

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, November 8, 2024, 8:30am
Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street

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

Welcome:

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Theivakumaran at 8:37am.

Chairperson's Report / Organization

Ms. Theivakumaran thanked Mr. Delia for helping her to prepare for this meeting.

- Updates on Board changes for next year, including proposed bylaw amendments and retiring Board seats.
- Emails have been sent to member businesses for nominations. A nominating committee has been established.
- Motion to approve the nominating committee (Bobbie Theivakumaran, Joanne Cruz, and Jason Delia) made by Ms. Loftus Suchan and seconded by Mr. Cea. Motion approved.

Secretary's Report

- The bylaw changes were presented which included removing the Arts Council seat and replacing it with a resident set, adjusting the timing of the annual meeting to be in the first quarter of the calendar year, and discontinuing the Associate Membership program.
- Discussion on all suggested bylaw changes.
- For businesses interested in associate membership it was suggested redirecting them to join the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.
- The Board also considered offering sponsorship opportunities as an alternative.
- Motion to approve the suggested bylaw changes made by Ms. Loftus Suchan and seconded by Ms. Theivakumaran. Motion approved.
- Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Ms. Theivakumaran, seconded by Mr. Tilbor. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report

No report

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Mackey thanked the Board for their efforts during the recent audit, highlighting the positive feedback and enthusiasm.

- **Financial audit:** Work continues, with assistance from Ms. Levine.
- **Sustain and Serve program:** Awaiting further information from the state to resolve outstanding issues.
- **Transformation Grant updates:**
 - Work has commenced, including projects in Pearl Street, Imagination Alley, and tree lighting on The Plaza.

- The tree lighting includes a five-year maintenance plan and will remain until Memorial Day.
- **Public Art:**
 - Starbucks mural dedication coincided with Haunted Downtown. Middlesex Arts Grant requirements, such as accessibility features, were met.
 - The planned Greenway bird walk proceeded despite the absence of the Audubon Society representative.
- Continued focus on helping businesses find suitable tenants for available spaces.

Borough Update

Mr. Delia provided updates:

- Recent reelection activities.
- Holiday parking plans.
- Discussions about taxi stand placements.

Arts Council Report

Ms. Loftus Suchan reported:

- Annual outreach to gather ideas for 2025 and recruit volunteers is underway.
- Efforts to collaborate with MDA and other partners in planning for Metuchen's 125th anniversary celebrations.

Promotion Team

Ms. Theivakumaran shared updates:

- **Haunted Downtown:** Successful event with great weather.
- **Holiday promotions:** Begin November 23, with events every weekend through the season, including:
 - Small Business Saturday.
 - Winter Market with an arts element.
 - Festivus celebration on December 21.
- "Downtown Bucks" initiative will continue this year.

Economic Vitality

Mr. Muldoon provided updates:

- Holiday parking plans reviewed.
- Discussions with restaurants to create and promote lunch menus tailored to local business workers.
- Mr. Cea is preparing graphics to support this initiative.

Design Committee

The team has been busy with holiday decorations:

- Encouraging storefront decoration.
- Adding seasonal window clings, decorated benches, and lampposts.

Communications Team

Mr. Cea is actively preparing promotional materials for Small Business Saturday and holiday events.

Public Art Team

No report

Ribbon Cutting Team

Ms. Lai and Ms. Callinan provided updates:

- Recent ribbon cuttings:
 - Woofgang Bakery & Grooming.
 - Khorasan Kabab.
 - Starbucks mural.
- Upcoming ribbon cutting for Ram and Rooster on November 25 at noon.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am.

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

Submitted by Jason Delia