

# MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

## GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Board Meeting  
November 15, 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, Natalie Haddad, Matt Horrigan, Ray Ketchem, Jill Montague, Jacob Nieman, Jaji Packard, Liz Rich, Matt Silverman, Kristen Zachares

Absent: David Cummings, Emer Featherstone, Rachael Grochowski, David Placek and Lori Price Abrams

Staff: Abhishake Shah, Aysa Gordon

Guest: Mary Cumella, Brian Silver, Lisa Johnson, Neil Grabowski, Nat Testa, Genevieve Wrenn Bryant, Stacy File, and Te’Nijah Bussey

### I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

### II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES (*attachments*)

Amended: Present Jaji Packard noted a misspelling, and Treasurer Matt Horrigan noted that the attached proposed budget had two calculating errors in the variance columns

Minutes from the October Board meeting with amendments were unanimously approved.

### III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

President Jaji Packard opened the meeting for public comment and welcomed those attending the meeting who were interested in joining the board.

### IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT (*Assistant Director Abhishake Shah*)

#### A. New and Noteworthy in Montclair Center

Since the October Board meeting, the district has seen one (1) business close, Puebla De Noche, and welcomed ten (10) new businesses, including Venture Studios, GB Art Gallery, Iris Imprints, Bick City Vegan, Cornbread Farm to Soul, Nuts Factory, Libelula, Chip City, Montclair Indoor Golf, and Keycuts

Barbershop which moved from its previous location outside of the district into the BID.

October marked a record-breaking month with 653,000 visits, with an average visitation of 143 minutes, showcasing a consistent upward trend.

President Packard highlighted an uptick in foot traffic between 6 – 8 PM and encouraged board members to share the information and businesses to extend their operating hours. A comparison revealed an additional 75,000 people come to downtown between 6 – 9 PM, with increasing foot traffic throughout the week and especially on weekends.

Director Neiman asked if Placer could distinguish between visitors and employees. Mr. Shah explained how Placer obtains its data and accounts for individuals working within the district boundaries when calculating visitation data.

Treasurer Horrigan inquired about local visits and sought comparisons with other towns and North Jersey municipalities.

Director Rich encouraged board members and businesses to take advantage of digging into the data in person.

In the recent CDS report, several enhancements and challenges were addressed by our ambassadors. Hanging planters were successfully replaced, and new tulip liners added a fresh touch to the district.

November witnessed a notable increase in trash volume, surging from 140 to 359 compared to the previous month. Simultaneously, pedestrian-generated litter rose, with 547 bags placed out, up from 270. Curbside bags picked up by the BID surged from 518 to 766, prompting consideration of the contribution from new businesses opening.

Recognizing this trend, there is an opportunity to engage in a constructive conversation with the town about potential schedule adjustments. Questions were raised about data nuances, including the potential impact of the gas-power leaf blower ban on the increase of leaves in the trash increase.

Additionally, we saw an increase in stickers, tags & unsolicited ads. As is policy, Montclair Center and its Ambassadors remove all posters, tags, and unsolicited ads posted downtown. Mr. Shah noted that they had seen posters and tags on public and private property and electrical boxes.

Mr. Grabowski noted that his properties sustained some damage from these posters as they were superglued onto the windows and exterior walls.

In a positive stride, the Midtown deck is now fully lit, contributing to a reduction in trash-related concerns. The township has replaced a broken big belly trash receptacle on Glenridge Ave., and plans are underway to update the "Do Not Enter" sign on Church Street.

Mr. Shah reported increased inquiries about landscapers who comply with the new leaf blower regulations. The office is actively compiling a list of landscapers, and board members are encouraged to share information on any connections they may have.

#### B. Marketing and Social Media Stats

In October, Montclair Center's Instagram presence witnessed substantial growth, reaching over 22,000 accounts, with 15,000 of them being non-followers. This expansion was fueled by exciting announcements of new businesses, including Chip City, Keycuts Barbershop, GB Art Gallery, and Halden Interiors. The return of Winter Wonderland generated exceptional engagement. Notable reels featuring the Mesob 20th-anniversary celebration, and the Zombie walk contributed to the dynamic content.

A significant milestone was achieved with 14,000 followers on Instagram, while on Facebook, the follower count surged to 12.7K. The Flavors of NJ series added three new restaurants—La Fontaine, Zeugma, and Gioia Mia.

