

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting
April 8, 2020 – 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Via Zoom

Board members in attendance: Jose Barreiro, Jeff Beck, Jennifer Bobal, Phil Cantor, Richard Cronk, Ashley Cyrus, Brittany DeMaio, Chris Francois, Lisa Ingersoll, Lisa Johnson, Jaji Packard, Sharda Ramharack, Sue Schultz, Robert Squires, Nat Testa

Absent: Renee Baskerville, Honey Correia, Rebecca Doyle, Nicole Silva, Matt Silverman, Sean Spiller

Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney, AnnMarie Sekeres

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

Jason Gleason welcomed David Weitzman, owner of The Outdoor Store, representing his business, and his daughter, Rebecca Doyle.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

III. ADOPTION OF MARCH MINUTES

Phil Cantor reported a correction to the March minutes.

Lisa Johnson moved to approve the March minutes as amended.

Richard Cronk seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Lisa Johnson spoke regarding the current COVID-19 crisis, and stated we are all in this together; that this is a time of change and adaptation. She asked to keep communication flowing, and that the BID's Montclair Monday initiative is a good resource. She noted that an NPR report predicted the virus to peak April 16, although businesses may not be able to open normally until the end of May. Sue Schultz said while everyone's business model is different everyone should be encouraged to apply for funds, and grants through the government stimulus packages.

Discussion took place regarding the various loan programs, and their experiences, as well as criteria for filing for unemployment. Jennifer Bobal mentioned that Wells Fargo had pulled out of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan program, while David Weitzman reported having success applying through Chase.

Brittany DeMaio asked about rent relief for closed businesses. Lisa Johnson stated that it depends on the landlord, some will work with tenants, while others may simply waive late fees.

Lisa Johnson acknowledged the wonderful videos, produced by Chris Francois and another local artist, documenting Montclair during lockdown.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. Update on COVID-19 Initiatives
 - Wellness event cancelled. BID in triage, communicating information from all levels of government to stakeholders.
 - Local restaurants are donating unused food to Toni's Kitchen. Jason Gleason and the ambassadors are helping to deliver these food packages.
 - Gathering information of all open local restaurants, and listing them on social media to maximize exposure. Updating frequently, since openings and closings change daily. Will do the same for retail.
 - Partnering with MSU and DesignShed to produce Montclair Mondays, a series of Zoom meetings for both stakeholders and the general public, featuring local panelists addressing current issues raised by the pandemic.
 - The sidewalk sweeper is back on the street. Street poles and meters have been repainted, and the ambassadors are working on cleaning out tree beds and changing banners.
 - A special '*Montclair Together*' graphic has been designed for social media, which is key right now. Social media posts have been refocused, including highlighting each business sector on specific days.

Jason Gleason has applied for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) grant. Jacqueline Apicella has been furloughed since there are no events at present. However, he wants to hire her back as soon as possible since her role also focuses heavily on marketing. Meanwhile AnnMarie Sekeres has been invaluable in gathering and disseminating all the new and pertinent information throughout this crisis. As such he has changed her title to deputy director. He will be creating new job descriptions to reflect these changes.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Rent Control Ordinance 0-20-05

After very little discussion the Rent Control Ordinance was voted on and approved (5-2) at the Montclair town council meeting last night. Jason Gleason took a strong stance against the ordinance, reading a statement during the meeting. Jaji Packard stated that the ordinance is poorly written, submitted at a terrible time, and is harmful to both residents and property owners alike. Discussion took place regarding the provisions of the ordinance. Jason Gleason asked the board if the BID should start its own discussion with the property owners of the district, or join with the Montclair Property Owners Association.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None

VIII. OPEN DISCUSSION

a. COVID-19 Questions, Comments, Concerns

- UPS/FEDEX deliveries might be returned because there is no one at the store to receive them, so make plans accordingly. Mail has also been left on businesses' doorknobs/steps, so make sure to get mail forwarded.
- The district is very quiet and business owners are concerned for the safety of their stores. In response, Jason Gleason said a mobile command unit has been positioned at various points on Bloomfield Avenue to increase monitoring, and act as a deterrent. Overall crime is down.
- As per state executive order, all construction projects must cease from today.
- The budget committee will be getting together, repivoting to deal with the COVID-19 crisis.
- The BID should continue to focus on what it can control, including advocacy, virtual meetings/classes, focus the budget where it can help most right now, such as Toni's Kitchen.
- MSU opening the new technical Montclair Innovation Lab on Lackawanna Plaza; currently making 3D printed masks for hospitals. More to come on this partnership.

b. Event Schedule

- NYC's Broadway is shut down until at least June 6. Is this a cue for our events? Should we cancel the Spring Music Fest on June 13?
- Sidewalk Saturday, June 20 - propose to put together an online portal for a virtual sidewalk sale, marketing it hard and far.
- Ladies Night and Spring Art Walk are both cancelled.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Sue Schultz moved to adjourn the meeting. Richard Cronk seconded.

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

May 13, 2020 • 2 p.m.

Via Zoom