

# **MONTCLAIR CENTER BID**

## **GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015**

**Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting**  
**July 15, 2020 – 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

*Board members in attendance:* Jose Barreiro, Jeff Beck, Jennifer Bobal, Phil Cantor, David Cummings, Ashley Cyrus, Brittany DeMaio, Rebecca Doyle, Lisa Ingersoll, Lisa Johnson, Jaji Packard, Lori Price Abrams, Sharda Ramharack, Sue Schultz, Matt Silverman, Robert Squires, Nat Testa, Kathryn Waggener McGuire  
*Absent:* Richard Cronk, Chris Francois, Carley Graham Garcia  
*Staff:* Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney

### **I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME**

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Welcomed guest Alec Tobin, urban planning graduate of Rice University, and nephew of Nat Testa.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **III. ADOPTION OF JUNE MINUTES**

**Phil Cantor moved to approve the June minutes.**

**Matt Silverman seconded. Motion passed unanimously, with David Cummings and Lori Price Abrams abstaining.**

### **IV. INTRODUCTION TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Kathryn Waggener McGuire, owner and director of Clerestory Fine Art, and Carley Graham Garcia, executive director of the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

### **V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Lisa Johnson reported that Phil Cantor is moving to a new photography studio in Verona. He has been in business in Montclair for 25 years, and on the BID board for 12 years. He has been an amazing asset to the BID, his work has been invaluable, and he will be sorely missed. Phil Cantor thanked everyone for their best wishes. He said the highlight of his time on the board was going to Atlanta to accept the Great American Main Street award in 2015. Jason Gleason thanked Phil for his guidance and all he has accomplished during his tenure on the board.

**Lisa Johnson motioned to appoint Matt Silverman to serve the remainder of Phil Cantor's term as vice president. Jeff Beck seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

## VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### a. Vacancy/New Business Report

Jason Gleason welcomed new council member representatives Lori Price Abrams from the 3rd ward, and David Cummings from the 4th ward to the BID board.

The BID is currently working on a complete update of the Wild Apricot/excel businesses databases. Due to COVID-19, several businesses have shuttered, but there is much new business interest, with property owners showing many spaces. We should shortly have a more exact vacancy rate for the district, but currently it is about 19%. By the next meeting we will have updated data and hopefully less closures and more new businesses added to our district.

### b. Fresh Air Updates

Kathryn Waggener McGuire reported:

- two more art spaces were created at 47 S. Park Street.
- the Fresh Air website is being updated.
- a mural is in discussion.
- more planned for marketing and Instagram; encouraging property and business owners, along with the artist, to increase their own media posts regarding the installations.

### c. Planning Board SAFE Plan Report

SAFE plan, a pedestrian walking and biking plan to be added to the Montclair Master Plan (especially concerning safety in construction areas), will be deferred until September. Discussion took place regarding this issue. Matt Silverman mentioned we have an opportunity to weigh in more strategically; look at the issues in a fresh way, maybe have more specific intentions. It was suggested to expand the parking committee purview to include curb space usage, or have a transportation/movement committee in conjunction with the parking committee. The plan from 2017 is deemed no longer relevant; we now need to utilize precious curb space in more ways than was ever imaged before COVID-19. Safety is always the first concern.

### d. Update on June Resolution regarding Business Recovery

The June Resolution was presented to both the previous and new town council with the following results:

1. No free parking in all Montclair decks due to budgetary restraints.
2. Free 15 minutes at all meters has been in effect since March 14 and will continue.
3. Street closures will be discussed later in the agenda.
4. Cafe permit fees have been eliminated. However, processing time is still an issue due to the Township Health Department backlog.
5. Bloomfield Avenue road diet is a non-starter due to it being an Essex County road with many liability issues.
6. No rescinding the Special Parking Zone parking fine increases.
7. Streamlining commercial permitting and inspections remains a problem due to lack of inspectors.
8. An ordinance to regulate surcharges for third-party food delivery services is now moot due to industry shifts in fee structure.

Discussion took place regarding pedlets (use of a parking space barricaded for pedestrian walkway) and parklets (larger spaces barricaded for seating). One issue is the safety concerns regarding plastic versus concrete barriers and their availability. The cost of a pedlet/parklet would be \$12 per day/per parking space; the build out could cost in excess of \$1,200. Phil Cantor said we have to push for these structures, particularly for the restaurants, since they are the key to engaging our downtown.

## **VII. TREASURERS REPORT**

Pilot project closing Church and S. Park Streets is costing the BID \$8,700. DesignShed is providing \$2,100 in-kind material donations, along with \$5,000 in-kind labor for the build out of benches and design esthetics. The \$3,900 police price tag has been reduced to \$2,600 thanks to Jason Gleason working with Lieutenant Ignazio. In addition, another \$2,600 or so could be spent on cleaning products, masks, printing, etc. However, with collaboration from DesignShed, MixLab, Arterial Streets all adding volunteer labor the cost could have been far greater. It has been a really beautiful, communal, grass-roots project, showing that Montclair is still a place to visit safely with social distancing protocols.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Street Closing Pilot Report & Discussion**

The BID is closing down Church Street from 5-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday night, July 17, 18. With S. Park Street closing from 5p.m. Friday, July 17, through Sunday, July 19 at 3 p.m.

Church Street will feature full streetscape design, including:

- art elements on the street
- art/shade installation
- modular benches with umbrella shading and solar light elements.

It would normally take six months of planning and work to pull off a project of this scope, now completed in less than three weeks. Businesses can use the large sidewalk space in front of their building for additional seating/retail. There will be places to sit and congregate following social distancing. This is NOT an event, rather a demonstration of what a vibrant, public space/pedestrian plaza can be.

S. Park Street will be lined with district retail merchant tents to provide an equitable space for those businesses not on Church or S. Park Streets. The area will be filled with bistro tables and chairs for diners to bring take-out from any restaurant in town. Fresh Air Fitness will commence at 7am on Sunday on S. Park Street, with a different fitness activity each hour, including Pilates, HIIT, yoga, and dance. We currently have 12 retail vendors and seven fitness studios signed up for the pilot program. This demonstration will reaffirm and preserve Montclair as a cultural capital.

DesignShed will conduct a survey regarding the initiative and, if it is deemed successful, we will continue until September 30, with the Township picking up the cost of policing.

Crane Park is now also approved for weekend fitness. We will be filling four/five spots each Saturday for area fitness and martial arts studios.

**IX. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**X. OPEN DISCUSSION – New Ideas, Comments, Questions**

Lisa Johnson put in a call to action to the committee chairs to get moving on scheduling regular meetings. Nat Testa was appointed chair of the nomination committee. A town councilor is also required to sit on this committee, so David Cummings was nominated.

Discussion took place regarding marketing for the street closures. Right now, it is very generic until all the details are finalized. Then a press release with more specific information will be sent out. A reminder that the street closures are NOT an event to draw huge crowds, but rather an effort to safely engage dining and retail in a socially distanced and conscious way.

Lisa Ingersoll reported that Montclair Film has postponed their film festival until October 16-25, and it will be digital this year due to COVID-19. They are doing drive-in movies at Montclair State University, and in West Orange. They would like to provide more movies in Montclair if they can find a space large enough. There was discussion on whether the Lackawanna parking lot could be used.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Phil Cantor moved to adjourn the meeting. Nat Testa seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**TBD • 7 p.m.**

**Via Zoom**