

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting
Mar 11, 2020 – 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Montclair House Grill, 12 Church Street, 2nd Floor

Board members in attendance: Jennifer Bobal, Phil Cantor, Ashley Cyrus, Rebecca Doyle, Lisa Ingersoll, Lisa Johnson, Sharda Ramharack, Sue Schultz, Matt Silverman, Sean Spiller, Nat Testa (Dominick Sansavero on behalf of Richard Cronk)

Absent: Jose Barreiro, Renee Baskerville, Jeff Beck, Honey Correia, Richard Cronk, Brittany DeMaio, Chris Francois, Jaji Packard, Nicole Silva, Robert Squires

Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

a. Northeast Environmental Earth Coalition (NEEC)

Jose German and David Wasmuth gave a presentation regarding their pollinator corridor project along Glenridge Avenue.

- A pioneer project, Montclair would be the first New Jersey town to have a pollinator corridor in a business district.
- Replicating Crane Park success to create a sustainable garden.
- Volunteer driven to include businesses, community, families, open classrooms.
- Clean up neglected area landscapes, including use of container gardens; expand and connect to other environmental projects.
- Presented a 4-year budget.

Discussion took place regarding who would handle the maintenance of the plants and containers, and how much funding the NEEC is looking for from the BID. The board decided to table the discussion while Jason Gleason agreed to follow-up with the NEEC.

III. ADOPTION OF JANUARY MINUTES

Lisa Johnson moved to approve the January minutes.
Ashley Cyrus seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

a. Strategic Planning Process Discussion

Discussion took place regarding whether the transformational webinar with Josh Bloom was helpful. Comments included:

- A need to sharpen initiatives and connect them with real goals and objectives.
- What are the tangible benefits for us? What are we trying to achieve?
- Requires a more concrete plan; there is no blueprint.

Work plan ideas:

- Investigate the viability of a shuttle service.
- Getting more data; creating surveys.
- Late-night store hours; stores should stay open later.
- Installation of large banner poles for holding banners across Bloomfield Avenue; proposed installation by Lackawanna Plaza.

Discussion took place on whether to engage an outside agency to create our own strategic plan, but consensus was to hold off on this until the current construction projects have been completed. Meanwhile, the board will continue to utilize the services of Josh Bloom.

b. Key Executive Committee initiatives No discussion.

c. Schumacher Insurance

After evaluating proposals from three different insurance companies, Jason Gleason reported that Schumacher Insurance offered the best coverage for the best price. Because Honey Correia, the president of Schumacher Insurance, is a BID Board member, Jason Gleason requested the Board discuss and authorize engaging Schumacher Insurance in accordance with BID rules on conflict of interest.

Phil Cantor moved to authorize Jason Gleason to purchase Montclair Center BID insurance policies from Schumacher Insurance. Lisa Johnson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

d. Green Resolution

Lisa Johnson presented the Montclair Center BID Sustainability Statement.

The Montclair Center BID acknowledges that economic growth and the well being of society are inextricably linked to the health of the environment. We embrace our responsibility for environmental stewardship, and we are committed to integrating environmental practices and sustainability principles into our mission statement. We want our initiatives and strategies to positively impact the district by improving community health and quality of life, promoting resource conservation and pollution

prevention, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration and citizen participation.

We resolve to:

Protect and enhance the district's natural, cultural, historical, and human assets and resources.

Foster environmentally responsible purchasing practices by striving to balance short and long-term maintenance, life cycle and environmental costs in purchasing goods and services, with sound fiscal practices.

Continue to identify, implement, communicate, and coordinate practices that preserve and promote efficient use and conservation of energy, water, and other resources and increase promotion of conservation efforts to the district, so as to reduce resource consumption.

Lessen the impact of solid waste production by fostering recycling and reuse within the organization.

Support Montclair Township's Complete Streets Resolution whereby facilitating pedestrian travel, bicycle use and promotion of other alternative modes of transportation to minimize the environmental impact of vehicles in the district and surrounding communities.

Continue with the "greening" of the district and efforts to implement sustainable practices in the design and maintenance of the grounds.

Support green building standards for new major construction, the inclusion of affordable and inclusive housing into mixed-use redevelopment, and the incorporation of smart-growth policies into redevelopment plans.

Create a safe, healthy, and environmentally friendly work environment that supports our employees, volunteers, and stakeholders.

Lisa Johnson moved to approve the Montclair Center BID Sustainability Statement. Ashley Cyrus seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Sidewalk Sweeper

Jason Gleason mentioned that the sidewalk sweeper is getting serviced and will be back on the road within two weeks. It will be fully insured under the township's policies. Ambassador Donald Hunter will undergo training on the sweeper, so all ambassadors will be authorized to use it.

b. Partnerships/Sponsorships/Grants

Jason Gleason discussed having a stronger approach to partnerships. The

BID can be a conduit to many conversations. For example, Coalition for the Homeless, and ongoing robust music partnerships with many Montclair organizations.

Jason Gleason said the BID is yielding great results in grants and sponsorship submissions. A personalized sponsorship packet has been created and presented to numerous potential sponsors already. He also thanked Jose Barreiro, who brought in Whole Foods as a first-time BID sponsor.

c. NJ Bike & Walk Summit Report

Jason Gleason attended the 2020 summit and discussed what he had learned about complete/green streets programs, rain garden flood zone mitigation and bike and pedestrian walkways.

