

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Board Meeting
February 21, 2024, 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
In Person at **BID Offices** 26 Lackawanna Plaza or via Zoom

Board members in attendance: Te’Nijja Bussey, Mary Cumella, Emer Featherstone, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, Ernst Goldman, Rachael Grochowski, Natalie Haddad, Matt Horrigan, Jill Montague, Jacob Nieman, Jaji Packard, David Placek, Liz Rich, Matt Silverman, Nat Testa, Kristen Zachares

Absent: David Cummings, Stacey Filé, Neil Grabowsky, Lori Price Abrams, Brian Silver

Staff: Jason Gleason, Aysa Gordon, Abhishake Shah

Guest:

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

President Packard called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

II. ADOPTION OF JANUARY MINUTES

President Packard moved to approve the January minutes. Vice President Goldman seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Board member Neiman abstained.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT (*Jason Gleason, Executive Director*)

New and Noteworthy in Montclair Center

- **Openings and Closings.** The two new business openings since our last meeting are *The It Girl Massage Therapy* and *Lash and Brow by Chris*. Unfortunately, the *Manhattan Juice Bar* will be closing.
- **Montclair Center.** Over the past month, the number of non-followers was 7,787. This high number was due to captions, hashtags, or reels. Within this outreach, we acquired 268 new followers. The post about filming activity on Church Street garnered 58 shares and over 100 saves. Other successful posts included the opening announcement of Retro Fitness and a post about Magic Door Recording Studios.

- Experience Montclair. The Experience Montclair website is now operational. Additionally, we have established a presence on visitnj.com where we can share our events and updates. Our successful Instagram raffle post highlighted locally Montclair-made items and garnered over 100 comments. Another standout post was the announcement that Paper Plane Coffee was ranked the second-best coffee place in New Jersey by NJ.com. The feedback on Experience Montclair's Instagram account, featuring upcoming events, has been overwhelmingly positive. These events are highlighted weekly to ensure that they remain current. Our follower count has grown by 10% in the last 30 days, reaching 2,371 new followers.
- Montclair Center staff and WP Engine will meet to clarify why montclaircenter.com has increased website traffic. According to Board member and SEO professional, Nat Testa, many eyes are on our site with over 750,000 monthly impressions.
- **Placer Data.** Foot traffic is down by 25,000 visitors compared to last year during the same period. We believe the decrease is attributed to the recent snowstorms. Notably, Montclair is still holding strong in the nightlife category, with a significant uptick on Wednesday and Thursday compared to last year. Friday through Sunday continues to be high foot traffic days for the downtown.
- With some efforts from Montclair Center, PSE&G steered away from locating its future site on Bloomfield Avenue and is looking at an alternate site within downtown Montclair. Thanks to our board and committees for offering the feedback that helped guide PSE&G's decision. Our suggested proposal was welcomed by the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and PSE&G, who were very receptive to feedback on the pros and cons of the original site location. This was a good relationship-building exercise with PSE&G, the township, and Montclair Center. We are waiting for the new renderings from PSE&G for the new site.
- Congratulations to Board member Grochowski on the 20th anniversary of her business, RHG Architect + Design.
- April is shaping up to be a busy month for the Montclair Center staff this year as we have quite a few events on the agenda. Art Walk is progressing very well. The Candidate's Forum is in discussion. We will be having a Meet and Greet for Montclair Center members. Additionally, we are co-sponsoring an Earth Day event with the township and several other Montclair environmental organizations.

V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (*Jaji Packard*)

- Our Conflict-of-Interest (COI) form is standard and comes directly from our legal requirements as Board Members. Regarding a conflict of interest, the requirement that we are fulfilling as defined by our bylaws is the “duty of loyalty.” President Packard Board encouraged Board Members to ask themselves the following questions when in doubt:
 1. Will a board member or staff member benefit from this decision?
 2. Could a board member or staff member benefit from this decision?
 3. Will it look like a board member or staff member will benefit from this decision?

- Some examples of conflicts of interest include:
 1. Nepotism occurs when a family member or friend is hired and is unqualified and/or overcompensated and/or treated outside of the organization's standard practices.
 2. Self-dealing occurs when the director benefits from the nonprofit's dealings and places their personal interest ahead of the organization’s interest.
 3. Dual loyalties occur when the director has more than one interest that potentially conflicts with another. Dual loyalties exist when the board member sits on the board of two nonprofits at once. Equal loyalty, or not holding one organization above or below the other, is the key to avoiding a conflict of interest.

- Discussion: If there is a conflict of interest, President Packard is to be notified, and the conflict gets placed on the agenda. Board member Nieman added that the town attorney reviews conflicts of interest on the Planning Board, including whether the COI exists and what the remedy is- disclosure or recusal. Director Gleason offered to be the go-between for the board and attorney. He affirmed that if someone has a question, it should go to the lawyer. President Packard reinforced that communication is key and a problem exists if someone intentionally hides a conflict. Board member Featherstone suggested having a small group of 2-3 board members to handle these situations. Assistant Secretary Silverman added that the reason for having board members sign a COI agreement annually is that it is foremost in their minds. He added that it serves as a self-reporting tool and requires individuals to ask themselves if they are conflicted. Board member Featherstone spoke about the responsibility of board members to report if someone does not disclose on their own. Director Gleason wrapped up the discussion by saying that our Conflict-of-Interest agreement warrants a refresh as it hasn’t been updated in several years. Anyone interested in helping with updating our COI should reach out to President Packard. Board member Featherstone asked about possibly giving our current COI agreement to the lawyer for the update.

