

MONTCLAIR CENTER **BID**

Present: Phil Cantor, Sue Schultz, Lisa Johnson, Robert Weber, Michael Gillespie, Debbie Santiago, Gerald Sweeney, Alicia Robinson Luther Flurry and Lydia Fantozzi

September 10, 2014
7:00 pm

- I. Call to Order: Phil called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm
- II. Public Comments (5 minutes per speaker)
 - a. None.
- III. Adoption of Minutes (June & August Special Meeting)
 - a. It is noted that the Minutes of the August meeting should remain confidential.
 - b. June Minutes:
 - i. One edit was noted: Sharron should be changed to Sharon.
 - ii. Lisa moved to accept the June Minutes and Sue seconded.
 - iii. The minutes are unanimously accepted.
 - c. August Minutes
 - i. This was a special meeting with a phone contingent.
 - ii. Michael moved, Sue seconded.
 - iii. The minutes are unanimously accepted and are to REMAIN confidential until the legal matter is resolved.
- IV. Treasurer's Report/Audited Financials:

Robert reviewed the 8-month treasurer's report. Robert noted that the BID is essentially on target. Our legal expenses for this and last year were unbudgeted, but we hope to absorb all of the legal (current and anticipated) expenses without going over budget. We hope to end the year slightly in the black.

Line items discussed:

 1. Ambassador pay will be over budget, in part because they were used for plantings.
 2. Planters will be significantly below budget.
 3. Website is above budget, in part due to expenses carried from 2013, and graphic design elements which were higher than anticipated.
 4. The net music budget will be over, because we did not raise as much money as we anticipated.

5. Capital expenses have been for moveable barriers.
 6. BID truck expenses are a little high because of maintenance, and we are burning more gas by carrying the water tank.
- Robert notes that the budget, as we have always presented it, blends functional and program lines and nets revenue and expenses. Luther and Robert have discussed changing the format in the way we present the budget in 2015. This should give us a better handle on the nature of expenses and compare more readily to our audit.
 - Do we need a new truck? It can give us another 2-3 years but will need significant work next year. For about 6k we can target another 3 years out of it. That would be a 2015 expense.
 - On balance, we are on budget. Our net assets/capital reserves are about 90k.
 - o Audit review: We are a little late this year because we've been focused on other things. We will have the 990 soon.
 - o Are there any red flags? We got a clean bill of health with no management recommendations. Luther specifically asked auditors if there are any questions or issues that do not rise to the level of recommendation and was told no. Would the auditors put that in writing? Probably not, but Luther will check. As for specific expenses, we are in line with other nonprofits.
 - o Internal controls: we have strong internal controls. We have come a long way. At every step of our process, there are at least two pairs of eyes — someone approving and someone paying. Our controls are as rigorous as is reasonable for a small organization.
 - o A discussion ensued around net assets/capital reserves — what are they for, when should they be used, how much should they be? Capital expenses such as on-street improvements and purchase of Green Machine or Pickup Truck replacement were noted as uses for reserves, as well as unexpected matters such as our lawsuit.
 - o 9k is budgeted to be added to reserves this year.
- V. Housekeeping
- a. Budget Cycle: We are coming up to the 2015 budget cycle. We try to vote for next year's budget at the November meeting, and the constituency votes at the annual meeting. The budget committee meets starting in October. Luther will reach out to see if who else wants to join.
 - b. Committees: Program committees will meet to establish priorities.

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- c. Policies: We reviewed our Conflict of Interest Policy—essentially a policy that makes sure that management and Board decisions are unbiased. It requires that anyone in a material decision making role—board members and the executive director—disclose any interests connected to BID business that could also affect the involved board member or Executive Director financially. Individuals must recuse themselves from decisions with a potential conflict unless the board determines the individual's interest is the same as the Montclair Center Corp.
 - i. Jerry notes that this is a new draft. Please review it and provide feedback.
- d. Annual Meeting: December 10th

VI. Updates (See attached):

- a. New Businesses & Vacancies: Vacancy rate is over 12%.
- b. Music:
 - i. Luther says that people are definitely coming downtown for music. Church Street can be crowded at 10pm and more merchants are staying open late. Lisa notes that sometimes it's great and sometimes you are babysitting drunk people, but music is creating a bigger geographic draw.
 - ii. Debbie echoes that it has been very successful. It has given people a reason to stay around. Sometimes she gets traffic. Sometimes she gets business. It gives people a chance to discover her for the first time. Friday nights may have confused things, music should be on a consistent schedule.
 - iii. 3 years ago we had a visioning exercise where we envisioned a busy active street that looks the way Church street now looks on Saturday. This is a huge accomplishment, but we need to work on geographic spread and getting a busy street scene more days of the week.
 - iv. Friday vs. Saturday—Jerry notes Friday Music is easy for people who work in the area but Debbie noted Saturdays are better attended. Luther wants to eventually explore something smaller on Friday with bigger things on Saturday.
 - v. Could we consider doing something during the holiday season? Our biggest challenge is staff burnout. They have just come off 6 months of music. The question will be whether we can line up the music without killing the staff or the budget.

c. Events:

- i. Events in general: Debbie noted that Sizzlin' Summer, marketing just didn't have a broad enough reach. What can we do to better promote the events? Rather than have fliers in the participating stores, perhaps restaurants should be our focus. Special events in general—there is not enough word getting out. Can we use A-frame signs for more events? They are against zoning but we can review this point. There is a lot of value in them.
 - ii. Farmer's Market: Alicia (at Investors Bank) knew we had to give it time. People are now talking. It's wonderful. People are having a tough time with parking. We've made some adjustment. Are we increasing foot traffic? Yes. But is there more foot traffic because of it? Can't tell. Benches are filled; it's a nice scene. One of the farmers should sell refreshments. We have no basis for comparison. We need time and money for traffic studies.
 - iii. Montclair Fashion Night: September 14th, 4 PM to 8 PM
 - iv. Crane Park Family Festival: September 27th: 10 PM to 4 PM – this date may change in 2015. The whole event should be reevaluated. It takes up a lot of time and little interest. Spring event for sign up for camps would be a good idea. It would be the start of the season rather than the end. We could have a rain date inside?
 - v. Art Walk, October 17th
 - vi. Ladies Night Out: October 24th
- d. Voting: Please vote in APA NJ People's Choice Awards, Suburban Essex and Chase Bank Vote.
- e. Website: It is officially the new website. Search functionality is still being worked on. We've killed the old website so we don't have to maintain two sites.

VII. New BIDness

VIII. Organizational Updates

- a. MAM- African American Quilt. These will be around the town. We will display them.
 - i. Fright Night at the Museum: Fright Night Two.
 - ii. October 2nd – Free first Thursday's resume with Neuben Quilters demonstrations and the Art Truck.
- b. Lydia – Has been wooed away from us and will leave 9/26.

IX. Adjournment

Michael moves to adjourn, Sue Seconds. We adjourned at 8:36.

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Updates

New Businesses & Vacancies

New in June:

Glamour Gal Beauty Supplies: 190 Bloomfield Ave Suite B

Ani Ramen: 401 Bloomfield Ave

Xocolatz: 398 Bloomfield Ave

Laboratorio Kitchen: 615 Bloomfield Ave

Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices New Jersey: 695 Bloomfield Ave

NJ Fitness Factory: 47 South Park Street

Noches de Colombia: 19 Elm St

East Side Mags: 7 South Fullerton

New in July:

Perfect Pawn: 342 Bloomfield Ave

Juice Basin: 631 Bloomfield Ave

Pedal Montclair: 15 Midland Ave

10 Park La Cucina Italiana: 10 Park St

Art Garage Annex: 619 Glenridge (pop-up for the summer)

Isaiah HemmingWay: 4 South Fullerton Ave

New in August:

Villalobos: 6 South Fullerton Ave

Vital Dining: 387 Bloomfield Ave (was HLS)

Kayla Natural Beauty: 547 Bloomfield Ave

Vital Dining: 387 Bloomfield Ave

Closed or Moved:

