

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Board Meeting
October 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
In Person at BID Office 26 Lackawanna Plaza or via Zoom

Board members in attendance: Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, Ernst Goldman, Rachael Grochowski, Natalie Haddad, Matthew Horrigan, Ray Ketchem, Jacob Nieman, David Placek, Matt Silverman

Absent: David Cummings, Emer Featherstone, Jill Montague, Jaji Packard, Lori Price Abrams, Liz Rich, Robert Squires

Staff: Jason Gleason, Abhishake Shah, Aysa Gordon

Guest: Lisa Johnson

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Vice President Ernst Goldman called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. He ran the meeting in Jaji Packard's absence.

II. ADOPTION OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES

Ernst Goldman moved to approve the September minutes as presented, and Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Johnson, former Board President, longtime owner of Culture Couture, and Environmental Affairs Coordinator for Montclair Township, spoke about some grants and initiatives she is working on.

Lisa stated that Montclair Township was awarded a grant from the US Forestry Service for one million dollars to plant trees across the township over the next five years. Funds will also be used to partner with Montclair State University's Green Team, which will focus on education and outreach about Street Trees, provide a Geospatial Mapping Services (GIS) map of the trees, and offer tree care, among other things.

Lisa also spoke about applying for an energy outreach program through PSE&G for the commercial sector, which is offering free energy audits and rebates. She is looking forward to partnering with Montclair Center BID to help get the word out to our businesses to help them save money on energy bills and make them more energy efficient.

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

A. New and Noteworthy in Montclair Center

Montclair Center opened two store openings and closings in September: Bond Vet and MTS Massage; Lululemon and &Son closed. Montclair Indoor Golf Club will be replacing &Son. Montclair Indoor Golf is a golf simulation activity center that is a unique business for Montclair because it is in the activity and entertainment sector. Details of Lululemon's replacement are to follow.

October store openings include Libelula Bakery & Cafe, GB Art Gallery, Iris Imprint Books, and Keycuts Barbershop - a relocation from outside the BID on Glen Ridge Avenue.

CDS Report: CDS trends show that overall litter in the district is trending downward. This month, there were 140 bags of litter, lower than usual. Garbage overflow trash bags are down from 180 in August to 130 bags in September. Pedestrian-generated litter is also trending downward, with 363 bags collected in August and 270 bags this month.

Conversely, improper dumping, curbside bags left on non-pickup days, is trending upward, from 518 bags to 568 bags collected from month to month. Illegal dumping has been trending upward since we started tracking it about seven months ago when the number of bags was in the 300s. Illegally dumped trash bags will no longer be picked up by our Montclair Center BID ambassadors as of next week.

The number of stickers, tags, and unsolicited ads on light poles and within public areas is also trending significantly higher at 244 pieces this month, up from 160 pieces last month.

CDS has positively contributed to Montclair Center in many ways. At The Jazz Festival, CDS helped to remove 75 bags of trash. New garbage can liners have been added to 25 of our 32 district's garbage cans. Tulips are being planted into planters with covers placed over them for the winter. Fall mulch has been put down as well.

Marketing Update: In the past 30 days, 83 new followers on Instagram have increased, elevating our follower count to 13,900- surpassing our yearly goal. In efforts to stay mindful and consider the triggering effects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we refrained from posting the Zombie Walk reel. Before that decision to omit that reel, there was an audience increase of 14% year over year, and afterward, the increase was more modest at 2.1%.

Among the 25 posts we shared, reels garnered the most extensive reach. Reels are continuing to trend higher views than traditional posts. Our highest-ranking reels from the last month have been the Libelula opening, the Art for All ribbon cutting, and the Little Treasures expansion.

Facebook yielded significant improvement across all categories. There was a 1.5% increase in reaching unique accounts. Page impression garnered a 3.2% boost.

Overall engagement surged an impressive 18.7%. Ultimately, our Facebook account gained 20 new page likes, increasing our follower count to 12,675.

In November, Flavors of NJ will return for the sixth time to feature three more restaurants. The owners of Zeugma, Gioia Mia, and LaFontaine will be featured in long format videos at their restaurants to talk about menu items, drinks, and other offerings. Because of its popularity as a “restaurant town,” Montclair has been featured by Flavors of New Jersey multiple times.

Experience Montclair: In the first two months of its presence on social media, Experience Montclair has over one thousand followers. Tomorrow is the launch of the beautiful new Experience Montclair website with categories including restaurants, art scene, Montclair history, parks and trails, and event spaces, among others. Notably, there will be a section for an events calendar where our members can submit events happening at their businesses. Another rotating, special section will be dedicated to local celebrities and well-known residents and their idea of a perfect weekend in Montclair. The Membership drive for Experience Montclair starts tomorrow, with a promotion and email blast in Montclair.