VI.TREASURERS REPORT (*Matt Horrigan*)

Director Gleason and Treasurer Horrigan are getting a monthly update from our accountant, Tesha Kelley, and a financial update will be presented each quarter. As of April 15th, the first quarter numbers will be ready, and Treasurer Horrigan will create a budget dashboard. He also expressed confidence that Director Gleason and staff will remain on the budget for the current fiscal year. Treasurer Horrigan also encouraged board members to reach out if they have any questions or want to participate in the Financial Affairs Committee.

VII. OLD BUSINESS (*Jason Gleason*)

Update on District crime incidents and discussion of best practices.

Director Gleason recently sat down with several members of the Montclair Police Department and two business owners to have a frank, open conversation about crime in the district. First, they spoke about two types of break-ins. The first type is from the unhoused community seeking shelter. Property owner Bob Silver has found a couple of instances of someone sleeping in the vestibule of his occupied building overnight. Another type of break-in is vacant buildings being broken into by high school students to host parties. This has happened six times now at Lackawanna Plaza. At Six (6) Gates, seventy high school students caused \$200,000 in water damage from fire alarms setting off sprinklers. Bennet Schwartz, the owner of 514 Bloomfield, mentioned that an intruder was reported screaming on the second floor of the building.

Shoplifting was another topic of discussion. The owners of East Side Mags, The Eclectic Chic Boutique, and several others have brought this to Director Gleason's attention. Board member Zachares spoke about her experiences with a group of teenagers targeting her store for shoplifting. She said that the situation has worsened and intends to take further action to curb shoplifting. She is also concerned about increased theft when students are not in school over the summer. Her advice to other business owners was to be watchful of groups of people with bags and break up suspicious activity as soon as possible. Board member Grochowski spoke about assembling high school students in a school setting to talk seriously about the ramifications of shoplifting.

The owner of Al Bazar recently had an incident. He refused to sell to minors and was struck by a teenager who knocked him unconscious with a backpack. Fortunately, a neighbor caught the incident on camera. Al Bazar's owner was very touched by the outpouring of care from the downtown business community. This is an example of how a neighborhood watch can be of benefit and support in the aftermath of crime.

Director Gleason also spoke about the promising use of License Plate Reading (LPR) Camera technology to identify unregistered stolen cars and help find suspects in break-ins like the one at Connect Clothing.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution for Main Street Grant Application

President Packard moved to accept the board resolution authorizing the 2024 Main Street New Jersey Grant application as written. Ernst Goldman seconded the motion. See the attached board resolution.

The \$150,000 grant application for the Main Street Organization will be submitted this Friday. The Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ) Grant is competitive, and we will be notified if we are to be awarded this grant within 4 – 6 weeks of submission. Here's a quick review of what Montclair Center is applying for.

1. Planters. We have a long overdue upgrade of new concrete planters to replace the 40 plastic planters in our district.
2. Public Art Mural. We propose an expansion and facade enhancement to our mural project at the Pilgrim Medial building. A new awning will free up the entire façade for the mural.
3. Audit. We will cover the cost of our mandatory audit using MSNJ Grant Funds.
4. Vibemap. We will invest in Vibemap software, allowing us to integrate their software which uses AI to build an events calendar and update business listings automatically, saving staff numerous hours and allowing them to refocus their efforts on other BID priorities. Vibemap and Urality can offer API integration.
5. Enhanced Collaboration & Remote Communication: An interactive communications display with a built-in microphone and camera will replace our current equipment purchased at the beginning of the pandemic.
6. Staff and Payroll. This grant allows us to pay for staff and payroll by paying for grant administration. Through cost aversion, we can do things we were budgeted for, such as capacity building, placemaking, public art, beautification, etc.

President Packard moved to accept the board resolution authorizing the 2024 Main Street New Jersey grant application submission. Vice President Goldman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Candidate Forum: Montclair Center Concerns, Economic Development, and other questions for Council candidates. IMPORTANT: Legally, we may educate, inform, and NOT take sides for or against any candidate or slate.

- Our goal is to have a Candidate's Forum in late April. Montclair Center, UMBA, and The Local will participate with Liz George from The Local moderating. President Packard speculated that due to the size of the pool of candidates, we may want to limit the focus to only mayoral and at-large candidates so there is enough time for discussion.
- Several specific questions were raised by individual board members to be included in the forum. The goal would be to build a bank of questions. Question topics included parking, the Lackawanna Plaza Development Plan, economic development, quality of life, rats, historic preservation, crime, public safety, and garbage. Board member Featherstone cautioned against using a question related to a particular property. She also encouraged us to address business-related questions foremost because of our mission.