#### Experience Montclair:

The Experience Montclair website is now live, currently at 75% completion. Future enhancements include blogs covering nightlife, trails, shopping, and an interactive event calendar. Experience Montclair's Instagram followers experienced rapid growth, reaching 1447 in just three months. Top-performing content includes reels featuring the Montclair Staycation, Montclair Animal Shelter, and Montclair State Ice Arena.

In addition to these achievements, advertising efforts extended to features in the Jewish News' "Guide to Holiday Shopping and Events," Crossings Magazine's "Stay Awhile," and MPI Meeting Professional International. This is complemented by local coverage on Baristanet, Montclair Girl, Tap Into, The Patch, NJ Media, and Montclair Local. The comprehensive outreach efforts have successfully amplified Montclair's presence across various platforms.

#### V. TREASURER'S REPORT (*attachments*) (*Matt Horrigan*)

- A. Proposed 2023 BID Budget, questions, and discussions, vote  
Move to adopt proposed budget Ernst seconded.

The Proposed 2023 BID Budget was presented, and it was noted that from 2023 vs. 2024, the total revenue saw an increase of 4.25%, amounting to \$56,422.

In items 23 and 24, the total revenue saw a 4.35% increase, amounting to \$56,422. The budget includes projected grant awards totaling \$67,500, which supplement the budget and provide flexibility for creative and strategic initiatives aligned with the board's mandates.

Treasurer Horrigan opened the floor for discussion and questions.

**President Packard motioned to adopt the 2024 budget, which was seconded by Vice President Goldman. The vote budget was approved unanimously.**

#### VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (*Jaji Packard*)

- A. President Packard expressed her gratitude to all who attended the fall Meet and Greet, emphasizing its significance as a valuable platform for fostering community engagement and collaboration.
- B. The 2023 Year in Review is scheduled for discussion at our annual meeting on December 20th.

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

- A. Description of Process: Election to the 2024 Board of Directors  
President Packard initiated the election process for the 2024 Board of Directors, urging all candidates, whether new or existing board members, to submit a brief introduction for the ballot. The submission deadline is set for Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. President Packard emphasized that all ballots will be emailed and mailed out promptly and must be submitted by 3 PM on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, she encouraged both current board members and potential candidates to begin considering potential officers for the year 2024.

#### VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Montclair Film Festival Wrap-Up (*Jill Montague*)  
Director Montague reported that The Montclair Film Festival had a successful run this year, with 190 screenings, panels, and special events featuring artists and volunteers, and addressing concerns like the SAG strike; the festival drew notable attention. Interestingly, ticket sales remained robust even without the presence of big-name celebrities. The BID played a crucial role in supporting

the festival by helping offset marketing costs, including print and digital ads, as well as the cost of extra duty solutions.

Collaboration with the Urality resulted in creating a digital map and parking assistance, although opportunities for improvements were identified. Despite this, the overall energy during the festival was reported as very high. Any suggestions for enhancement were welcomed, with attendees encouraged to reach out to Director Montague.

An attendee survey and reports on ticket buyers provided valuable insights. Anecdotal evidence suggested a significant local presence, with many attendees from Montclair. There was also a notable increase in hotel attendance, although specific numbers needed verification.

B. Marketing and PR Committee Update (Jill Montague)

Director Montague discussed the goals outlined by the Marketing Committee to bolster support for the BID and its staff in early October. The committee emphasized stronger backing for BID events from the full board, proposing that all board members attend at least two ribbon-cutting ceremonies per year. Additionally, active engagement on social media platforms, particularly liking and sharing posts, was encouraged, along with promoting board membership on LinkedIn.

Brainstorming sessions were held to generate ideas for a stakeholder letter, and discussions centered on developing a Crisis PR Plan. The utilization of digital maps by the municipality was explored, aiming to identify optimal strategies.

C. Rodent Reduction

Collaborating with the township on data initiatives and providing the township with a map of rat burrow locations. Mr. Shah noted that the Garden Club had planted tulips in the Church and South Fullerton Garden boxes. However, the increasing rat population in many boxes made it difficult for the garden club volunteers to bury the bulbs in the ground.

President Packard encouraged the board and BID to continue to work with the township to root out the problems. As rat activity is expected to rise, property owners must prepare by investing in containers with rodent-proof bottoms and barriers for exterior doors. Proactive community engagement will help address the challenges the rat population poses and promote a cleaner, healthier environment.

D. Grant application results:

The BID was successfully awarded a grant from NJ BPU to install two (2) electric charging stations. The township has granted permission for the stations, raising the question of maintenance responsibility—whether the town or the BID will handle it.