Vision Zero: Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility. The Vision Zero Taskforce is launching rapidly with an agreement with our consultant, Laura Torchio. The Township will contribute \$11,000 to the Vision Zero Taskforce for six months, during which Montclair Center BID will be the administrator of the funds.

eFM Partnership: Montclair Center has partnered with eFM and its subsidiary Hubquarter. Hubquarter is a space-sharing organization that identifies underutilized business spaces for the purposes of co-working space. This app-driven connector technology allowing people with different skill sets to join forces for their work needs. The participating businesses that are involved gain revenue share. Montclair Center BID is helping to identify potential spaces and alert them to this unique opportunity.

Jason Gleason, Executive Director of Montclair Center, and Justin Copenhaver from Urality, will present at The NJ Downtown Conference on Thursday, October 19th. They will discuss big data, the importance of having data for a downtown area, and what that means for downtown management. Data affects everything from grant writing, marketing, and overall decision-making.

Jason answered Jacob Nieman’s question regarding the visit frequency of Montclair residents. From data from residents within one square mile, visit frequency was at 27.47 per year with an average dwell time of 91 minutes. In comparison, the general visit frequency was 4.92 per year with an average dwell time of 142 minutes. From this data, Jason concluded that many residents are visiting at a very high frequency.

V. **TREASURER’S REPORT** (Matt Horrigan) (attachments forthcoming)

A. Financial Review

Budget 2023 YTD:

- The 2023 Budget projected additional revenue from Main Streets. Main Street intended to put out two grants but ended up putting out only one. We will not be investing \$40,000 on the plants as originally planned due to the shortfall.
- We exceeded our marketing budget by \$12,700 but could balance these unforeseen expenses due to a \$12,000 saving in our Events and Programming budget.
- General Administration faces budgetary challenges driven by increased software, travel, and website costs.
- Our overall budget variance is \$30-\$35,000 over, but Director Gleason anticipates closing this fiscal year with a balanced budget.

Budget 2024: Matt Horrigan stated that this is the time for the Board to contribute ideas for new spending for next year's new budget. The budget assessment will be increased by 2% or \$21,000, YTD. David Placek asked about increasing the BID assessment, mentioning the overall value of the work done.

B. Introduction and Discussion: The 2024 BID Budget

Director Jason Gleason encourages everyone to review the draft and directs questions to Matt, the project manager. He mentions a 2% increase in assessments, resulting in a \$21,000 overall increase and a \$56,000 boost in revenue. The committee aimed for conservatism, recognizing the challenges of balancing desires for program expansion with maintaining financial responsibility. Jason emphasizes the need to secure sponsorship and advertising income and highlights the increased focus on grants. Despite the challenges, he expresses confidence in meeting the budget goals and commends the committee's efforts in achieving a well-rounded budget that aligns with the organization's strategic plan.

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (*Ernst Goldman*)

- A. The Meet and Greet Date was changed to November 9 at Montclair Film, 505 Bloomfield Ave, from 6 pm – 8 pm, with a short presentation from Jason. Beyond Main, Hubquarter, and The Township will also be presenting there.
- B. Board Member Recruiting (*Kristen Zachares*)

Kristen encouraged everyone to investigate their networks for board recruitment purposes. Ernst created a beautiful flyer to encourage business owners to consider joining the board. Restaurateurs, lawyers, realtors, and fourth-ward business owners were encouraged to apply to create more balance. There are three business seats available, with one nominated thus far. Kristen mentioned recruiting second-floor business owners for the board, and Jason agreed they would also be welcome.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Rats

The Sanitation Department, Code Enforcement, the Health Department, the Department of Sustainability, and Montclair Center BID sat down two weeks ago to discuss the rat problem. Code Enforcement sent a strongly worded certified letter to property owners about closing garbage can lids, ensuring garbage is inside a can/container, and placing garbage out at the correct times. Code Enforcement has also sent out a flurry of citations for garbage violations. Montclair Center will work with the Health Department to email our stakeholders about how best to keep our garbage clean and rats-free.

The Health Department will exterminate more rats and set more traps. We have been looking into purchasing rat contraceptives. The contraceptive could be bought and sold at cost or just gifted to the businesses outright. If one hundred businesses participated in rat contraception, the cost would be \$1,300. An unstressed rat pair can yield up to 1200 rats in a season. Matt Silverman mentioned that it makes sense for all involved parties to have some plan in place for March and April so that we can make a dent in the population leading up to the summer.

B. Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Plan – what’s next?

The Town Council approved the redevelopment plan last Tuesday, outlining guardrails. The next steps are township site plan application, testimony hearings, and years of planning board meetings. Rachel suggested the BID work more closely with the town and possibly request a seat on the planning board.

