

# MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

Present: Phil Cantor, Gerald Sweeney, Diane Israel, Sharda Ramharack, Lisa Johnson, Israel Cronk, Sue Schultz, Sharon Gill, Michael Gillespie, Rich McMahon, Luther Flurry and Lydia Fantozzi,  
June 4, 2014

I. Call to Order: Phil called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

II. Paul Zimmerman

- a. Paul asked for an explanation of the role of TPAC plays. Phil, who also serves on the TPAC, explained that TPAC is currently reactive, though they would like to move into a more proactive process.
- b. Paul expressed curiosity over the new head of the HPC, Peter Primavera, and the BID's opinion of him. Luther noted that he is busy but is business friendly.
- c. Paul requested that Luther attend a Captain's meeting to address the siren issue in Montclair.
  - i. Rich noted that ambulances from all over Essex come down Bloomfield Avenue to go to Mountainside Hospital.
  - ii. Rich also assured Paul that EMTs in our area use sirens for safety to clear traffic.

Paul is thanked for coming.

III. Adoption of the May Minutes: Minor edits are suggested on page 2 and 3. Jerry moved to accept the May minutes with minor edits; seconded by Michael. The minutes are accepted unanimously.

IV. Website Walk Through [www.MontclairCenterBID.com](http://www.MontclairCenterBID.com): Luther introduced the website and gave an overview of its features.

a. Features:

- i. Now that we own the site we can see statistics.
  1. Many of our current web users are men 25-35. This is in contrast to our Facebook users who are most commonly women 35-45.
- ii. Our graphics are now hyper-linked and take users to valuable information.
- iii. Directories: The top directory is about the Montclair Center BID, as an organization. The second menu is about Montclair Center with subcategories: dining, entertainment, shopping.
- iv. Maps are included in each listing.

- v. The footer has a running facebook feed.
  - b. The floor is opened up for comments.
    - i. Rich noted that maps should be in multiple places.
    - ii. Michael suggested prioritizing the smart phone platforms when designing and choosing fonts as that is becoming increasingly more popular. Luther showed how easy the website is to operate on the phone.
    - iii. Sharon noted that the directory search at the top right does not search the shopping/dining directory, it searches the BID pages. This is a little confusing. Luther explains that we may not be able to solve this, but we are working on it.
    - iv. Some express interest in using Google calendars for our events.
    - v. Another suggestion is to use our transit village maps rather than web maps to show consistency. Luther explains that custom map graphics are not in our budget.
    - vi. The last suggestion is that since our look is supposed to be clean and simple perhaps we should eliminate the top header.
  - c. Michael raised the question as to why we use MontclairCenterBID.com rather than MontclairCenter.com since Montclair Center is the place and BID is the organization.
    - i. Luther said this was a choice to show ownership over the website, but that can be re-examined.
  - d. Phil addressed the entire board and noted that everyone must look at the website and send notes to Luther about the website by the end of June. Some of the comments will be implemented.
    - i. Luther, Lisa and Michael will close the circle regarding where photos and maps are placed.
    - ii. Jerry noted that everyone should know that this is a work in progress.
- V. Master Plan Background: Every 6 years the town is supposed to come up with a new master plan. Right now it is a topic of discussion.
- a. Master Plan Meeting: Luther noted that some people feel that it is infringing on the character of Montclair. Their concerns are both building height and almost any new development.
  - b. Concerned citizens have prompted significant revisions to the draft master plan.
  - c. The executive committee decided that the BID should take a stance on the revised Master Plan in favor of smart development, with good aesthetics, and changes to more affirmative approach to parking. This way the planning board knows our thoughts.

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- i. Luther requested that people vote on the draft presentation to be presented to the planning board on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- ii. Luther gave a brief recap on BID thoughts and requests:
  1. We need development and density, our retail is not strong enough without more demand and that can come from more visitors.
  2. The largest barrier to development is parking. The master plan must address the parking problem of our downtown. This could be done with: Offsite parking
  3. and payment into a pool so that there can be added parking when there is a parking deficiency.
  4. Building Standards: the Master Plan must be more specific when requesting "stronger standards". What does that entail?
  5. The master plan should include Incentive Zoning.
  6. The master plan should include transfer of air rights.
- iii. The floor is opened for comments:
  1. Sharon noted that it is time to take a strong stand.
  2. Rich noted that some wording may come off as negative. The document should be affirmative in the way it presents suggestions.
  3. Luther noted that there are varying view points on how high buildings should go. How far should we push this topic in our document?
    - a. Israel said it must be palatable and something the majority can agree upon.
    - b. Michael noted that previously when 10 stories were suggested the public was not pleased.
    - c. Jerry believed that we would not want higher than 6-8 stories but that exceptions could be made.
  4. Phil proposed a vote, Sharon seconded and Rich abstained. The policy paper is accepted and will be polished and shared with the planning board.

#### VI. Main Street Conferences

- a. Lisa debriefed the board on the National Main Street conference.
  - i. A big takeaway for Lisa was the need for more volunteerism.
    1. We need to build our board base. Each board member should be a part of a monthly subcommittee. The chair's contact information should be listed on the website.
    2. We need to build our volunteer base. We should get our businesses and our community more involved.
  - ii. Jerry noted that a big takeaway seems to be that we need to have more involved board members.

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iii. Ideas from the conference:

1. Provide checklists for our merchants. Especially during tough times like construction.
  2. Phil requested that perhaps we provide board members maps to help engage better with the public.
  3. Sue noted that the executive committee should reach out to the board to let them know where help is needed.
  4. BID Board members should have a sign on their windows to show they are part of the BID.
- b. Lydia gave a brief recap of her conference experience. Her main take away was the value of strong community involvement.

VII. New BIDness

- a. Sunday, Fresco will close Church Street to host a exotic car show from 10:30am-5:00pm. They are being loaned the stage. They are paying for staff time. Phil encouraged the board to check it out.
- b. Diane encouraged people to bring items to Essex Fine Arts and Sorrelli for the Salvation Army. It is important to note that they got together through Allignable.
- c. Bluemercury opened recently and they noted that they are blown away by the transformation of Montclair Center since 2000.

VIII. Organizational Updates

- a. MAM: Last free First Thursdays of the year tomorrow, June 5.
- b. On June 24<sup>th</sup> NJ Properties will move to the Old Luna Stage and be named Berkshire Hathaway New Jersey Homeservices.
- c. This is the last board meeting of the Summer—the executive committee will continue to meet.

IX. Updates (See attached):

- a. New Businesses & Vacancies
- b. Events
  - i. Art Walk
  - ii. Sidewalk Stroll: June 14<sup>th</sup>
  - iii. Sizzlin' Summer Sales: August 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>
  - iv. Music- positive review.
  - v. Farmer's market- great review in Baristanet article.
- c. Website
- d. Main Street Conference

X. Adjournment

- a. Sharon moved to adjourn, Michael seconded. The meeting ends at 8:31pm.

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Updates

## **New Businesses & Vacancies**

### **New Business**

- Ani Ramen
- Yalo & Me
- Fly By Nite Gallery
- **Vacant**
- My Blue Suede Shoes
- Edge Mid-Century

### **Coming Soon**

- Atelier (Moving to So Park)

## **Events**

The **May Art Walk**, A Little Night Art XIII took place on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm. Although the weather deterred some visitors several venues made sales and reported good numbers.

**The Sidewalk Stroll** will take place on June 14<sup>th</sup> from 10am-5pm. We currently have 22 stores participating as "Stroll Stoppers" hosting activities throughout the day. The BID will provide street entertainers, the bouncy house, the Montclair Center Stage, and a Classic Car Show.

As merchants turn over their inventory and customers are looking for end of the summer sales, we will host a three-day district sales event. **Sizzlin' Summer Sales** will take place from August 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> and the BID will advertise these sales through the web, online calendars and social media.

## **Website**

**The Website** is up and running. We have begun to put it on posters, and shared it on online calendars. We hope to redirect our old website to [www.MontclairCenterBID.com](http://www.MontclairCenterBID.com) soon.

## **Conferences**

Both Lydia and Lisa attended the **National Main Street Conference** in Detroit from May 17<sup>th</sup>-May 21<sup>st</sup>. A special thanks to New Jersey Main Street for providing the scholarships for the conference. This was an educational experience for the BID. A large takeaway was community involvement and buy-in, this is something that we will be focusing on during future events.