

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID - BOARD MEETING

September 18, 2024, 7:00 – 8:45 p.m.

In Person at BID Offices 26 Lackawanna Plaza or via Zoom

Board Members in attendance: Te’Nijah Bussey, Mary Cumella, Emer Featherstone, Stacey File, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, Ernst Goldman, Neil Grabowsky, Matt Horrigan, Jacob Nieman, Jaji Packard, Matt Silverman, Nat Testa, Aminah Toler, Rahum Williams, Kristen Zachares

Staff in Attendance: Interim Executive Director: Abhishake Shah, DMO & Marketing Director Jackie Apicella, Administrative Assistant: Aysa Gordon.

Absent: Rachel Grochowski, Natalie Haddad, Jill Montague, David Placek, Liz Rich, Brian Silver

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

II. ADOPTION OF JUNE MINUTES (attachments)

President Packard approved the minutes from the June board meeting, and Vice President Goldman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments made.

IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (Jaji Packard)

a. Transition and ED Search

President Packard thanked Interim Executive Director Shah for stepping into the role while the committee searches for a new Executive Director. The search committee has been working hard since early July and has received 46 applications. Results from the search are expected soon.

b. Committee Meetings

The board committees have not met in September due to current events, but they plan to have short meetings in the next 4-6 weeks. President Packard chairs both the Stakeholder Support Committee and the Placemaking Committee. Secretary Silverman chairs the Clean Safe and Green Committee, Board Member Montague chairs the Marketing Committee, and Treasurer Horrigan chairs the Finance Committee, which is meeting tomorrow to discuss a proposed budget for 2025.

President Packard stated now is the time for all board members to share their ideas for new projects they would like to see happen in 2025 so we can allocate funds towards those projects.

c. Board member recruiting

The Nominations Committee needs to meet soon to put together a slate of recruits for empty board seats. The ballot will be presented at the November board meeting, and the vote will be announced at the December meeting. The Recruitment Committee will soon send out an invitation to all stakeholders to encourage

nominations. All suggestions from the Board, Staff, and Town Council are welcomed.

V. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Abhishake Shah)

a. New and noteworthy in Montclair Center

i. Montclair Center had a great summer, with lots of activity in the downtown area. Since we last met, 25 new businesses have opened and 10 have closed, leaving a net of 15 new businesses. The Historic Preservation Commission recognized Houss Freya and Diesel and Duke with the Brick-and-Mortar Preservation Award for their work. Houss Freya restored the historic church at 205 Glenridge Ave. Currently, Montclair Center's vacancy rate is very low at 4.6%, down from 6% in December 2023. According to Placer data, Montclair has seen increased visitation and dwell time, with visitors mostly coming from Montclair and nearby towns. Upcoming events in Montclair Center include Halloween Trick-or-Treat Stops on Thursday, October 31st and Winter Wonderland on Small Business on Saturday, November 30th. Montclair will be hosting the annual NJ Downtown Conference on December 5th, with expected attendance between 300 and 500 people, including downtown business owners, elected officials, and organizations involved in public projects. Last year, former Executive Director Jason Gleason and Urality owner Justin Copenhaver presented at the conference and helped convince the organizers to choose Montclair as the next location.

b. Jazz Festival Recap

Interim Director Shah expressed gratitude to everyone who took part in the Montclair Jazz Festival, including Board Member Grabowsky, for helping with photography. The preliminary attendance numbers from placer.io show that 24,100 people attended, up from 18,800 last year and 22,000 in 2022. Interim Director Shah expected around 25,000 attendees.

During the meeting, Board Member Testa inquired about the data regarding parking availability at the different parking decks. Board Member Silverman conducted two parking spot availability checks at the Midtown and Fullerton Decks and found that there was more than enough parking.

c. Mural Project Update

The Mural Project funded through the 2024 MSNJ Grant will be painted from October 6th to 14th by artist Christina Kwan from Atlanta. Director Bussey explained that the selection process involved a jury of nine individuals and narrowed down from sixty candidates to three, with the finalist being selected by the owner of Pilgrim Medical.

VI. TREASURERS REPORT (Matt Horrigan)

A. Overview of finances

Treasurer Horrigan presented the board with the year-to-date August 2024 Budget, noting some items were over or under budget. The variances were explained, including funds received after the budget passed and savings from staff turnover. The Vision Zero money was used to pay the head of the Vision Zero Taskforce and expedite the process on behalf of the Township, addressing safety concerns on Bloomfield Avenue.

VI. MARKETING AND EXPERIENCE MONTCLAIR (DMO) OVERVIEW

a. Montclair Center

- i. Jazz Festival. Forty-one businesses took advantage of the discounted vendor rate for the Jazz Festival. Market Space worked effectively with us, and all the vendors were thoughtfully curated.
 - Ribbon Cuttings. Since our last board meeting, several ribbon cuttings have taken place, including Retro Fitness, Acorn General Store, Izzy's Boxing, Sol Spirit Yoga and Wellness, The Juice House, and Diesel and Duke.
 - The top-performing social media posts included Diesel and Duke, followed by The Jazz Festival, behind-the-scenes content at Nami Nori, and a new store announcement for Francis Henri. These posts have helped increase our Instagram follower count to 15,400. Facebook's follower count is following closely behind.
 - We have begun filming behind-the-scenes content showcasing the moviegoer experience for the Montclair Film Festival. It will be released over the next month.

