

# **MONTCLAIR CENTER BID**

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

**Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting**  
**June 3, 2020 – 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

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

Absent: Renee Baskerville, Chris Francois, Lisa Ingersoll, Sean Spiller

Staff: Jason Gleason, Jackie Apicella, Pauline Heaney, AnnMarie Sekeres

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

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Gerald Sweeney stated he would like to see Montclair center reopen to be as vibrant as it was before the shutdown. He suggested the BID focus on community outreach with an aggressive marketing campaign.

### **III. ADOPTION OF APRIL MINUTES**

Lisa Johnson moved to approve the April minutes.

Richard Cronk seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

#### **a. Board & Committee Nominations**

- Board members Nicole Silva and Honey Correia have resigned from the BID board. Kathryn Waggener McGuire, owner and director of Clerestory Fine Art, and Carley Graham Garcia, executive director of the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, have been nominated to serve the rest of their terms.
- Jennifer Bobal has resigned from her position as treasurer on the Executive Committee. Jaji Packard is nominated to take over the position of treasurer, with Nat Testa nominated to the assistant treasurer/secretary position.

**Sharda Ramharack moved to approve these nominations. Sue Schultz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **b. Key Executive Committee initiatives**

The Executive Committee has been meeting extensively, and together with local business owners in order to have plans in place for when some businesses are permitted to reopen on June 15. The committee thanked everyone for being so engaged in this process, for all the ideas and initiatives put forth, and for being there for our neighbors during this crucial time.

c. MPOA Rent Control Petition

Jaji Packard reported that the rent control ordinance is currently under litigation in the NJ Supreme Court. There is a temporary injunction until the end of the pandemic +20 days. 1020 signatures are needed on the Montclair Property Owner's Association's (MPOA) petition to put the ordinance to a vote in November. If the MPOA fails to get enough signatures in the allotted time, the ordinance will be signed into law. Only Montclair residents are entitled to sign the petition or vote for the ordinance.

The BID Board is taking the stance that it is supporting the referendum, since property owners are an important component of the BID's undertaking. As mentioned previously, the vote on the ordinance was highly political, rushed, and with insufficient stakeholder discussion or input. Jeff Beck offered that we facilitate the conversation on both sides (tenants and property owners). Local businesses rely on Montclair residents as customers to their businesses. He said the BID should be the voice of reason, that communication should be clear that it's in the interests for all, not just the property owners.

**V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

a. Fresh Air Updates/NBC

Jason Gleason reported that downtown Montclair is being turned into an outdoor museum with the Fresh Air Montclair initiative. This will be coupled with Fresh Air Fashion, and Fresh Air Fitness. NBC is coming to shoot a TV segment and interview local business owners Luck Sarabhayavanija of Ani Ramen, Nicole Silva of Dolly Moo, and mayor-elect Sean Spiller. With this initiative there are many marketing opportunities surrounding the theme 'Rediscover your Backyard.' It is a great all-round project, helping businesses, property owners, non-profits, Bike&Walk Montclair and Bounce, putting forth a progressive Montclair.

b. Township Recovery Taskforce

Jason Gleason presented a document to the Township finance committee outlining 19 potentially actionable items to aid the recovery process caused by the pandemic.

c. Bike&Walk Survey

Bike&Walk compiled a survey of how Bloomfield Avenue might be reimaged. Data collected from this survey feeds directly into the BID asks at Township.

d. BID to Business Covid Impact & Recovery Survey Results

During the COVID shutdown the BID attempted to call every single business in the district reaching out with a personal message of support. We also administered a survey asking about concerns and issues impacting each business due to the shutdown and eventual reopening. Respondents overwhelmingly said they were frustrated by the lack of specific state/town guidelines, misinformation, worry about lack of PPE and how to enforce safe practices upon reopening. Some businesses indicated they did not receive any of the grant/loan programs offered, while others did not fully understand the forgiveness portion of the loan.

## VI. TREASURERS REPORT

Jaji Packard reported that financially the BID is doing fine.

- BID finances are approximately \$48,500 better than budgeted.
- COVID-19 upended the BID budget; we underspent on events and marketing, while revenue sources both closed and opened, i.e. we lost Wellmont Theater support, but gained PPP revenue.
- Extra funds are now available for businesses reopening, PR and marketing.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

### a. COVID Recovery Action Letter to Township

Discussion took place regarding the ask the BID had presented to Township. Similar proposals have already been passed in Maplewood and Asbury Park, among others. How can we get the Township to move on this urgently? Jason Gleason has coordinated with the other Montclair business district organizations and everyone agrees to a unified approach at the next Town Council meeting. We need to get the freshmen councilors onboard. We need action.

Matt Silverman prepared a draft resolution and together the board reworked the draft to succinctly detail the steps needing to be taken. The resolution stating:

*Whereas* the Montclair business districts have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge that the Township act to approve and implement the following business recovery initiatives by June 15th, 2020:

- 1. Allow free parking in all Montclair decks from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. for 6 months or until peak time demand approaches capacity.**
- 2. Offer free first 15 minutes at all meters to ease curbside pickup.**
- 3. Facilitate scheduled street closures to improve pedestrian flow.**
  - i.e. Montclair streets such as Church Street, Glenridge Avenue, Midland Avenue, Bloomfield Avenue.
- 4. Allow all businesses to utilize their sidewalks as soon as possible.**
  - Extend sidewalk space usage for businesses needing to contend with reduced capacities.
  - Streamline and/or eliminate sidewalk permit process and fees.
- 5. Work with Essex County to temporarily implement a "Road Diet" on Bloomfield Avenue.**
- 6. Rescind the Special Parking Zone parking fine increases.**
- 7. Streamline and prioritize commercial permitting and inspections.**
- 8. Create an ordinance to regulate surcharges from third party food delivery services.**

Phil Cantor moved to issue the resolution. Nat Testa seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

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

Sue Schultz asked that any board members who would like to serve on the Nominating Committee email her. Duties usually begin around August.

The updated BID website is going to relaunch in the next couple of weeks. Jason Gleason asked if the BID can retain Nat Testa to provide AdWords services and other Google advertising initiatives for the site.

**Lisa Johnson moved to retain Nat Testa’s services. Jaji Packard seconded. Motion passed unanimously, with Nat Testa abstaining.**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Matt Silverman moved to adjourn the meeting. Richard Cronk seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**July 8, 2020 • 7 p.m.**

**Via Zoom**