Discussion took place regarding supporting efforts with Bike/Walk Montclair to do a Complete Street demo program, starting on a small scale, to show proof of concept which can then be expanded.

VI. TREASURERS REPORT

Jennifer Bobal announced that the BID finances are really healthy and under budget. She has already met with BID accountant Tesha Kelly several times.

VII. COMMITTEES

a. Marketing: no discussion.

b. Parking: Matt Silverman itemized ideas to be included in the parking survey:

- Goals to improve employee parking.
- Helping customers find more parking.
- Fair and consistent parking enforcement.
- Improved place finding.
- Improving communication with a public relations campaign on what is available.
- Restructuring parking in general.

Matt Silverman said the committee is putting together a draft of the survey and hopes to have it out to stakeholders shortly. He also is meeting Emanuel Germano at the township on March 20, and wants to continue meetings on a monthly basis to stay informed regarding policies.

c. Property Owner/Real Estate: Ashley Cyrus reported that the committee felt the need to:

- Resolve issues of communication with stakeholders.

- Create a private survey to include problems property owners are facing as landlords.
 - Optimize an internal database of building ownership, including data such as square footage, amenities, occupancy, and rent.
- d. Visual Improvements & Streetscape: Jennifer Bobal reported the committee was focusing on holiday décor purchases for the 2020 season. They will also continue these 2019 initiatives, with a few improvements:
- Holiday window decorating and container Christmas tree decorating competitions.
 - Hanging flower baskets along the southside of Bloomfield Avenue.
 - Tree bed contests.
 - Continue working with Hillcrest farms and Montclair Garden Club.

Jennifer Bobal reported that the ArtConnects/mural project will continue this year capitalizing on its huge 2019 success. The grant should be open in April.

In regard to lighting, the committee wanted again to encourage businesses to keep lights on up until 11 p.m., making the district brighter and livelier. There is also a possibility to get a grant from PSE&G for new lights.

Jennifer Bobal then submitted the Improve Downtown Lighting resolution.

Whereas Montclair Center is a thriving retail, restaurant, entertainment, and residential neighborhood, it is imperative that the District be well lit to promote pedestrian safety and reduce Township liability. Whereas Montclair Center BID was formed to advance the activities and interests of downtown Montclair, the Montclair Center BID Board considers the improvement of downtown lighting essential to its mission.

Downtown Montclair currently lacks sufficient lighting to properly support downtown activities and promote public safety at our current level of foot traffic. Several new developments coming online will exacerbate this problem as pedestrian traffic will increase significantly. We have dark blocks, inconsistent lighting, and aging lighting infrastructure that detracts from safety, discourages visitors and commerce, and is contrary to the image we hold for our town.

Whereas PSE&G has not been consistent maintaining lamps, bulbs and services within Montclair Center. The Township of Montclair and PSE&G have a legal requirement to provide adequate lighting for safety and security in the District.

Whereas many alleys are dark, many sidewalks are significantly under lit, and storefront windows go dark during high pedestrian hours. The BID Board calls for additional Township lighting instruments, ordinances and voluntary cooperation from constituents to remedy these three issues.

The Board hereby resolves that staff, Board and constituents should exert maximum pressure on the Township, PSE&G, building and business owners to increase public lighting and private light spill onto Montclair Center sidewalks and alleys to best promote safety at night and in hazardous weather conditions.

The Board of Montclair Center BID calls on the Township to promptly resolve this issue by

- 1) *Require PSE&G to repair or replace nonfunctioning downtown public lights as quickly as possible.*
- 2) *Invest, along with PSE&G, the BID, and owners of adjacent property, in new alleyway lighting.*
- 3) *Work with the BID, property owners, and business owners to increase private light spill onto sidewalks.*

Sharda Ramharack moved to adopt the lighting resolution. Sue Schultz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Board Assessment Survey

Lisa Johnson reminded the board that the self-assessment survey has been sent out and responses are requested by March 18.

b. Jason Gleason announced that BID had, for the seventh year in a row, won the People's Choice Award for favorite downtown arts district. Four other Montclair organizations also won in their respective categories.

IX. OLD BUSINESS None.

X. UPCOMING EVENTS

a. Love Yourself Montclair – CANCELLED

Due to the hands-on nature of this event and growing health concerns about the COVID-19 virus, the event has been cancelled. Rescheduling the event will be determined by the availability of the Wellmont Theater, and the current BID schedule of events.

b. Sip & Shop/Ladies Night Out – April 17th

Registration is currently open for this event.

XI. OPEN DISCUSSION – New Ideas, Comments, Questions

Jason Gleason commented on the escalating nature of the corona virus outbreak. Concerns are:

- How will this impact our businesses? How can we help them?
- With reduced income, how will businesses pay rent and bills?
- Does the State have plans to subsidize loss of business?
- What are the legal requirements for paying employees for sick leave, closed business? What is covered under insurance?

Upon discussion, these strategies were offered:

- Wild Apricot blasts to businesses with links to CDC recommendations and Montclair Township Swift911 alert system.
- Red Root social media to post helpful ideas, such as using Grubhub and Uber Eats.
- Plan to cancel events a month out, and then week-by-week on a rolling basis.
- Create a virtual town forum on a site such as Zoom to collaborate, disseminate accurate and current information, act in an advisory role and show support and caring. This would likely require a facilitator and robust IT/wireless infrastructure.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Nat Testa moved to adjourn the meeting. Matt Silverman seconded.
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

April 8, 2020 • 7 p.m.
Montclair House Grill