

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting
Jan. 13, 2021 – 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
Zoom

Board members in attendance: Celestina Ando, Jose Barreiro, Jeff Beck, Jennifer Bobal, David Cummings, Ashley Cyrus, Rebecca Doyle, Carley Graham Garcia, Lisa Johnson, Jaji Packard, Alescia Peyton, David Placek, Lori Price Abrams, Sue Schultz, Matt Silverman, Robert Squires, Nat Testa
Absent: Richard Cronk, Hipolito Pollantis
Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney
P.U.M.A. Staff: Brad Segal,
Guest: Councilman Peter Yacobellis

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.
She welcomed the two new board members, Celestina Ando and David Placek.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

III. ADOPTION OF DECEMBER MINUTES

Jaji Packard moved to approve the December minutes.
Sue Schultz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Midtown Deck Update

Jason Gleason said he was thankful to the council and township for their help in straightening out issues caused by miscommunication regarding the closing of the Midtown Deck. Construction work has already begun, with asphalt dug up and street lighting taken down. Fourteen businesses utilize this area for parking, sanitation, egress, etc. All issues have now been addressed, and we will continue to work with individual business owners to monitor and mitigate problems as they arise.

b. MSNJ Grant Update

With this grant the BID was able to make an incredible impact for 130 businesses who each received a micro grant. Business owners, some of whom had not

received any COVID relief funding to date, were truly humbled and thankful to the BID for providing this badly needed financial help.

c. 2021 Meeting Schedule

The board meeting schedule is now set for the year. There will be no meeting for July or August. A zoom link has been emailed for each meeting.

d. Basecamp Overview

The office has now begun using Basecamp communication software. Once board committees are formalized, each board member will be invited to join. This is a great platform, with calendar, chat, agenda, and to-do features, including a location for storing documents. Jason Gleason will give a usage tutorial in February.

V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

a. Survive & Thrive

Matt Silverman presented the Survive and Thrive document saying this 'toolbox' will help our businesses over and above what we already provide. It will create increased conversation with the township regarding initiatives, both short- and long-term. Already, Jason Gleason has met several times with the town's COVID Recovery Taskforce Business Subcommittee, with lots of great stuff to be launched. The board liked that Survive and Thrive brings value to ALL the businesses in Montclair. It's like a wish-list to get through COVID and aide recovery. Rebecca Doyle said a big dream would be to carve out space for curbside pickup, not only for restaurants but for retail as well. It is hoped that with better communication and collaboration with the township, there can be a simplification of rules, procedures, and permits. With better presentation, the curbside barrier conundrum (type, purchase and storage) might also be resolved for the upcoming season.

Jeff Beck moved to support the Survive and Thrive initiative as presented by Matt Silverman. Jaji Packard seconded. Motion passed with two abstentions.

b. 2021 Six-Month Work Plan

Lisa Johnson presented the six-month work plan as a guiding light of things to stay on course from now until June.

- Goal A – Support and ensure completion of strategic plan and marketing campaign. Objectives 1-4 to include finalizing report draft, rollout and tracking plan.
- Goal B – Work with town council to implement survive and thrive initiatives. Objectives 1-3: receive a commitment by township for 50% of 'asks' to be ready for warmer weather months. Apply for and win one new grant.
- Goal C – Implement new marketing campaign. Objectives 1-3: complete a draft campaign for approval at the February board meeting; coordinate all marketing activities with township and Montclair Business Association efforts. Launch campaign by March 1.

c. 2021 Committees

Jaji Packard said we have eight committees, plus the strategic plan working committee chaired by Matt Silverman, which all need to be active. She reminded board members that they are required to be on at least one committee. She would like to get every committee set and up and running right away. The BID also encourages non-board members who have a special talent in that area to serve on a committee, which can lead as a gateway to serving on the actual board. All information regarding boards and committees will be posted on Basecamp.

VI. TREASURERS REPORT

Jaji Packard reported that the BID ended 2020 healthy financially. She discussed an issue with the 2020 assessment: the council approved a \$726,010 assessment, which is \$60,250 more than our budgeted amount. The options are to vote to return the funds, or to accept them. There was discussion regarding the problems of redistributing the funds back to the stakeholders, or accepting them and putting the money back into community projects, thus paying it forward.

Jaji Packard moved to accept the 2020 MCBID Assessment as unanimously voted upon by Montclair Town Council. Matt Silverman seconded. Motion passed with one abstention.

