

MONTCLAIR CENTER BID

GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015

Montclair Center BID - Board Meeting

September 17, 2025, 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.

In Person at **BID Offices** 26 Lackawanna Plaza or via [Zoom](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

(3 Minutes)

Board Members in attendance: Neil Grabowsky, Ernst Goldman, Jacob Nieman, Jaji Packard, Matt Silverman, Kristen Zachares, Matt Horrigan, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, George Brennan

Board Members attending via Zoom: Mary Cumella, Emer Featherstone, Karen Schloss-Diaz, Te’Nijah Bussey,

Staff: Abhishake Shah, Lauren Barnas

Absent: David Placek, Natalie Haddad, Brian Silver, Rachael Grochowski, Rahum Williams, Aminah Toler and Nat Testa

Public: Deb Sharp & Suzanne Cekoric of Indivisible, Deputy Mayor Susan Shin Anderson

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Board Member Bussey. Board Member Schloss-Diaz seconded it.

II. ADOPTION OF JUNE MINUTES

(3 Minutes)

Vice President Silverman moved to table the approval the June Minutes until next board meeting, President Goldman seconded the motion.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

(3 Minutes Per Guest)

Suzanne and Deb from Montclair Indivisible (One Million Rising) spoke about their campaign called Signs for Solidarity; supporting the immigrant community of Montclair. They are educating the businesses of Montclair via handing out flyers and materials. Executive Director Shah will connect them with other local organizations that can help them as well.

IV. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT** (*Ernst Goldman*)

(25 Minutes)

A. **Board Membership Changes and Transitions**

President Goldman thanked the BID team for the work they did at the Jazz Festival this past weekend. President Goldman announced that Board Secretary Cumella will be stepping down and Assistant Secretary Nieman will be stepping in in her place.

B. **Board of Directors Election**

Vice President Silverman asked for a review on how board elections work. Board Member Packard explained that our elections begin in November, and voting gets mailed out to all stakeholders no later than 21 days before the December board meeting. The nominating committee tallies the votes, and new members are announced at the Annual Meeting. Officers are voted on in January. Director Shah states that open seats include property owner seats, at large positions, business owners, etc.

C. **Bylaw's report (Matt Silverman)**

Vice President Silverman gave his report, stating that there were several meetings over the summer to improve the bylaw's and are nearly finished. The Board of Directors must vote to approve any amendments to the bylaws- there is a motion introduced, and then a correspondence is sent out with the motion, and then voted on at the November meeting. Officer descriptions and an HR committee are some of the things being looked at within bylaw amendments.

D. **Marketing, Public Relations & DMO Committee**

President Goldman reviewed the Marketing committee meeting, Director Shah gave an overview of the duties of the marketing department of the BID. Board Member Schloss-Diaz and Board Member Bussey will be co-chair of the Marketing Committee. They are looking to add more members to the committee. Board Member Grabowsky offered his video/photo skills to any committee that needs it.

E. **Executive Director Annual Review**

Board President Goldman and executive team had Director Shah's mid-year review and will be sending a survey to board members.

V. **TREASURERS REPORT** (*Brian Silver*)

(15 Minutes)

A. **2026 Budget Drafts**

Board Member Pedrosa suggests moving the treasurers report to next board meeting because of both Treasurer Silvers absence and an upcoming finance meeting. Board President Goldman motions to table the report, and Board Member Packard seconded moving it until after having the finance meeting. The Finance meeting will be Friday the 19th at 2 PM.

Director Shah reviewed the bridge report, including DMO changes, building improvements, money savings seen by not having an assistant director, moving services in-house, removing consulting staff, etc.

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

(15 Minutes)

A. Executive Directors Summer Report

Director Shah noted 33 new businesses opening over the summer season, including various spots at The Little Shops at Lackawanna Station, The Saint Clair, MM By Morimoto, with Insomnia Cookies, Hummus Republic, and Terra coming soon. Board Member Schloss-Diaz inquired on if we limit the saturation of similar businesses within close proximity. Board Member Packard gave her viewpoint on how it would feel to be told who can and can't lease her space. Board Member Zachares gave their viewpoint on as a business owner, how it would look as a visitor if they had to pass several of the same business before seeing a different business. Board Member Grabowsky gave his view of how being selective with tenants has big payoffs for Montclair.

Jazz Festival 2025

Director Shah raved about the success of Jazz Festival and its new location at Lackawanna Station. The turnout was great, our stakeholders did well as vendors and at their stores. The fact that Bloomfield Ave was closed allowed for less car traffic surrounding the festival and opened up bus access to those who don't drive to be able to attend the festival. Preliminary numbers suggest 27,000 people and Board Member Grabowsky notes seeing a substantially larger linger time. He also suggests using the BID tent as an information tent. Board Member Packard asked about how the businesses outside the festival did. Board Member Zachares had both their booth and storefront open and noted that there was a flow of people making their way to Jazz Fest from far up Bloomfield Ave. Director Shah recounted helping wherever he could between Jazz House Kids, Lackawanna Station, and various BID member vendors.

B. Staffing Updates

Director Shah noted that the staff picked up a lot of work this past year due to lack of sufficient staffing and is in the final stages of hiring a new Assistant Director.

C. Board of Directors Election

Covered in an earlier report

VII. NEW BUSINESS

(15 Minutes)

A. Repealing Ordinance O-21-23

Assistant Secretary Nieman reviewed the ordinance regarding parking minimums within the BID, which removed a parking minimum exemption for businesses that expanded by less than 15% in intensity of use. He mentions that the exemption would benefit the BID and the township by maintaining a diverse economic community, reducing tax burdens, and encouraging diverse business uses.

B. Holiday Parking Policy

Vice President Silverman reviewed the free parking tradition around the holidays. There is a suggestion to offer free parking in the decks instead because the capacity is higher. Deputy Mayor Shin gave her perspective, asking if the parking needs to be as long in terms of timeframe (November-January) Board Member Packard suggested starting the free parking on Small Business Saturday (Nov 29th) as a kickoff to the holiday season.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

President Goldman has moved to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Packard seconded it.

Next Meeting of the Board of Directors will be on **Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 7 PM**

Upcoming Committee Meetings:

Finance Committee: **Friday, September 19th @ 2:00 PM**

Recruitment, Nominations & Elections Committee: **Thursday, September 25th @ 2:00PM**