

# MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

## MONTCLAIR CENTER BID - BOARD MEETING

March 19, 2025 7:00 – 8:45 p.m.

In Person at **BID OFFICES** 26 Lackawanna Plaza or via Zoom

- I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME (5 MINUTES)  
**Board Members in attendance:** Natalie Haddad, Ernst Goldman, Jacob Nieman, Jaji Packard, Brian Silver, Matt Silverman, Nat Testa, Te’Nijah Bussey, Kristen Zachares, Karen Schloss-Diaz, Neil Grabowsky, David Brennan, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa **Board Members attending via Zoom:** Mary Cumella, Rahum Williams, Emer Featherstone, Matt Horrigan, Rachael Grochowski (8pm), Reza Momeni **Staff:** Abhishake Shah, Lauren Barnas, Jackie Apicella **Absent:** David Placek, Stacey File, Aminah Toler, **Public:** Genevieve Wrenn,
- II.  
*The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm*
- III. ADOPTION OF FEBRUARY MINUTES (attachments) (2 MINUTES)  
*February Minutes passed by Board President Goldman and seconded by Board Member Jaji Packard. The motion passed unanimously.*
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER VISITOR)
- V. PRESIDENT’S UPDATE (Ernst Goldman) (15 MINUTES)
  - A. **Board Meetings**  
*suggestions for topics (e.g., storefront ideas, Township EDC)*  
*Board President Goldman reviewed the previous suggestion of different meeting formats. No suggestions presented but board members are reminded to think of ideas.*
  - B. **By-Law Task Force**  
*(Ernst, Emer, Matt H., Matt S) to meet and will report back to Board Board Members. Board Member Testa would like to join the By-Law task force. Reports will be sent to the board after the task force meets.*
  - C. **Committees**  
*Placemaking minutes; CS&G & Finance to meet in April.*  
*Board President Goldman will meet with board member Brennan about the marketing committee. An HR committee is in talks- must be a board member as to keep neutrality.*
  - D. **Main St Conference-**  
*Board President Goldman and Executive Director Shah will be attending, with other board members welcome to join for day passes. Attendees will be reduced in order to save on budget.*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (*Abhishake Shah*)

(15 MINUTES)

A. **New and noteworthy in Montclair Center**

*Director Shah reviewed the accepting of the budget, the intro date/public hearing for the budget is March 25<sup>th</sup>, voting on the budget is on another date.*

B. **BID Staffing Update** *Phone screening for the Assistant Director position begins the week of March 24<sup>th</sup>*

C. **Meet and Greet**

*Meet and greet is March 20<sup>th</sup> from 3-6pm. Light fare and refreshments will be available. ICE enforcement guidelines will be discussed. Skip The Stuff introduction will also be given.*

D. **Festival Updates – PRIDE**

*Pride will be June 14<sup>th</sup>, a presentation will be given from Pride organizers to the Board to give a run-down of the festival at a later date.*

E. **Main St 2025 Grant-** *Budget changes- tentatively will be \$105,000, but we are capped at \$30,000 since we got the max amount last year. Those changes will be discussed at the April Board meeting. Director Shah was hoping for a PSEG grant for electric chargers. Budget modification will be done if we get the PSEG grant. Board member Nieman asked if we could find a sweet spot looking forward for grant funding caps to plan ahead next time to get a more even split.*

VI. **TREASURERS REPORT** (*Brian Silver*) – Grant reductions and budget planning (5 MINUTES)

*A. Treasurer Silver passed out his Bridge report of the last two months. DMO is under. Grant and other revenue is under by \$24,000. Staffing changes also reflect a \$23,000 below budget outlook. However, a \$75,000 shortfall overall due to changes in grant allowance. There will be a meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and again in mid April to figure out 2025 budgeting.*

VII. **OLD BUSINESS**

(15 MINUTES)

A. **Vision Zero** (*Jacob Nieman*)

*Council is waiting to adopt the new ordinance until Steven Marks is appointed. Safety sticks were not discussed, will have the manufacturer come in and talk about them. Councilman Williams attested to Marks qualifications.*

