

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting
Feb. 11, 2021 – 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
Zoom

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

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

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

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. Rev. Allen Shelton – Good Success Academies
Jason Gleason spoke on behalf of Rev. Allen Shelton of the Good Success Academies regarding the non-profit organization's work linking disadvantaged high schoolers with job opportunities; paid internships, and providing work-development classes.

III. ADOPTION OF JANUARY MINUTES

Matt Silverman moved to approve the January minutes.
Jaji Packard seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. Clean, Safe & Green Report
Jason Gleason reported on the ambassador (clean, safe and green) team, seen everywhere on the streets. He thanked and congratulated the entire ambassador team, but especially Dylan Blackwell, ambassador supervisor. Dylan Blackwell was the first employee hired back in 2002 and has dedicated 19 years to the district. The BID continually gets comments from stakeholders saying what a great and helpful person he is, and a most dedicated worker, doing a meticulous job. Jason Gleason said Dylan Blackwell is not recognized enough, and that he is a huge asset and an invaluable member of the team. Jason Gleason acknowledged the other members of the team, expressing a need to legitimize the job they do, saying the four members do the work of eight people.

Jason Gleason continued his report:

- Snow removal has been a huge part of the ambassadors' activities lately. They took care of all district intersections, plowing, shoveling and salting, while also providing assistance to some business owners. They cleared the stairway in the North Fullerton parking deck, besides clearing the new BID office's sidewalk. While not in their usual purview, they also cleared four bus stops, pathways and shelters.
- The illuminated snowflake trestle over Bloomfield Avenue is another safety issue that had to be dealt with. Tremendous wind gusts broke the snowflake causing half of it to dangle precariously over the street. The fire department and John Herman assisted in swiftly removing the dangerous part. The BID will take down the remaining half next week.
- As to the green aspect of the team, Dylan Blackwell has already been speaking with Pat Filoso from Hillcrest Farms regarding the spring planting in their greenhouses for more than 95 hanging baskets which will be installed around the district in May.
- Lastly, if grant funds are made available, the green team would like the board to consider purchasing a stronger V8 truck. Currently, they have a sport truck that is not strong enough for the needs of the district. Something more powerful is needed for the hauling, plowing, and salt spreading work they do. A water tank for the Polaris vehicle is also greatly needed to help in the watering of all district planters and baskets.

b. Basecamp Tutorial

Jason Gleason thanked everyone for starting to interact with Basecamp. He reiterated how simple this platform is to use, having already sampled Slack, Teams, and a few others. This is a much more streamlined process, with multiple group/committee tabs and document repository. He then gave a thorough overview and demonstration of the platform.

V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

a. 2021 Committees

Jaji Packard reported that all committees are up and running. She asked committee chairs to input calendar dates on Basecamp so meetings are not double booked.

VI. TREASURERS REPORT

Jose Barriero reported that he had reviewed the P & L and that the BID is in very good fiscal health, starting the year with overages of \$321,000. He suggests that the budget committee, which usually begins work in September, actually meet in the spring to address changes in this year's budget due to grants. He also suggested one member from each committee sit on the budget committee so that every committee's needs can be identified. Lastly, he recommended investing in the BID's own people by spending money on staff training and conferences.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Marketing Committee

Jose Barreiro reported already having had one Marketing Committee meeting with another scheduled for next week. He said we must bolster ongoing activities. The marketing plan will be aligned with and supportive of P.U.M.A.'s strategic plan. BID marketing must also be aligned with Township; it must all tie in together.

Jose Barriero also stated we need a strong B2B marketing campaign to support property owners. It is a different message from our regular social media postings. Also key is communicating with out-of-district businesses, including regional and national brands, letting them know Montclair Center is a great place to build a business. We will also pitch a *NY Times* story, and focus on Twitter, including posts on commercial real estate vacancies.

b. Nominations Committee

Nat Testa stated that Carly Graham Garcia has resigned from the board. She recommended Elizabeth Rich, a locally active Montclair resident and director of strategic partnerships at Montclair State University, to fill her unexpired one-year term. Discussion took place regarding this nomination.

**Nat Testa moved to accept the nominating committee's recommendation of Elizabeth Rich to the board. Dave Placek seconded.
Motion passed unanimously.**

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. 2021 MSNJ Grant Ask

Jason Gleason presented a very preliminary wish-list detailing a large \$4.2 million grant ask, in response to a request from MSNJ. He would like to collaborate on this grant framework with the Township's planning and legal departments, town councilors, design firms and developers. There is a lot of room for revision, but the ask could include:

Direct Business Assistance

- Business start-up grants – bolster recruitment efforts for store fronts.
- Pedlet/parklet program on Bloomfield Avenue - (10-12 businesses on a first come first served basis) all to have a uniformed look.
- Downtown parking – purchasing all street-level parking for one year. Help control parking environments.
- Employee parking program – alleviate 40-50% of daily on-street parking.

Business Incubation/Retention

- Lackawanna Plaza shipping container village - recruit businesses into town.
- Incubator pop-up grants - linked in with brick-and-mortar grants.

Downtown Physical Improvements

- Church Street Fountain Plaza
- Facades and window projects
- Wayfinding signage
- District alleyways and lighting improvements – update 50-year-old lights with LEDs. All poles to have electrical power for holiday lighting, etc.
- Hanging baskets

Additional Staffing

- Project manager/ambassador/data collection

IX. OLD BUSINESS

a. New Board Member Orientation

Lisa Johnson has scheduled a board orientation Zoom meeting for February 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m. This is open to all board members, but mandatory for those new to the board.

b. P.U.M.A. Update

Brad Segal stated that the discovery phase is practically complete, and they will pivot into the strategic plan itself. He said he learned a lot from each board meeting and thanked the members for their candidness. P.U.M.A. is hoping to wrap up work in May, with possibly a visit to Montclair in the spring.

J.J. Folsom reported that they had conducted approximately 50 interviews with about 12 to go. He discussed emerging themes such as being creative/visionary; more Township collaboration; excitement at new development; marketing to neighboring cities. He said some of the emerging BID priorities were filling vacancies and marketing the arts community as a regional destination. Safety along Bloomfield Avenue, improved parking experiences and streamlining zoning and code issues were some emerging district priorities.

Andrea Buglione reported on initial market impressions: residential boom with home prices jumping 10%; worry about being priced out/displacement, especially in the fourth ward.

Yvette Freeman spoke regarding her initial clean and safe impressions and was alarmed by how little credit and value the ambassadors are given. She reported a lack of formalized systems and benchmarks in place for the team, with more collaboration needed with the Township. There needs to be boundaries established with a baseline services agreement in writing with the Township, with equal sharing of responsibilities. Being 'green' is more than just planting but includes sustainable machinery and practices. She mentioned the need for additional staff to properly serve the district.

Lastly, the online survey is almost ready for distribution. We need to send it far and wide, to business and property owners, residents, anyone who eats, shops and

works in Montclair, and to adjacent towns. P.U.M.A. has offered gift card raffle incentives (with Beyond Main Montclair businesses) to those who complete the survey. The next steps will be to complete interviews, finalize a market snapshot, and draft a plan outline for presentation in April.

X. **OPEN DISCUSSION** – New Ideas, Comments, Questions
None

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**
Sue Schultz moved to adjourn the meeting. Ashley Cyrus seconded.
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:
March 10 • 7:00 p.m.
Zoom