consistent activity downtown, even when no major events are scheduled. The goal is to increase weekly foot traffic and encourage more frequent visits to Metuchen businesses.

Placemaking Initiatives

Discussed ideas for permanent placemaking features and activations that would make downtown Metuchen feel more vibrant, inviting, and active throughout the year.

Design Team- Laura Fiebert

Bench Painting

The bench painting project is nearing completion, with the final batch of benches still awaiting completion.

Spring Decorations

An update was provided on seasonal spring decorations and related beautification efforts throughout the downtown district.

Treasurer's Report: Ian Fawcett

Reviewed the May financials, noting that total expenditures for the month were approximately \$21,000.

Ribbon Cuttings:**Recent Ribbon Cutting (June 10)**

Maria's Brunch celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Upcoming Ribbon Cutting (July 9)

Adamer Interiors will host its grand opening celebration beginning at 6:00 p.m. The event will feature a DJ, cocktails, wine sponsored by Wine Chateau, and a charcuterie board provided by Bison Board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, August 14, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Metuchen Senior Center, 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Laura Fiebert