A. Experience Montclair

- We have launched our Fall Campaign showcasing one hundred events across the six districts. The events are linked to the Experience Montclair website. This campaign is featured in digital ads on NJ Monthly, at six NJ Transit stations, Edible NJ, Visit NJ, WXPN radio, and more. It will run for ninety days.
- Marketing efforts are in place for The Montclair Film Festival, the Montclair Jazz Festival, and the Walnut Street Festival. Thanks to these efforts, 4.2% of the attendees were first-time event attendees from South and Central Philadelphia.
- Experience Montclair will be hosting its first food tour with Chow Town this Saturday at Walnut Street with plans to continue these tours in each district
- Top performing Instagram posts include Fall in Love with Montclair, the Summer Recap, and the Walnut Street Festival. Over the past 60 days, Experience Montclair has garnered 60,746 views bringing our follower count to 4,500.
- Director Apicella will be attending the NJTIA Conference on Tourism between December 11th and 12th. The focus of the conference will be

learning, networking, and exploring ideas for promoting New Jersey as a destination for the World Cup. The World Cup will provide a tremendous economic benefit to Montclair and surrounding areas.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Film Festival

President Packard shared details about the upcoming Montclair Film Festival, which will take place from October 18th to the 27th. The films for the opening, closing, and centerpiece events will be announced on September 19th, and the full program will be revealed on September 27th. Catalogues will be distributed on September 28th. Tickets will be available for Montclair Film Members on September 30th and for the public on October 4th. You can find tickets and general information on montclairfilm.com. The festival will take place at The Claridge, The MKA Upper School, The Wellmont Theater, and Cinema 505. Montclair Center and Experience Montclair are this year's festival sponsors. Montclair Film and Experience Montclair worked together on a four-page brochure that will be included with subscriptions to NJ Monthly magazine and sent to 20,000 subscribers in Bergen, Union, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, and Passaic Counties. The Montclair Center BID will cover NJ Transit banners and police costs for the festival.

B. Unhoused Committee:

President Packard asked the Town Councilors about concerns regarding the increased issues with the unhoused community. Board Member Williams noted an uptick in the unhoused population and panhandling on Church Street. Interim Director Shah mentioned the Unhoused Committee's efforts to connect the unhoused community with local social service organizations, such as MESH Montclair, Toni's Kitchen, and the Salvation Army. Board Member Featherstone mentioned that the Executive Director of Toni's Kitchen knows many local unhoused community members by name and that there are sixty to seventy regular members of the unhoused community in Montclair.

Assistant Secretary Silverman suggested that the BID could provide guidelines for businesses to help individuals in need and refer them to social services. Interim Director Shah mentioned that the BID would participate in quarterly meetings and connect people to social service agencies. Mayor Baskerville emphasized the importance of respecting the choices of unhoused individuals and being cautious about involving the police in certain situations.

Secretary Zachares emphasized the importance of having an action plan for businesses to handle interactions with unhoused individuals. The MC Hotel supports the unhoused community through businesses donating food and soft

goods to MESH, and Board Member Bussey suggested keeping a resource list on the MCBID website.

C. Parking

Assistant Secretary Silverman discussed parking in downtown Montclair during COVID, emphasizing the importance of addressing parking perception rather than a parking availability issue. The committee plans to launch a parking outreach campaign to direct people to parking decks, and to incentivize longer-term visitors to park there instead of at street meters. Safety measures such as better lighting and camera monitoring will be implemented at the parking decks, and signage will be placed to draw more attention to them.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Flooding and General Emergency Response Planning

President Packard discussed the recent storm and the potential for more weather events due to climate issues. She said the BID is well-positioned to have a best practices list for who to call and how to prepare to help our community. Interim Director Shah added that there is a process for applying for relief from FEMA, the Red Cross, and other relief agencies with strict deadlines. We can offer the best information to our businesses to help them stay resilient and recover from severe weather events.

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

Board Member Toler asked about the calendar of MCBID events. There was a brief discussion of how the MCBID chooses and schedules its events. President Packard spoke about the factors that figure into how the BID chooses its events, including foot traffic inside the BID, a certain number of eventgoers, the event being free to the public, and the organization approaching the BID to set up the event. Board Member Zachares shared the idea of having a multicultural festival that includes all of Montclair's cultural organizations.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.

