

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, August 9, 2024, 8:30am
Zoom

In attendance: Eric Berger, Diana Callinan, Dan Cea, Joanne Cruz, Jason Delia, Jenny Lai, Sean Massey, Angie Quinonez, Meg Loftus Suchan, Gary Tilbor, Bobbie Theivakumaran. **Not attending:** Linda Koskoski, Jay Muldoon, Amar Singh, Jace McColley **Staff:** Dawn Mackey

Welcome:

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Delia at 8:36am.

Chairperson's Report

Ms. Theivakumaran had nothing major to report. She lamented on the difficult summer we have been having with the heat and now rain.

Secretary's Report

Meeting minutes of July were shared. Motion to approve by Ms. Theivakumaran, second by Mr. Cea. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report

No report

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Mackey has been working with owners of businesses on their storefronts including The Greek on Main, and the building owner where Phattrra and the travel agent are located. She has been connecting these folks with the NJ EDA about the various funding opportunities that are available. As usual Ms. Mackey also continues with her efforts to work together with property owners and connect them to great potential tenants. There are some exciting new businesses that may be coming soon.

Borough Update

No update

Arts Council Report

Ms. Loftus Suchan reported that the Arts Council will participate in the upcoming Street Fair on August 18th. This led to a discussion around the Street Fair and Mr. Delia asked the Board to provide feedback to him on the positive and negative impacts on this fair to the business district.

Promotion Team

Chairperson Theivakumaran reported that the promotions team has been trying to keep the summer months busy with small promotions. A discussion was had on the distinction between "events" and "promotions". The team only hosts a small handful of large events per year and they are trying to do more, smaller promotions in between. This helps especially on otherwise slow summer days and gives the downtown an aura of "there is always something going on there" which is what we are trying to cultivate. The Summer Olympics promotion was an example of a small promotion. It coincided with the opening ceremonies and it was fun and went well.

Another promotion coming will be Metuchen Pops, a pop culture celebration. There will be a small area for artists and it takes place the morning of the Jazzfest.

Wrestling event will be on Sep 14th. This is always one of the more popular events during the year.

Feedback from both summer concerts put on by the Borough was great. ED Mackey received feedback from several attendees, who mentioned that it was their first time visiting Metuchen. This is important because once we get them here to visit, we can keep them coming back.

Economic Vitality / Organization Team

Jay Muldoon

No report

Communications Team

Mr. Cea reported that the concerts helped with the MDA's social media this month. There were 170+ new followers on Facebook and 120+ on Instagram. Posts received 77,000 impressions and 35k of those engaged with the posts. Usually we receive only about 5% engagement. We also were able to collect a huge number of new email addresses through the Eventbrite registration page from the concerts. These addresses can now be used for email marketing. According to Eventbrite's demographic information, we had registrants from over 40 towns.

Public Art Team

Mr. Berger said that the mural on the wall near Starbucks is almost complete and just needs a protective coating. The team is working on a date for unveiling. The hope is for Starbucks to be open within a week or two.

Ribbon Cutting Team

There was a discussion about the new restaurant Ram and Rooster and Ms. Theivakumaran and Mr. Delia shared their experiences dining there. Mr Lai informed us that Pastry lu is hoping to be open in the next couple of weeks. She is very excited and ready to open. The new Afghan kebab restaurant is moving along too and making progress towards an opening. Ms. Mackey will be meeting with Flo the new owner of Antonio's next week with a hope to have a ribbon cutting soon.

Old Business

No old business to report.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:07am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, September 13, 2024, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jason Delia