IX.OPEN DISCUSSION- New Ideas, Comments, Questions

Board member Grochowski invited the board to her 20th anniversary on Thursday, March 7th, at her office downtown. Board member Nieman shared that Carmel Loughman and Anthony Ianuale were not reappointed to the Planning Board. Thamar Campbell and Geoffrey Borshof were newly appointed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:38.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 7:00 pm at the BID Office

SCHEDULE I: RESOLUTION

Whereas, the Montclair Center Corporation desires to
(formal name of organization)
for and obtain a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$ 150,000.00
(dollar amount of request)

to carry out a project to: Montclair Revitalized: A Synergy of Art, Ecology, and Community Collaboration
(briefly describe the project)

This project aims to transform the heart of downtown Montclair through the installation of a vibrant public art mural,
enhancing aesthetic appeal and community engagement. Additionally, it involves upgrading to sustainable concrete planters
for a greener, more inviting public space, and integrating advanced technology to facilitate effective remote communication
and collaboration. By hiring additional staff, the initiative also strengthens organizational capacity to support these improvements.

Be it therefore RESOLVED,

1) that the Montclair Center Corporation does hereby
(formal name of organization)
authorize the application for such a grant; and,

2) recognizes and accepts that the Department may offer a lesser or greater amount and therefore, upon receipt of the
grant agreement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, does further authorize the execution of any such
grant agreement; and also, upon receipt of the fully executed agreement from the Department, does further authorize the
expenditure of funds pursuant to the terms of the agreement between

Montclair Center Corporation
(formal name of organization)

and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, including the provision of a local match share in the ratio of at
least one local dollar for every five State dollars.

Be it further RESOLVED, that the persons whose names, titles, and signatures appear below are authorized to sign the
application, and that they or their successors in said titles are authorized to sign the agreement and any other documents
necessary in connection therewith:


(signature)

Jason Gleason
(type or print name)

Executive Director
(title)


(signature)

Jarmila Packard
(type or print name)

Board President
(title)

MIKUEL R. DARBEAU
NOTARY PUBLIC OF NEW JERSEY
My Commission Expires Sept. 8, 2024



CERTIFICATION:

Kristen Zachares the Board Secretary
(Name of Board Secretary/ Government (Title of position - Board Secretary or Government Clerk)
of Montclair Center Corporation
(formal name of organization)

hereby certify that at a _____ of the Board of Directors / held on February 21, 2024
(meeting date)

the above **RESOLUTION** was duly adopted.

AFFIX GOVT
CORPORATE OR
NOTARY SEAL


(Signature of Secretary of the Board of Directors or Government Clerk)

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

	Board Approved 2024 Budget	YTD Mar2024 Budget	YTD Mar2024 Actual	YTD Mar2024 Budget v. Actual	Note:
Revenue					
BID Assessment	\$ 1,039,907	\$ 259,977	\$ 259,977	-	
DMO Grant, sponsorship and member dues	194,000	48,500	36,600	(11,900)	
Grant and Other	120,480	30,120	3,618	(26,502)	
Total Revenue	\$ 1,354,387	\$ 338,597	\$ 300,195	\$ (38,402)	
Maintenance & Improvements					
Third-Party (QOL Staffing, Sweeper, Vehicle Maintenance, WC)	\$ 312,003	\$ 78,001	\$ 78,001	-	
QOL Supplies, Beatification & Landscaping, Public Art	34,500	8,625	3,956	(4,669)	
Total Maintenance & Improvements	346,503	86,626	81,956	(4,669)	
Destination Marketing Organization Costs					
Tourism and Sales Coordinator	36,000	9,000	9,012	12	
DMO Program Costs	144,000	36,000	25,694	(10,306)	
Total Destination Marketing Organization Costs	180,000	45,000	34,705	(10,295)	
Events & Programs					
Program Staff	208,517	52,129	40,162	(11,968)	
Constituent Support Programs (stakeholder classes & Business Marketing)	40,000	10,000	10,557	557	
Other (Extra Duty Solutions, Internal programming, and Support event)	95,000	23,750	1,142	(22,608)	
Total Events & Programming	343,517	85,879	51,861	(34,019)	
General Administration					
Executive & Administrative Staff	193,466	48,367	61,425	13,059	
Contracted Services	41,000	10,250	18,449	8,199	
Accounting, computer, misc. office, legal,	104,250	26,063	18,059	(8,004)	
Rent	44,290	11,073	3,480	(7,593)	
Total General Administrative	\$ 383,006	\$ 95,752	\$ 101,413	\$ 5,661	
Strategic Initiatives	67,500	16,875	-		
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 1,320,526	\$ 330,132	\$ 269,935	(60,196)	
Net Income (Change in Net Assets)	\$ 33,861	\$ 8,465	\$ 30,260	21,795	

Notes:

Included in the actual totals are expenses for the ArtWalk at \$918, which was unbudgeted.

Total DMO grant for \$144,000 ends June 30, 2024. Organization is on track to spend that down.

Main Street Grant (\$27K) will be closed out in June.