The PPP is currently still carried as a loan. In addition to the \$100,000 MSNJ grant, the BID was the recipient of an additional \$762,392 in federal CARES funds. In order to qualify for this grant, the funds had to be spent by December 31. It will be used for Montclair Public Library educational programs, Antony Whittaker Salon trainings, Storefront Mastery training, the BID website, Altera Web services, our Strategic Planning initiative, Polaris vehicle, the Fresh Air public art program, off-duty police security for events, a data analyst to provide a solid picture of our constituent businesses, as well as the 130 microgrants issued to district businesses.

Jason Gleason reported that everyone who received the microgrants was incredibly thankful to the BID, not only for the funds but for making the process of application so simple. Many grants went to those in the fourth ward, while other businesses interacted with the BID for the very first time. We had many joyful social media stories and posts regarding how crucial these funds were.

Jaji Packard mentioned the possibility of more grants being available later in the year, and charged the board to come up with creative ideas to use these to help the district rebound from the pandemic. She then asked for a vote to ratify the use of the current grant funding as presented.

Matt Silverman moved to approve the BID to apply for, receive, and distribute Corona Virus Relief funds from the State of New Jersey to be used to assist the BID and Montclair Center businesses to pay for COVID recovery expenses not reimbursed through other grant programs. Ashley Cyrus seconded. Motion passed with five abstentions from those who were grant recipients.

VII. COMMITTEES REPORTS

a. Nominations Committee

Nat Testa thanked all who submitted nominations for the executive committee. There was no contest for any seats, so the positions are: Lisa Johnson, president, Matt Silverman, vice-president, Jose Barriero, treasurer, Jaji Packard, secretary, and Nat Testa, assistant treasurer/secretary.

Sue Schultz moved to accept the executive committee as presented. Alescia Peyton seconded. Motion passed with one abstention.

Sue Schultz was thanked for her year as board secretary. Due to the press of business, she is not able to serve in 2021, but is happy to continue editing the minutes.

b. Executive Committee Ratification

With the resignation of two board members, Kathryn Waggener McGuire, whose business Clerestory Fine Arts has moved out of the district, and Lisa Ingersoll, who is no longer working at Montclair Film, two names were put forward to serve out these terms. If ratified, Roger Mazzeo would serve as business owner, with Jill Montague of Montclair Film taking the non-profit position.

Nat Testa moved to accept these two candidates to fill the vacant positions. Jose Barriero seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. New Board Member Orientation

Lisa Johnson mentioned that she would be conducting new board member orientations shortly. It will cover the organization's history, responsibilities and expectations. It is open to any board member who would like to attend, not just the new members.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

a. P.U.M.A. Update

Brad Segal stated that P.U.M.A. was halfway through the stakeholder interviews, (approximately two dozen so far) and would be following up with more retail/restaurant businesses next. They will be looking at documents, including things like zoning regulations, and taking a market snapshot, using 2019 as a base. He said Montclair is poised to see a better second quarter with many more businesses coming into the district, and is optimistic in regards to the third and fourth quarters, stating that Montclair is in a better position to bounce back quicker than many other towns.

As part of the discussions to date, certain themes that will shape the strategic plan

have emerged, including:

- BID does well at the basics, especially in terms of the ambassadors, and marketing.
- An area of improvement would be township relations.
- The BID and township should be more visionary, more ambitious.
- Stakeholders are concerned about vacancies.
- Stakeholders are excited about new development.
- There is concern of displacement. Could Montclair become unaffordable? If so, what safeguards can we build into this plan to prevent this.

Next steps will be to continue stakeholder interviews, and to craft an online survey in February. This survey will have broad distribution, including via social media and business networks. Also in February, P.U.M.A. will begin to look internally at the office, bylaws, and operating procedures. As the discovery phase winds down, March will see a skeletal framework of the plan, with initial ideas and goals and how they are aligning. In April the whole board will have a draft plan, for which they will provide reaction and feedback. Realistically P.U.M.A. is looking at May to have everything wrapped up, with possibly even an in-person visit, depending on how the pandemic challenges are at that time.

Brad Segal also mentioned that P.U.M.A. can be a great resource in grant spending, saying that they might be able to identify some quick wins for the district.

X. OPEN DISCUSSION – New Ideas, Comments, Questions

Jaji Packard said she was very excited to be the board's new secretary and is looking forward to learning Basecamp. She reminded the board to regularly sign-in and use the platform once it is completely rolled out.

Carley Graham Garcia addressed the board, saying she has left her position at Montclair State University and accepted a new job in public policy at Amazon. She said she loves being part of the BID community and feels she has a lot to offer, especially since her new position will involve interaction with Hell's Kitchen and the Fifth Avenue BIDs, but she wanted to be forthcoming and transparent.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Rebecca Doyle moved to adjourn the meeting. Alescia Peyton seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

February 10 • 7:00 p.m.

Zoom