We will work with the township to determine the best course forward and the possibilities of a shared service agreement and with Lisa Johnson from the township's sustainability office to apply for a PSEG grant to cover the installation costs.

Our application for the electric box mural project was unfortunately not granted. President Packard encouraged all to consider this project for future grant applications.

Lisa Johnson discussed the PSEG Energy Efficiency program for commercial buildings and the different subsidy income brackets. Ms. Johnson shared her personal story of participating in the residential version of this program and the many benefits she received, such as attic and basement insulation. Mr. Grabowski mentioned how he participated in the PSEG commercial program and was able to upgrade the Montclair Film office space and the Claridge theatre.

- E. Shop Small Saturday  
Mr. Shah reminded the board that Shop Small Saturday is on November 25th; the BID will hold Winter Wonderland again this year at the Wellmont Arts Plaza from 12:30 – 5:30 PM with family-friendly activities and special guests.

Winter Wonderland will end promptly at 5:30 PM, followed by Tree Lighting at 6 PM.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Vision Zero (*Jacob Nieman*)  
The Vision Zero task force has been initiated to eliminate all traffic fatalities. The concept involves engineering narrower streets and raised crosswalks. Over an 18-month plan, the committee is focusing on data collection, community input, and formulating a workable plan to end traffic fatalities by 2028. The BID is actively contributing to work groups that meet monthly, covering internal and external committees, completing street policies, motivating communities, and data collection.

Specifically, within a 3-block radius, incidents involving children prompted the need for a certain number of incidents to secure county funding. Bike and Walk Montclair is working on creating a reporting tool for community feedback, allowing residents to report incidents around town. Hoboken has achieved a traffic-free status since 2018, while Jersey City is limited to highways.

Within the 18-month timeframe, there is a focus on areas with speed limits higher than 25 mph, with Councilor Price Abrams and Mayor Spiller actively involved in the committee. President Packard proposed early wins for Vision Zero, suggesting pilot projects such as curb bump-outs (cones at intersections) and speed flashing lights.

Director Nieman stated the idea is to secure an infrastructure grant to implement a pilot project in collaboration with the BID. It was noted that Middlesex County has a Vision Zero plan, and Commissioner Gill is concentrated on these issues, exploring grant funding opportunities, such as the Safe Routes to School grant.

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

Director Silverman announced the upcoming Clean, Safe, and Green committee meeting on Monday, November 20th, at 4:30 PM and invited all to attend.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Packard motioned to adjourn, Seconded by Director Silverman.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM.

The next full board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7 PM.

**MONTCLAIR CENTER BID**  
**2024 Board Approved Budget**

	Approved 2023 Budget	2024 Board Approved Budget	2024 Proposed v. 2023 Approved
<b>Revenue</b>			
BID Assessment	\$ 1,018,290	\$ 1,039,907	2% \$ 21,617
Banner Income	5,000	3,000	(2,000)
Grant Income	265,000		(265,000)
DMO		144,000	144,000
Main Street & Other		105,000	105,000
Sponsorship Income (DMO)		30,000	30,000
Advertising Income (DMO)		20,000	20,000
Interest Income	75	2,400	2,325
Rental Income	9,600	10,080	480
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,297,965</b>	<b>\$ 1,354,387</b>	<b>\$ 56,422</b>
<b>Maintenance &amp; Improvements</b>			
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	-	-	-
<b>Total Maintenance &amp; Improvements</b>	<b>358,139</b>	<b>346,503</b>	<b>(11,636)</b>
<b>Destination Marketing Organization Costs</b>			
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	-	-
<b>Total Destination Marketing Organization Costs</b>	<b>243,300</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>(63,300)</b>
<b>Events &amp; Programs</b>			
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
<b>Total Events &amp; Programming</b>	<b>282,441</b>	<b>343,517</b>	<b>61,076</b>
<b>General Administration</b>			
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
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	-
<b>Total General Administrative</b>	<b>369,410</b>	<b>383,006</b>	<b>13,596</b>
<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 67,500</b>	<b>\$ 67,500</b>
<b>Capital Reserves Transfer</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,253,290</b>	<b>\$ 1,320,527</b>	<b>67,237</b>
<b>Net Income (Change in Net Assets)</b>	<b>\$ 44,675</b>	<b>\$ 33,860</b>	<b>\$ (10,815)</b>
<b>Amortization &amp; Depreciation Expense</b>	<b>\$ 44,675</b>	<b>33,860</b>	<b>(10,815)</b>
<b>Net Income (with A/D expense)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Notes:**