Uptowne Girl Salon: 12 North Willow Street

Retro Grade: 10 Park St

J&K Steakhouse: 44 South Park St

SwapXXchange: 425 Bloomfield Ave

Trini's Barber Shop: 154 Bloomfield Ave

Aquarian Yoga Center: 641 Bloomfield Ave

Prudential New Jersey Realty (Moved/Name Change): 92 Church St

Weaving Eyelash Salon: 332 Bloomfield Ave

HLS Restaurant: 387 Bloomfield Ave

Fogo: 10 Park St

Runway Luxury Consignment & More: 342 Bloomfield Ave

Purchased Possessions Fine Men's Apparel: 47 South Park St

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Coming Soon:

Hall of Fame Boutique 158 Bloomfield Ave (was Mississippi Antiques)
Nail Fitness: 461 Bloomfield Ave (was Edge Mid Century)
MK Designs, Merit Kitchen: 16 Church St
Heritage House (restaurant): 44 South Park St (was J&K Steak House)
Atelier: 47 South Park St
Jimmy John's: 52 South Park St

Montclair Center Stage

We have had a summer full of great music on the Montclair Center Stage. Saturday nights on Church Street are a fun scene, filled with people dancing and enjoying the outdoor cafes. Some businesses are staying open to accommodate the late night-shoppers. We have two more shows on Church Street, so stop by Saturday night!

Events

The Farmers' Market started in June and has continued throughout the summer. The start was weak, but has improved, with tweaks and improvements almost weekly. We may be shifting the hours this month, as it gets darker earlier. We think that we have hit a good stride and will continue to monitor its success into October. On balance, we are very pleased with this as a first season and a mid-week Farmers' Market.

Montclair Fashion Night will take place this Sunday, September 14th from 4 PM to 8 PM at The Wellmont Theater. It will showcase 13 retail establishments, several vendors, and two restaurants. From 4 PM to 5PM there will be a cocktail party with music and food from Xocolatz and Fresco. From 5 PM to 6 PM there will be both a ready-to-wear and evening wear fashion show. The night ends with shopping, a DJ and cocktails from 6PM-8 PM. We hope the board will join us to support both the BID and our local merchants. Thanks to Israel Cronk from Bangz Salon & Wellness, Rob Greco from Atelier and Joann Smalls for helping us put this together.

Our 9th annual Crane Park Family Festival will take place on September 27th: 10 AM-4 PM. This is a family friendly event with music on the Montclair Center Stage, tables for shopping from merchants, the bouncy house and entertainment.

The Art Walk, A Little Night XIV will take place on Friday, October 17th from 6 PM to 9 PM. It is an opportunity for both retailers and our community to celebrate our vibrant visual arts community.

Our second annual Ladies Night Out will take place on Friday, October 24th 6 PM to 9PM. The first Ladies' Night Out in March was a success and it was requested by merchants we have a second one in the fall. The night is dubbed

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'evening of experiences'; merchants host an activity, tutorial, or demonstration. This is not a sales driven event but an opportunity to get new customers in a merchant's store. We encourage all merchants to form partnerships with one another and cross-promote.

Voting

We have three exciting opportunities for the Board and the public to show support for Montclair Center.

This year we are one of four Northern Jersey towns selected by the American Planning Association in their Great Downtown People's Choice Award. This is a new award. Please vote and encourage people to vote here: <http://njplanning.org/news/peoples-choice-awards/> . This has been posted on Baristanet, our Facebook and we have a QR code to use at the Montclair Center Stage. We will continue to push until the deadline, September 26th. The three winners, from Northern, Central and South Jersey categories will be announced in early October.

Suburban Essex has extended their voting in the Best of Essex contest until October 15th. Go to <http://suburbanessex.com/> to vote for your favorite restaurants, shops and service establishments.

Two merchants, The Art Garage and Style Haven are participating in the Mission Main Street Grant program through Chase Bank. This is a contest that allows small businesses to win up to \$150,000 in grant money. Both merchants need 250 votes in order to be eligible for the award. Please vote and spread the word. Go to <https://www.missionmainstreetgrants.com/> and vote. You may vote for both merchants once.

Website

When the board met back in June, Luther gave a tour of the new website. Feedback was given and the board was invited to email the office more suggestions. Some of these suggestions were implemented throughout the summer. The old URL www.MontclairCenter.com and new URL www.MontclairCenterBID.com both land on our new website. There are a few features that are still under development.