B. **Closing Bloomfield for Porchfest – update**

*Executive Director Shah is still inquiring about the legitimacy of the permit acquired by Porchfest allowing them to close the section of Bloomfield Ave between Fullerton and Valley Rd. Board Member Packard recounted her positive experience with other town's Porchfests. Board Member Testa inquired about the legal issues surrounding Porchfest/Downtown Montclair and the Montclair Center BID similarities. Vice President Silverman reminded the Board that last time we spoke about Porchfest we went into executive session due to the sensitive nature. Board Member Zachares voiced her opinion against supporting Porchfest due to the misalignment of Porchfest's marketing practices and the values of the Montclair community and businesses owners. (genuine art, use of AI imagery, etc)*

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS** (*Abhishake Shah*)

(10 MINUTES)

F. **Meet & Greet**

*Meet and greet is March 20<sup>th</sup> from 3-6pm. Light fare and refreshments will be available. ICE enforcement guidelines will be discussed. Skip The Stuff introduction will also be given.*

**A. BID Events: Art Walk/Summer Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup>**

*Executive Director Shah went over the fate of upcoming events for the BID including Art Walk and Summer Sunday. Due to the proximity of other festivals like Pride, or weather; the turnout at these events have not been the best and may not be benefitting the businesses in the way that we hoped they would. Shah suggested using the funding and efforts from these events and pouring that into supporting the BID businesses and highlighting their talents, educating them on crime, town funding, and giving the businesses a tangible outcome instead. (increased sales, education, safety). Board Member Packard suggested compiling data surrounding the ROI of these events to further evaluate whether doing these events is worth using BID staff/resources.*

*Executive Director Shah mentioned that after speaking with business owners, they are struggling financially and with getting foot traffic. Treasurer Silver highlighted that while some businesses may report low sales and other hardships, these events are still bringing high foot traffic and even if they don't make a day-of sale, it still can be looked at as a positive touch point in the effort of getting people to visit both Montclair and it's businesses- even if people return a day, week, or month after an event was held. Treasurer Silver asked to compile the events we spend substantial time on and the financials of those events. Vice President Silverman suggested going around the room to voice board member's opinions regarding this issue. Board Member Apicella highlighted that there is increased foot traffic on weekdays after 6pm, yet most businesses are closed. Perhaps weekday evening events would be more prosperous if only the businesses were open during the later hours. General consensus is perhaps a revision of how/what/where/when Art Walk happens is needed rather than completely getting rid of or keeping Art Walk.*

**B. Planter Designs-** *Board Member Packard gave an overview of her meeting regarding planter designs, as well as a planting competition. She mentioned looking into grants. There is an inquiry for a "Welcome to Montclair" mural perhaps across from Bangz. There is also talk about restoring our current murals, costing between \$6,000-\$11,000 each mural to restore. We will be sending agreements to the mural artists and property owners to extend our rights to the murals. Executive Director Shah suggested alternatives to Art Walk.*

**IX. OPEN DISCUSSION - New Ideas, Comments, Questions**

**(TIME PERMITTING)**

**Public comment:** *Genevieve Wrenn of Genevieve's Exclusive Vintage Collection discussed a recent break in at her business, taking \$30,000 worth of clothing and merchandise. The same burglars then went to Connect Clothing on Bloomfield Ave and attempted robbery there as well. A string of robberies also happened in Upper Montclair. Genevieve voiced her concerns about the recent robberies on the rise and proposed preventative measures such as cameras or overnight patrolling. Board member Neil Grabowsky suggested a camera surveillance company and Blink camera systems. Minia's also reported their Bloomfield location was also targeted. Board Member Bussey suggested a minimum contingency budget from the town. Vice President Silverman will be adding the topic of burglary and preventative measures to the upcoming Clean Safe and Green meeting. Board Member Packard suggested opening up the CS&G meeting to stakeholders to get their feedback and awareness. Genevieve asked if the BID could include a warning in our upcoming newsletter about the recent robberies. Vice President Silverman suggested a neighborhood watch comprised of the residents closer to Bloomfield Ave. Board*

*President Goldman and Executive Director Shah proposed a town hall type of meeting to discuss the safety of fellow business owners in Montclair.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*President Goldman moved to adjourn the meeting; Board Member Bussey seconded.*

*Next full board meeting will be **Wednesday, April 16, 2025**, 7 pm at the BID office.*