

# **MONTCLAIR CENTER BID**

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

**Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting**  
**June 9, 2021 - 7:00 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.**  
**Zoom**

Board members in attendance: Celestina Ando, Jeff Beck, Richard Cronk, David Cummings, Ashley Cyrus, Lisa Johnson, Roger Mazzeo, Jill Montague, Jaji Packard, Alescia Peyton, Elizabeth Rich, Sue Schultz, Matt Silverman, Nat Testa

Absent: Jose Barreiro, Jennifer Bobal, David Placek, Hipolito Pollantis, Lori Price Abrams, Robert Squires

Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney

P.U.M.A. Staff: Andrea Buglione, Yvette Freeman, Brad Segal

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

Lisa Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **III. ADOPTION OF MAY MINUTES**

**Jeff Beck moved to approve the May minutes.**

**Richard Cronk seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **a. Clean, Safe & Green Report**

Jason Gleason reported that the team had picked up a half ton of garbage this month. There are multiple collection complaints for the 300-400 block of Bloomfield Avenue with garbage not being collected or collection coming on the wrong day. Jason is working with business and property owners and the DPW on this. The BID ambassadors took care of the garbage for this area, but it is causing rat problems. Rats are also nesting in the construction area of the Midtown Deck.

There is a need for signage at the new crosswalk over Bloomfield Avenue at Seymour Street where there have been several near misses. Signage is also needed in front of Ascend at 395 Bloomfield Avenue to avoid tripping and falling due to removed sidewalk bricks.

All 46 hibiscus plants and 192 lime plants are being watered daily and twice a day during 90-degree plus weather. The new water tank is scheduled to arrive soon.

- b. Updates:
  - i. Church Street Circle  
The BID is working with O’Boyle’s Brookside Garden Center who will provide and plant all the flowers (annuals) for the year.
  - ii. Jazz Festival  
Jazz House Kids has given proposals to the Township Finance Committee, who will make a final determination if the Jazz Festival is viable.
  - iii. Springboard Start-Up Grants  
The application portal for the grant was supposed to close June 1. However, due to a glitch on the Springboard website and application problems, only nine complete applications have been received. The BID has spoken with numerous applicants, and have extended the deadline window by a couple of weeks.
  - iv. New BID Website  
Grant money was used to fund a new website and is in the final stages of roll out. The back end of the new site is much easier to use, along with having designated stakeholder-specific logins. The site will be unveiled in a couple of weeks and be in beta testing for a month or so. Once complete, there will be tutorials for the board.
  - v. Small Business COVID Recovery Taskforce  
Jason Gleason is still meeting regularly with the Small Business COVID Recovery Taskforce. A Township-wide directory is almost ready for unveiling.

It is believed the Bloomfield Avenue Construction project is slated to commence in July. The Township will be the conduit for the construction planning.

**V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

- a. Transitioning to a Post-COVID Headspace: Where are we at?  
Lisa Johnson commented that a lot has changed in the last year and a half. She asked board members how their businesses are faring. Jeff Beck was excited to announce that East Side Mags is moving to a new location on Bloomfield Avenue later this year. Discussion took place regarding in-store mask wearing, and which businesses were keeping the mandates imposed. Alescia Peyton mentioned her business opened during COVID, and business had picked up somewhat after the banner portrait initiative. She is excited about the engagement of Lackawanna Plaza.

**VI. TREASURERS REPORT**

Jason Gleason reported on behalf of Jose Barriero saying the Budget and Finance Committee has to have a meeting within the month to make budget modifications.

**VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. Visual Improvement Committee  
Jaji Packard reported the tree bed contest is encouraging lots of beautiful plantings in the district. The planting at the Church Street circle has made a huge difference.

The rainbow crosswalk project is temporarily on hold until we hear about the Bloomfield Avenue construction. Fresh Air has new installations and is also working on four new window installations at Lackawanna Plaza. A ribbon-cutting there in conjunction with Make Music Day, and a glass-blowing demonstration by Glass Roots Newark, is slated for June 21.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

### P.U.M.A. Strategic Plan

Brad Segal was delighted to present the final strategic plan. He praised Matt Silverman for doing a great job herding the working group through the process, and that it was a real collaborative effort, especially during the pandemic. The executive summary should be shared publicly and with the Township. The plan encourages recruiting new businesses and improving parking. It gives a market snapshot of the accelerated desirability of Montclair, and the surge in entrepreneurship. He detailed the revised vision and mission statements along with goals, objectives and tactics.

Yvette Freeman spoke to Goal A: Maintain a downtown that is clean, safe and green by providing a high and consistent standard of maintenance within the district. A baseline services agreement is key in clarifying the BID's responsibilities and enhanced services. Documenting work so benchmarks and metrics can be established is also important.

Andrea Buglione spoke to Goal B: Employ marketing and communications approaches that promote the district. Engage all stakeholders by raising increased awareness of the BID and its functions. There is a need to reevaluate event production. Goal C: Broaden support for business and property owners by having the BID as a go-to resource for investors and entrepreneurs, while addressing vacancies and curating a vibrant business mix.

Brad Segal spoke to Goal D: Enhance and create public spaces to provide enjoyable experiences throughout the downtown by establishing a welcoming and accessible space for all, together with arts-related programming. Goal E: Work with the Township and other partners to be an effective advocate for the district by establishing a collaborative culture with the Township, and leverage BID resources to solve challenges.

Organizational implications on how to achieve these goals include hiring a Business Relationship Manager and a Data and Special Projects Manager. These positions will help service the four activity centers within the BID:

- Clean, safe and green
- Marketing and communications
- Business support and economic development
- Public space enhancement and activation

The strategic plan also includes recommendations on the rolls of board members and staff, as well as increasing the budget for the BID with revenue diversification and reviewing the rate of assessment.

Discussion took place regarding the final plan. Consensus is the plan is a well-written, comprehensive document. The baseline agreement will help strengthen the partnership with Township.

Jason Gleason thanked the board and P.U.M.A. for all their hard work. P.U.M.A. delivered a fine document, and were a pleasure to work with. We are excited to implement the plan and utilize the tools given to us.

**Jeff Beck made a motion to accept the P.U.M.A. Strategic Plan as presented. Ashley Cyrus seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

Jennifer Bobal has resigned from the board since she is relocating her business out of the district. Lisa Johnson thanked her for her years on the board, especially the great work she did with the Executive and Visual Improvements Committees.

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

Jaji Packard spoke about the upcoming construction on Bloomfield Avenue and how we can help mitigate any problems for our businesses. Establishing good communication is key, so there are no surprises. We need to get a true start date from the county, and determine how the construction will roll out (north/south, block by block?) Schematics/drawings would be useful to help manage expectations. How will accessibility be affected? How will restaurants handle Door Dash/Uber Eats? Will there be a shuttle for pedestrians? Unfortunately, the Midtown Deck is not slated to be completed until October/November.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Sue Schultz moved to adjourn the meeting. Alescia Peyton seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Sept 8 • 7:00 p.m.**