

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID - BOARD MEETING

June 18, 2025 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

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

- I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME (5 MINUTES)
Board Members in attendance: Ernst Goldman, Jaji Packard, Matt Silverman, Kristen Zachares, George Brennan, Neil Grabowsky, Te’Nijah Bussey **Board Members attending via Zoom:** Rachael Grochowski, Mary Cumella, Brian Silver, Emer Featherstone, Matt Horrigan, **Staff:** Abhishake Shah, Lauren Barnas, **Absent:** Natalie Haddad, David Placek, Stacey File, Aminah Toler, Karen Schloss-Diaz, Rahum Williams, Nat Testa, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, Jacob Nieman

President Goldman called the meeting to order at 7:20 pm.
- II. ADOPTION OF MAY MINUTES (attachments) (2 MINUTES)
May Minutes were reviewed, and Board Vice President Silverman moved to approve the May minutes. Board Member Packard seconded it. There were several edits to the minutes, clarified by Board member Packard.
- III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER VISITOR)
- IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Ernst Goldman) (15 MINUTES)
 - A. **Board Summer Schedule**
Board President Goldman went over the summer schedule for Board Meetings. The Montclair Center BID Board of Directors won’t be holding meetings in July and August. Board Member Grochowski offered to be on the nomination committee. Board Member Packard gave an overview of the role, including recruitment requirements, ballot procurement, and officer nominations. Board Member Grabowsky also offered to run for the nomination committee. Board President Goldman moved to pass the nominations.
 - B. **BID Visioning Meeting**
President Goldman brought up past meeting’s discussions regarding the BID’s decision to lessen events. Vice President Silverman clarified that having this meeting will allow the board to review what the goals of the organization and prioritize our programming. A date and time for the meeting will be TBD. This meeting is open to all Board Members and staff.

Vice President Silverman mentions that a review of the strategic plan in tandem with this meeting would also be beneficial. Board Member Packard provided an overview of the strategic plan and explained how the data was compiled for those who were not present when the plan was created in Spring 2021. Executive Director Shah said the BID is up for a Site Visit from Main Street USA, which is similar to a strategic plan and will likely happen around Summer 2026.
 - C. **Marketing Meeting – Date?**
Board President Goldman suggests either June 30th or July 7th for the next meeting. Executive Director Shah suggests waiting until we are notified from the state on the fate of the DMO grant. Board President Goldman expressed his congratulations to the BID staff on working hard at the Pride Festival this past Saturday.

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

(15 MINUTES)

A. **Pride Festival Recap**

Executive Director Shah reviewed the success of Pride Festival. Early numbers range between 16,000-18,000 attendees. Despite rain, local protests, and local other events; it was a great turnout. Solid numbers are still being processed and will be posted on Basecamp. Board Member Grabowski is creating a highlight reel of the festival comprised of video, photos, drone footage, and time-lapse videos. Board Member Zachares recounts her vendor sales over the last 4 Pride Festivals and how the weather affects both attendees and sales. Board Member Grochowsky brought up how the new blueprint of Pride also had a possible hand in attendance and sale variance. A post-Pride Festival survey will be sent out to get feedback from stakeholders.

B. **Unhoused Update**

Executive Director Shah provided an update on the unhoused population, stating that he is working with the township on their efforts to secure a coordinator to lead efforts in addressing issues related to homelessness. Board Member Grabowsky mentioned that he does see more police presence in key areas such as Bloomfield Ave, Church St, Park St, and Fullerton Ave, and that presence has had a positive impact so far. Board Member Grabowsky has also mentioned how he would like to designate spaces for an influx of religious folks to pray safely.

C. **Hiring Status**

Shah mentions that there will hopefully be an update on a new Assistant Director in the coming weeks.

VI. TREASURER REPORT

(10 MINUTES)

D. **Budget Reforecast**

A budget reforecast was handed out, with adjustments made to grant money, expenses, etc. Revenue increased by \$4,000 due to the sale of trash cans to Lackawanna Plaza. The DMO funding is still up in the air. The Main Street grant has been capped at \$30,000. Maintenance has been increased by \$5,000 for event cleanup and beautification. There was a decrease of \$10,000 in public art, such as murals. Staff was reduced by \$45,000 by not having an Assistant Director for half the year. Support Event funding was reduced by \$20,000, which is a direct result of the Main Street Grant cut. \$14,000 is saved by suspending the Storefront Mastery contract for 5 months. Strategic initiatives were also cut by \$30,000. All of these results in being positive \$4,000 which is up from the original budget, where we were in the negative.

E. **2026 Budget Schedule and Process**

Treasurer Silver anticipates a draft for the budget for the September meeting, and be to be able to vote on it in October.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

(10 MINUTES)

A. **Graffiti**

CDS cleaned up various graffiti last week, and will be doing the parking decks in a two-stage process next week. Each deck will take approximately 1-3 days. Another round of removal will be scheduled for the Fall. The town will reimburse us for the graffiti removal. CDS will potentially paint over select areas, with paint provided by the town. Board Member Grabowsky mentioned that his buildings use an anti-graffiti spray that doesn't allow spray paint to absorb into the walls, and that may be a better choice financially.

B. Bylaw's Report (Matt Silverman)

There have been 3 meetings to discuss the bylaws, with another meeting upcoming. Board Vice President Silverman said the committee is about halfway through reviewing and revising. An HR committee will likely be added. A draft will be ready with a tentative date of September.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

(5 MINUTES)

A. Planting Contest (Jaji Packard)

Board Member Packard is still accepting entries for the planter contest. Judging will begin the week of June 27th, with winners announced the first week of July.

B. Repeal Ordinance O-21-23 - Supporting Small Businesses (Jacob Nieman)

Board Member Nieman was absent, Vice President Silverman gave the update for him. The ordinance says that when you change the use of a building, you must add parking. The issue is that developers and business owners have to jump through many hoops in order to be exempt from providing parking when it's not feasible. This, in turn, discourages businesses from opening up in Montclair, especially mom and pop shops that don't have an abundance of money or space to add parking. Board Member Featherstone adds that it also discourages investors from investing in businesses in Montclair.

Executive Director Shah suggests Board Members look over Board Member Nieman's write-up so we can present a strong case to the Town Council. Executive Director Shah wants to loop in Daniel White of the township, as this is a matter that affects all of Montclair.

IX. ROUND TABLE TOPIC – Notice of Claim

(20 MINUTES)

There has been no further notices coming from Mr. Powhlotanna. Executive Director Shah mentioned that we should be covered by our insurance if anything were to progress.

X. OPEN DISCUSSION - New Ideas, Comments, Questions

(TIME PERMITTING)

The Garden Club has teamed up with the town to revive the Church St traffic circle. Board Member Bussey noted that the MAAHF celebrated its 35th year and its parade was great, although it was held in the rain. Saturday June 21st will have the Lackawanna Station ribbon cutting, Montclair Film's Movie Night showing of Wicked, and the Juneteenth Festival. Board Member Grabowsky also extended an invitation to the BID Board to attend the TEDx Talk that the Mezzanine will be hosting on June 24th. Board Member Bussey suggested a committee to create a type of "Buddy System" between stakeholders to foster a sense of community.

ADJOURNMENT

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

*Next full board meeting will be **Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 7 pm** at the BID office.*