

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

**Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting
November 16, 2022 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
In Person at BID Office or via Zoom**

Board members in attendance: Celestina Ando, Jeff Beck, Ashley Cyrus, Emer Featherstone, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, Ernst Goldman, Matt Horrigan, Jill Montague, Jaji Packard, Hipolito Pollantis, Elizabeth Rich, Nat Testa, Kristen Zachares

Absent: David Cummings, David Harrison, David Placek, Lori Price Abrams, Robert Squires,

Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney, Judy Ross

Guests: Danny Kim, Rachel Grochowski, Natalie Haddad, Ray Ketchum, Julian Payne, Matt Silverman, Ira Smith

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Jaji Packard called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF OCTOBER MINUTES

Jaji Packard moved to approve the October minutes.

Emer Featherstone seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The board and staff introduced themselves along with guests: Rachel Grochowski, owner of RHG Architecture & Design, Danny Kim of Royal Bagel and DiRasa: House of Diversified Arts, Natalie Haddad owner of Monty, Julian Payne, GM of the MC Hotel, Ray Ketchum from Magic Door Recording, and Ira Smith from Smith Maron Architecture + Interiors, LLC.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (*Jason Gleason*)

A. New and noteworthy in Montclair Center

Business openings included Nami Nori Sushi, Gen & Rev Barbershop in the 4th Ward, and Almost Ready Records set for a soft opening Friday. Salute has closed, but there is active interest in this space.

Township relations have improved over the last couple of weeks. Kudos to interim manager Brian Scantlebury, who has been very responsive; many initiatives from the last three years are now moving forward. Gary Obszarny, Manny Germano, and Katya Wowk have been in constant communication. Weekly Township meetings, discussing an array of issues, including sanitation, parking, signage etc., have been very positive.

Winter Wonderland at the Wellmont Arts Plaza begins November 26, with Shop Small Saturday, and continues the following two Saturdays. A 30ft Christmas tree and a menorah will be on the stage area of the Plaza. Santa and Mrs. Claus, characters, live music, activities, and crafts with our non-profits, are all part of the festivities. A holiday shopping map and gift guide will be available along with a digital copy linked to our website.

The in-house marketing/social media push to highlight the event has been enormously successful. The BID reel reach was almost 7,000 with 174 shares, totally crushing numbers from Montclair Girl and Baristanet. The BID November newsletter was sent to more than 12,500 subscribers, with an open rate of 41.3% serving a wide reach.

Foot traffic numbers from Placer indicates more than 6.68 million unique visits over the last 12 months, which is just under pre-pandemic levels. It continues to trend upwards and includes 1.3 million unique visits from Montclair residents within a one-mile radius. Revisit numbers are healthy and include one million visits from residents 29.29 times a year, outpacing Madison Avenue BID in NYC.

V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (*Jaji Packard*)

- A. 2022 Year in Review slated for January
Ballot results will be announced at the annual board meeting in December. A 2022 Year in Review will take place in January, as well as announcing the new executive committee.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT (*Celestina Ando*)

- A. Proposed 2023 BID Budget, questions and discussion, vote
The Financial Affairs Committee put together a budget presented last month. It includes an increase of 6.8% over 2022, which is in line with inflation. The committee will meet in December to discuss the reserves.

**Jaji Packard moved to accept the proposed 2023 budget as presented.
Matt Horrigan second. Motion passed unanimously.**

VII. RECRUITMENT AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (*Jaji Packard*)

- A. A brief two or three sentence introduction is needed for the ballot from everyone who wishes to run, please send via email or Basecamp to Jaji by the end of the weekend. Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa and Kristen Zachares will shepherd a survey monkey regarding nominations for officers for 2023, and put together a ballot.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS (*Jason Gleason, Discussion*)

- A. Welcome to Judy Ross, our new Director of the District Marketing Organization
Judy comes with a wealth of experience including work with the Meadowlands Sports Complex, and 21 and 16 years in the hotel and tourism industries respectively. She is current president of the NJDMO and Division of NJTIA board. So far, she has been executing the DMO grant contract, applied for membership

to the National Bus Association, and is working on new branding for Destination Montclair, together with a large-scale marketing plan. She will provide monthly updates to the board regarding the DMO.

B. Brief update on CDS Ambassador Program

The first three weeks with CDS have been great so far. A Township meeting with CDS and Jason was terrific. Principals, Jerry Blankman and Matt Christensen are very hands-on, and provide multiple daily updates and photos.

Danny Kim commented on the sewer problems on Lackawanna. Jason said these are, in part, caused by incorrectly installed grease traps from restaurants. Business owner awareness, enforcement of ordinances for cleaning, and need for proper maintenance are all required. Township is aware of this issue and working on updating code and ordinance language.

IX. **NEW BUSINESS** (*Ira Smith, Discussion*)

A. Introduction to the Township's Lackawanna Redevelopment Plan

Ira Smith from Smith Maran Architecture + Interiors, LLC., redevelopment design consultants, gave a presentation regarding the proposed plan for Lackawanna Plaza. Smith works in conjunction with the Township's Economic Development Committee, but not directly for the Township or for BDP Holdings, LLC., the site's developer. Smith is looking for public reaction and comments to the plan.

The plaza is an eight-acre site (double the size of the Seymour Street project) with a major historic structure at its heart. BDP Holdings has partnered with internationally known firms for a truly collaborative product. They went through all records and public hearings regarding the site to understand what was needed/wanted for the site.

The plan was presented in form-based code; 2D planning (words rather than conceptualizing) transects from rural gradients, transitioning to urban. This type of plan needs involvement of a lot of stakeholders and demands a high level of explanation because it is tabula rasa. The need is to create a true destination and orientation for the town.

Logistically, the council will introduce the plan. The planning board then has 45 days to review the plan before it is presented to the historical preservation committee to review. When the plan is adopted by the council the developer then has to bring a site plan application to the Township.

Smith reviewed the map. It is an atypical site, broken down into sections. There is an 11-foot grade difference over the whole site, which is bowl-shaped. The plan includes setbacks from the edge of the street and step backs of the buildings. The tallest inner most structure being 87ft.

The plan includes forty pages of design standards, including in-depth analysis and reflections regarding such things as addressing the historic preservation of the site, solar shadow analysis, massing/density and walkability.

Proposed project conceptual images gave ground level views, which are very important, as this is how the public will interact with the buildings. Walkability was studied, including points of access on Glenridge Avenue through the site. The plans include a linear park, a pocket park, and a grocery store. There are proposals for two stories of parking above the grocery store, including space for day-to-day uses, and festivals. A horseshoe driveway for unloading, piazza, water fountain, art wall and open bays for pop-up shops are also part of the plan. BDP Holdings has purchased and will restore a railcar from that time period and will possibly leave the original stanchions, as well as the horse water trough.

The timeline for the project is unpredictable. It may take four months at the planning board, and six months for a working drawing, before the developer can file for a permit. Construction may take another two years, although the hope is to build for the supermarket first.

Some comments that were raised included:

- A strong beautiful project at a derelict location.
- Ability to bring people further into the fourth ward.
- How will construction affect local residents?
- Concern regarding underground waterways/sewer.
- Past problems with repeated electrical outages when Pathmark was open.

X. OPEN DISCUSSION – New Ideas, Comments, Questions

XI. ADJOURNMENT

**Jaji Packard moved to adjourn the meeting. Jill Montague seconded.
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.**

NEXT MEETING:

December 21, 2022 • 7:00 p.m.