

**Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, February 14, 2025, 8:30am**  
**Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street**

**Board in attendance:** Frank Assuncao, Dan Cea, Joanne Cruz, Jason Delia, Ian Fawcett, Laura Feibert, Sean Massey, Luisania Moronta, Sean Yan, Jennifer Zhu

**Not attending:** Jace C. McColley, Angie Quinonez, Amar Singh

**Guests:** Linda Koskoski, Jay Muldoon, Bobbie Theivakumaran

**Staff:** Dawn Mackey, Linda Levine

**Welcome:**

The meeting was called to order at 8:38. With the new Trustees joining, the Board went around the room and introduced themselves.

**Chairperson's Report**

Outgoing Chair Theivakumaran discussed what the next steps are to finalize the Board transition. Mr. Delia, a member of the nominating committee, put forth a slate of nominees as follows:

- Joanne Cruz for **Chairperson**
- Dan Cea for **Vice Chairperson**
- Ian Fawcett for **Treasurer**

This slate was seconded by Mr. Massey. No other nominees were put forward and the slate was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Cea nominated Jason Delia for **Secretary**. This was seconded by Mr. Massey. No other nominees were put forward and Mr. Delia was elected by acclamation.

For the benefit of the new Trustees, a discussion was had about the typical agenda for these meetings.

**Secretary's Report**

Meeting minutes for January were circulated prior to the meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Ms. Cruz, seconded by Mr. Cea. Motion approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

No report

**Executive Director's Report**

ED Mackey updated the Board on the following:

- **Board Orientation:** National Main St organization is offering training for Board members over zoom. Ms. Mackey encouraged both old and new Trustees to make time for the training.
- **Annual Meeting:** Held January 30th. Happy with the attendance and network opportunities. There was a presentation by New Frontier who is a website developer that participates in the NJEDA program that provides free websites for businesses. ED Mackey encouraged anyone who is looking for a new website or to upgrade to get in touch with her and take advantage while this program lasts.
- **Stakeholder Event:** A networking event is being put together for some time in March. Ms. Mackey polled the Board on what would be the best time of day for that meeting.

- **Yearly Accreditation:** ED Mackey is working her way through the accreditation process with the National Main St organization which is required to be renewed on yearly basis.
- **Transformation Grant:** Ms. Mackey brought the Board up to date on this year's changes for the DCA Transformation Grant program and the Board discussed what projects we'd like to seek this year with that potential funding. The Board was in agreement with the discussed projects and asked the ED to pursue the grant once the program opens.

### **Borough Update**

Mr. Delia asked Ms. Koskoski to update the Board on the Forum Theater public session and Mr. Muldoon on the coming ParkMobile app:

- **Forum Theater:** Two public meetings were held at the end of January. Attendance was high for both evenings. The sessions started with a short overview presentation followed by opportunities to meet and ask questions of the various stakeholders including the MDA. The Board asked for more information about the project. Mr. Delia to send via email. ED Mackey spoke about the benefits that the theater will provide to the district.
- **ParkMobile:** The new parking app will be launching today. This is in addition to the already existing ParkSmarter app. ParkMobile is the most popular parking app in the state. It offers a more robust offering including improved UI, text to pay, and pay by phone options.

### **Promotion Team**

Ms. Theivakumaran reported

- **Valentine's Day:** "Find You Love Downtown" promotion was last week and went well. Thanked Ms. Cruz for all of her help.
- **Borough 125th Birthday:** Starting to focus on the Borough's 125th birthday event to be held in the downtown
  - Looking to have the vibe of a birthday party
  - Looking for Borough committees and groups to lean in and be a part of the fun
  - Businesses can participate
- **Lunar New Year:** This took place two weeks ago on the plaza. Thanks Mr. Yan and Ms. Zu for participating. Weather was very cold. This is one of the more difficult events to coordinate due to all of the performers involved.

### **Organization Team**

- **The Main St Approach:** For the benefit of the new Trustees, Ms. Theivakumaran and Ms. Mackey led a discussion on the Main St Approach including the four pillars. How the MDA is funded. Geographic designation of the district.

### **Economic Vitality**

Mr. Muldoon gave a some background for new Trustees on what the committee focus on:

- **Storefront grants**
- **Recruitment**
- **Market Trends**
- **Working with the Borough:** Sign ordinances changes from last year for example

### **Communications Team**

Mr. Cea spoke about how the team work:

- **Planning:** Thinking ahead for upcoming events, promotions, holidays, etc. This involves both traditional ads and social media
- **Reactive:** Responding when unexpected communications are needed, for example when a business is featured in an article
- **2025 Planning:** Underway. Looking into the possibility of paid influencers.
- **Meet Cute Videos:** Several of these have been posted already with more to come.

### **Design Team**

Ms. Feibert detailed the teams recent work:

- **Sweetheart Signs:** These were designed, printed and installed throughout downtown. It was noted that an influencer with over 50k followers had already organically picked up on this

### **Ribbon Cutting Team**

Ms. Mackey informed the Board that Ms. Lai, while no longer a Trustee, has agreed to continue to chair this team.

- The Kitchen and Bath design business is interested in a ribbon cutting once she is ready. No date has been set yet.
- The other businesses like Duke's, Lore, and Fresh Twist will probably not be until April

### **Old Business**

No old business to report.

### **New Business**

Personnel matter was discussed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:46am.

The next Board meeting will be Friday, March 14, 2025, at 8:30am at the Metuchen Senior Center 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Jason Delia