

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting
Sept 9, 2020 – 7 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
Via Zoom

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

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

III. ADOPTION OF JULY MINUTES

Matt Silverman moved to approve the July minutes, as amended.
Sue Schultz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. Vacancy/New Business Report
Vacancy rate still in flux due to COVID. There is lots of interest for new businesses, and several new openings upcoming, including a new theatre space at 180 Bloomfield Avenue, an old 1900s theatre, with 1,000 capacity space.
- b. Pop Goes the Plaza
 - Ebb and flow of participation.
 - Big line up this weekend (9/12/20) including Jazz House Kids musical performances.
 - Three more weeks to go.
 - Has been very successful; early problems ironed out. Lots of positive feedback.
- c. Montclair Center Website
 - Still in beta phase, although now live. Official launch will be very soon.
 - Looking for feedback on content. Is it clean? Easy to find everything within a click or two?

Discussion took place regarding Pop Goes the Plaza. Jason Gleason was able to iron out the early problems by placating frustrated business owners and residents, setting up a community meeting with the business owners on Church Street, making adjustments to the schedule to accommodate most business owners' needs, and ironing out problems on the fly. All making for a successful project. Whether we do this again next year is a question for the board at perhaps a side meeting or incorporate the discussion with the parking committee. Thoughts of doing it on a larger scale in the spring.

V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Township Relationship

We are asking for help to improve our partnership with the Township relative to planning and implementing initiatives. When COVID hit and the BID pivoted to aid businesses with street closures/pedlets and parklets, the biggest issue was the delay in getting approval from the Township. We need to work closer with the town council, and firmly have a seat at the table when key decisions are made, especially where we might also provide ideas and solutions. Effective communication is key and beneficial. We will look into new ways to get Township information flowing through our BID council board members.

VI. TREASURERS REPORT

Nat Testa reported on behalf of Jaji Packard that we currently have a \$72,000 surplus.

- If the PPP loan is forgiven, we will have \$50-70K to redirect in the last quarter.
- Due to COVID we have not tapped into some event, music and parklet program allocations.
- Work has begun on the 2021 budget.
- What are board committee wish list items?

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominations Committee – Nat Testa

- A notice to all stakeholders for nominations will be sent out, with September 30 a firm deadline for applications.
- The official ballot will be presented at the October meeting.
- The committee has suggested Alescia Peyton and Hipolito Pollantis to fill out the terms of two open board seats.

Jaji Packard moved to offer the open seats to Alescia Peyton and Hipolito Pollantis. Nat Testa seconded. Motion passed unanimously

Property Owners Committee - Ashley Cyrus

The committee is looking at new ways to source tenants. A specific marketing campaign geared to businesses, along with the BID's updated Welcome Packet will be very beneficial.

Visual Improvements Committee – Jaji Packard

- Holiday decor is set to go up after Halloween. It will include tall, lighted fir trees at each end of the district, and silver ball garland on light poles. The BID is proposing to decorate the Church Street tree as well this year.
- The pavement art on Church Street needs updating. Estimated cost to paint the lines is \$2,500 - \$3000.
- Fresh Air now has a total of 19 exhibits. We put up \$1,500 of seed money to start the program, and ended up with \$12,000 more in sponsorship for the project. The response to this program has been overwhelming. An immediate pivot piece to the COVID pandemic, foot traffic for local businesses has been greatly increased, and we were able to hit so many goals with this initiative. Kathryn McGuire and Mary Scotti have each devoted many volunteer hours to this incredibly successful project, adding much value to the district.
- Shaun Killman has donated a giant LOVE sculpture to the BID. The proposal is to install it at the Valley Road triangle. A decision has to be made how to best display it.

Marketing Committee – Jose Barreiro

Jose Barreiro thanked Jackie Apicella and AnnMarie Sekeres for the stellar job they are doing with marketing at the BID. He reported the committee has several initiatives, including:

- Conducting a Zoom meeting with retailers in the district, out of which came a call to encourage shoppers to get a jump start on holiday shopping, and for retailers to have extended hours one night a week.
- A new Shop Small campaign to create ads around local business owners, giving a more personal approach to shopping, and encouraging shoppers to purchase from the people (retailers) in your neighborhood.
- Targeted *NJ Monthly* ads, email marketing, some print ads.
- More business-to-business, marketing vacancies.
- Recommending to increase social media spending, initiatives and use of video through Red Root, including posts on Instagram, Facebook and adding Twitter for B2B marketing.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. COVID Related Activities: Holidays & Beyond

- What are the holidays going to be like? Do we go all out with decor?
- Is this the time to help businesses go to ecommerce? Do we facilitate ecommerce app development?
- It is still too early to say what events will look like next year. We are governed by state level mandates, so planning far ahead is hard to do. Instead, focus on infrastructure, app and marketing development.
- Is there a better delivery mechanism for small businesses to utilize during the holiday season?
- We must provide good PR value; encourage residents to purchase locally.
- Township not making a decision regarding tree lighting until November.

- b. Marketing 2021 Focus
 - Marketing higher on our list due to COVID; expanding it and making it more robust; moving into business recruitment marketing.
 - Possible radio advertising, including NPR.
 - Going to the next level with Red Root. How do they drive engagement with our retailers? Have them monitor and create small snippets of content on our Twitter account. Adding TikToc to get our younger crowd involved.
 - Tell the story of our community and how great it is to start a business here. Focus on consumers, business owners, and new opportunities. Marketing parking when a new lot is open.
 - A push to drive people to our website.
 - SEO/SEM can really drive marketing range.
 - Engaging a marketing consultant.All these strategies will require additional funding, so the marketing committee needs to work with the budget committee to allocate additional funds.
- c. Board Meeting Structure Moving Forward

Meetings will be conducted digitally for the rest of year; October 12, November 11, and the annual meeting, December 9.
- d. MSNJ – Possible Grant Opportunity

The Main Street New Jersey grant opportunity is imminent. It could be in excess of \$100,000. As yet we do not know the parameters, but it does cover COVID related expenses. If we secure the grant, we could tackle large-scale projects like lighting, a pilot project for a shuttle service with electric vehicles, or a mobile app. Filing the application for the grant will likely have a very short turnaround time.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

No update on the Bloomfield Avenue/Glenridge Avenue redevelopment project.

X. OPEN DISCUSSION – New Ideas, Comments, Questions

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Richard Cronk moved to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Ingersoll seconded.

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

October 14 • 7 p.m.

Via Zoom