The next full board meeting will be Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 7 pm at the BID office

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID
2025 Proposed Budget

			Revenue				
	2024 Proposed Budget	2025 Proposed Budget	2024 vs 2025	BID Assessment	MSNJ Grant	DMO Grant	Cross Check
Revenue							
BID Assessment	\$ 1,039,907	\$ 1,065,905	25,998	1,065,905			
Polaris		\$ 10,000	10,000	10,000			Note #1
Banner Income	3,000	\$ 2,000	(1,000)	2,000			
Grant Income							
DMO	144,000	\$ 144,000	-			144,000	Note #2
Main Street & Other	105,000	\$ 105,000			105,000		Note #3
30,000			(30,000)				
Advertising Income (DMO)	20,000	\$ 20,000	-			20,000	
Interest Income	2,400	\$ 3,000	600	3,000			
Rental Income	10,080	\$ 10,382	302	10,382			
Total Revenue	\$ 1,354,387	\$ 1,360,287	5,900	1,091,287	105,000	164,000	1,360,287
Maintenance & Improvements							
QOL	-						
Third-Party (QOL Staffing, Sweeper, Vehicle Maintenance, WC)	312,003	\$ 324,483	12,480	324,483			
Banners	-						
BID Vehicle Maint. & Expenses	-						
Beautification and Landscaping	24,500	\$ 25,000	500	10,000	15,000		
Public Art	10,000	\$ 10,000	-		10,000		
QOL Equipment/Supplies	-						
Sidewalk Sweeper Maintenance & Insurance	-	\$ -	-				
Total Maintenance & Improvements	346,503	\$ 359,483	12,980	334,483	25,000	-	359,483
Destination Marketing Organization Costs							
Administration	16,800	\$ 17,900	(1,100)			17,900	
Advertising	32,000	\$ 34,000	(2,000)			34,000	
Marketing	51,000	\$ 56,000	(5,000)			56,000	
Research	20,000	\$ 20,000	-			20,000	
Salaries	-						
Tourism and Sales Coordinator	-						
Trade Shows	11,500	\$ 2,100	9,400			2,100	
Website	12,700	\$ 14,000	(1,300)			14,000	
Tourism and Sales Coordinator	36,000	\$ 36,000	-	36,000			
Advertising and Marketing	-						
Software and Technology	-						
Travel and Meetings	-	\$ -	-				
Total Destination Marketing Organization Costs	180,000	\$ 180,000	-	36,000	-	144,000	180,000
Events & Programs							
Program Staff	219,360	\$ 242,488	23,128	242,488		-	
Constituent Support Programs		\$ -	-				
Stakeholder Education & Classes	-	\$ -	-				
Business Marketing	40,000	\$ 40,000	-	40,000			
Event Municipal Expenses (Extra Duty Solutions)	5,000		(5,000)				
Internal Event Programming	10,000	\$ 10,000	-	10,000			
Support Event Programming	80,000	\$ 80,000	-	60,000	20,000		80,000
Total Events & Programming	354,360	\$ 372,488	18,128	352,488	20,000	-	372,488
General Administration							
Executive & Administrative Staff	194,378	\$ 189,294	(5,085)	189,294			
Contracted Services	41,000	\$ 41,000	-	41,000			
Accounting	18,000	\$ 18,000	-	18,000			
Audit Services	8,000	\$ 8,000	-	8,000			
Computer and Software	6,000	\$ 10,000	4,000	10,000			
Conferences, Meals, and Meetings	15,000	\$ 15,000	-	15,000			
Copying & Printing	2,500	\$ 2,500	-	2,500			
Dues & Subscription	3,000	\$ 3,000	-	3,000			
Graphic Design	3,500	\$ 3,500	-	3,500			
Insurance	12,000	\$ 14,000	2,000	14,000			
IT Support Services	2,000	\$ 2,000	-	2,000			
Legal Fees	10,000	\$ 10,000	-	10,000			
Miscellaneous	2,000	\$ 2,000	-	2,000			
Office Supplies	5,000	\$ 5,000	-	5,000			
Payroll Service Fees	2,500	\$ 2,500	-	2,500			
Phone & Internet	4,000	\$ 4,000	-	4,000			
Postage	250	\$ 250	-	250			
Professional Development	2,500	\$ 2,500	-	2,500			
Rent	44,290	\$ 45,619	1,329	45,619			
Utilities	7,000	\$ 7,000	-	7,000			
Web Hosting	1,000	\$ 1,000	-	1,000			
Total General Administrative	383,918	\$ 386,162	(2,244)	386,162	-	-	386,162
Strategic Initiatives	\$ 67,500	\$ 60,000	(7,500)	-	60,000	-	-
Capital Reserves Transfer	-	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 1,332,282	\$ 1,358,134	25,852	1,109,134	105,000	144,000	1,368,134
Net Income (Change in Net Assets)	\$ 22,105	\$ 2,153	19,952	(17,847)	-	20,000	2,153.13
Amortization & Depreciation Expense	33,860	\$ 31,050	-				
Net Income (with A/D expense)	\$ (11,755)	\$ (28,897)					

Notes:

- #1) 10K revenue projected from the sale of the Polaris 4x4
- #2) 72K of the DMO revenue in the 2025 budget is funded & 72K is projected to be awarded
- #3) 105K of the MSNJ Grant revenue in the 2025 budget is projected to be awarded