C. International Downtown Association Conference

Director Jason Gleason and President Jaji Packard attended the 69th International Downtown Association (IDA) Annual Conference & Marketplace in Chicago, Illinois, on October 4-6, 2023.

President Packard and Director Gleason discussed meeting with Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) at the conference, attending a “Top Ten Global Trends Affecting Downtowns” session, and possibly partnering with PUMA to host a Zoom seminar inviting members of the community, including constituents, planning board, zoning, parking, property owners and stakeholders.

D. Introduction to *Unify and Engage*

Justin Copenhaver from Urality has collaborated with Director Gleason and BID staff to develop a one-of-a-kind District Management and Economic Development CRM platform. This software is both front-facing with tools for communication, event management, and directory services but also a database of stakeholders, property records, business records, and district assets.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. We are introducing our new stakeholder newsletter!
Director Jason Motioned the table discussion due to time constraints.

IX. OPEN DISCUSSION – New Ideas, Comments, Questions (TIME PERMITTING)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Next full board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 7 p.m.

**MONTCLAIR CENTER BID
2024 Proposed Budget**

	Approved 2023 Budget	2024 Proposed Budget	2024 Proposed v. 2023 Approved
Revenue			
BID Assessment	\$ 1,018,290	\$ 1,039,907	2% \$ 21,617
Banner Income	5,000	3,000	(2,000)
Grant Income	265,000		
DMO		144,000	144,000
Main Street & Other		105,000	
Sponsorship Income (DMO)		30,000	
Advertising Income (DMO)		20,000	
Interest Income	75	2,400	2,325
Rental Income	9,600	10,080	480
Total Revenue	\$ 1,297,965	\$ 1,354,387	\$ 166,422
Maintenance & Improvements			
QOL	\$ -	-	-
Third-Party (QOL Staffing, Sweeper, Vehicle Maintenance, WC)	283,639	312,003	28,364
Banners	-	-	-
BID Vehicle Maint. & Expenses	-	-	-
Beautification and Landscaping	64,500	24,500	(40,000)
Public Art	10,000	10,000	-
QOL Equipment/Supplies	-	-	-
Sidewalk Sweeper Maintenance & Insurance	-	-	-
Total Maintenance & Improvements	358,139	346,503	(11,636)
Destination Marketing Organization Costs			
Administration		16,800	16,800
Advertising		32,000	32,000
Marketing		51,000	51,000
Research		20,000	20,000
Salaries			-
Tourism and Sales Coordinator		-	-
Trade Shows		11,500	11,500
Website		12,700	12,700
Tourism and Sales Coordinator	119,300	36,000	(83,300)
Advertising and Marketing	107,000		
Software and Technology	15,000		
Travel and Meetings	2,000	-	-
Total Destination Marketing Organization Costs	243,300	180,000	60,700
Events & Programs			
Program Staff	165,941	208,517	42,576
Constituent Support Programs			-
Stakeholder Education & Classes	2,500	-	(2,500)
Business Marketing	38,000	40,000	2,000
Event Municipal Expenses (Extra Duty Solutions)	5,000	5,000	-
Internal Event Programming	8,500	10,000	1,500
Support Event Programming	62,500	80,000	17,500
Total Events & Programming	282,441	343,517	61,076
General Administration			
Executive & Administrative Staff	185,360	193,466	8,106
Contracted Services	46,800	41,000	(5,800)
Accounting	18,000	18,000	-
Audit Services	9,300	8,000	(1,300)
Computer and Software	4,200	6,000	1,800
Conferences, Meals, and Meetings	10,000	15,000	5,000
Copying & Printing	2,000	2,500	500
Dues & Subscription	3,000	3,000	-
Graphic Design	3,500	3,500	-
Insurance	10,000	12,000	2,000
IT Support Services	1,500	2,000	500
Legal Fees	10,000	10,000	-
Miscellaneous	1,000	2,000	1,000

	Approved 2023 Budget	2024 Proposed Budget	2024 Proposed v. 2023 Approved
Office Supplies	5,000	5,000	-
Payroll Service Fees	2,500	2,500	-
Phone & Internet	3,500	4,000	500
Postage	250	250	-
Professional Development	2,500	2,500	-
Rent	43,000	44,290	1,290
Utilities	7,000	7,000	-
Web Hosting	1,000	1,000	-
Total General Administrative	369,410	383,006	13,596
Strategic Initiatives	\$ -	\$ 67,500	\$ 67,500
Capital Reserves Transfer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 1,253,290	\$ 1,320,527	67,237
Net Income (Change in Net Assets)	\$ 44,675	\$ 33,860	\$ (10,815)
Amortization & Depreciation Expense	\$ 44,675	33,860	(10,815)
Net Income (with A/D expense)	\$ -	\$ 0	0

Notes: