

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

In attendance: Sue Schultz, Diane Israel, Phil Cantor, Rich McMahon, Gerald Sweeney, Robert Weber, Sharda Ramharack, Debbie Santiago, Joanne Malave, Israel Cronk as well as Alescia Peyton and Luther Flurry

Meeting was called to order at 7:16 pm.

There were no members of the public wanting to speak.

Approval of May minutes was moved by Rich, seconded by Sharda and passed unanimously.

Jerry presented the Conflict of Interest Policy, discussed at the June meeting. The proposed changes link our language more closely to the language for government agencies. Israel moved to accept the changes and Sharda seconded the motion. Changes in the policy were passed unanimously. Members present completed acknowledgements of the policy.

Sad news, Essex Fine Arts Gallery is leaving the district, which has prompted lot of questions: Are we still an art destination? How can we make art more visible in a retail way? and Is the BID offering retailers the support they need?

A discussion ensued touching on changing demographics, changing buying patterns, and past practices. Events, marketing, pop-up stores and landlord practices were covered as well. Parking challenges were discussed

All agree that a retailer's committee should address these questions, prioritize challenges, and bring new ideas to BID operations.

As part of the updates, Phil notified the board that he was no longer on the towns TPAC (Traffic & Parking Advisory Committee). The town had notified Phil that since he was no longer a Montclair resident he was not eligible to vote on a town commission. Phil pointed out to the council that the township has viewed owning a business as equivalent to residency for Commission Membership, Parking and other purposes, but the Township declined to take that view in his case. There are now Zero business representatives on TPAC. Phil expressed the hope that the Township would reach out to businesses to gain their representation and input on parking.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 after a motion by Robert.

Updates:

Legal Update

- Our OPRA case was sent back to the Superior (lower) court to determine whether there was an actual violation of OPRA (prior decisions focused on whether OPRA should be applied to us) and what, if any legal fees are due to the Plaintiff. The judge did not address whether we had violated OPRA, but said \$6k plus expenses were due to the Plaintiff. The Plaintiff was seeking about \$170k plus expenses. Plaintiff has appealed. Since early 2013, this matter has cost us about \$62k in legal fees.

Events:

- Music on **Montclair Center Stage** has been going well and very well received. Music continues through September.
- **GLAM (Glenridge Avenue Merchants)** has sponsored a DJ every Friday night since May. This has encouraged Glenridge Ave stores to stay open later and generated evening foot traffic. They will continue this as long as the weather permits.
- **Farmers' Market** on Tuesdays has seen limited success. There are only two vendors on a whole block and not many customers. We need to decide whether we are willing to let this experiment continue another year.
- **Touch a Truck** is an event we are hosting this Saturday, September 12. The event is simply what it sounds like. \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. Anticipated receipts have been used to pay for August/September advertising for the event and general district advertising. We hope this advertising will help top of mind recall for shopping season.
- **Open Streets MTC** will be on September 27. This event is co-sponsored by Bike Walk Montclair (BMW) and the township of Montclair. Its purpose is to get people thinking about different ways to use streets, and will include entertainment, bike, hula hooping, shopping, etc. The police have a grant to pay for their time and BWM is closing Lackawanna Plaza to Glenridge, Glenridge Ave to Bloomfield, S Fullerton from Bloomfield to the Crescent Deck entry, Church St to S Park, and S Park from Bloomfield to the Crescent Deck entry.
- **Girl Noticed**, a public art project that creates temporary murals with empowering messages, will be on Glenridge Avenue during the Open Streets event. Matt Silverman was instrumental in making this happen.
- **Ladies Night Out** will be October 2.
- **Art Walk** will be October 16.

- **Montclair Fashion Night, Holiday Preview** will be November 12 at the Wellmont.

Downtown Re-Development

- There are several redevelopment areas in different degrees of discussion. The **Leech/Police Building/Gateway 2** redevelopment plan will be before the Planning Board at their September 28 meeting.
- Also under discussion at the September 28 meeting is the **Lackawanna Plaza** redevelopment plan, which had a public visioning meeting before summer.
- The **Seymour Street Redevelopment/Social Security Building** area will have a visioning workshop on October 15. The master plan calls for this area to have an arts focus. Studio Montclair is hoping that there will be dedicated gallery space. Others want a performance space or senior center.
- **Valley & Bloom** construction continues, with one building envelope complete. There is strong interest in the apartments; applications have closed for available small ones. I do not know about commercial tenants. Residents should start move-in before year-end, which means the parking deck should open then as well.
- The **MC Hotel** is targeting groundbreaking in October.
- **The Wellmont Theater** will re-open on October 6.
- **Vault 491** (former PNC Bank) should open, fully occupied, early second quarter 2016.
- **Bloomfield Avenue Cost/Benefit Traffic Study** by the Voorhees Transportation Center is under way and should be completed in December. We hope this study will give us the traffic modeling we need to move forward on our Better Bloomfield Avenue initiative. The BID has taken a strong position that Bloomfield Avenue, as configured and used is detrimental to business. Other groups have noted that it is very unsafe. We hope to start conversations about a meaningful redesign next year.

Budget and Planning

- The beginning of October is when we start the budget and planning cycle. Start collecting your thoughts.