

# **MONTCLAIR CENTER BID**

## **GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD WINNER 2015**

**Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting**  
**June 15, 2022 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.**  
**In Person at BID Office or via Zoom**

Board members in attendance: Celestina Ando, David Cummings, Ashley Cyrus, Emer Featherstone, Ernst Goldman, Matt Horigan, Roger Mazzeo, Jill Montague, Jaji Packard, David Placek, Lori Price Abrams, Elizabeth Rich, Robert Squires, Nat Testa, Kristen Zachares

Absent: Jeff Beck, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, David Harrison, Kiahna Malloy, Hipolito Pollantis,

Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney

### **I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME**

Jaji Packard called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

### **II. ADOPTION OF MAY MINUTES**

Jaji Packard moved to approve the May minutes.

Jill Montague seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

A. Supported events of the last three weeks:

- African American Heritage Festival

BID provided a hybrid tier 3 support package, which included marketing, stage in-kind, and policing. BDP Holdings, LLC., donated the TD Bank space for free. With musical performances, vendors and a wide swath of attendees, the event was incredibly well-received. The BID made a solid partnership with MAAHF.

David Cummings mentioned that MAAHF was very pleased with the support it received from the BID. Even though next year the event will likely go back to Nishuane Park there might be an opportunity to bring the Friday night event to Lackawanna Plaza. He also mentioned that the MAAHF trolley tours, taking in all the African-American history in town, will likely soon start also from Lackawanna Plaza.

- Rocky Horror Picture Show

Another great partnership with Montclair Film, Out Montclair, and BDP Holdings, LLC. The BID provided in-kind support with the stage, tent, and cost of police presence.

Jill Montague mentioned it was a lovely night, with many food and beverage vendors. It was a very happy crowd of more than 500, many in costume, with families having a great time with the movie, pre-show and live performances from the Ordinary Kids. She said Montclair Film appreciated all the help from the BID, along with their partnership with MAAHF for shared services of porta potties.

B. Pride Festival recap and first data

Working with the Out Montclair organization has been fabulous. It has been a wonderful collaboration; they are incredibly well organized. Thanks to the county and township cooperation. Also, the MPD, MFD, MES were all outstanding with their event, security and emergency protocols. Our vendors were very happy. This highly successful event is a fabulous look for our organization.

Kristen Zachares said it was an incredible day for the Eclectic Chic Boutique. Non-stop all day at both the booth and the store. Roger Mazzeo said Benvenuti had a very busy, above average day.

Placer.ai will be able to provide some incredible information regarding the event. Data is still being compiled, and final numbers will be made available to the board and marketing committee. A few data points so far:

- peak event time was between 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- average stay approximately 106 minutes, 5,000 attendees stayed longer than 150 minutes.
- trade area was huge; attendees came from as far away as NYC, Brooklyn, Long Island, Waldwick, NY, Philadelphia, and Stroudsburg, PA, as well as from all over New Jersey.
- locally 29% of attendees came from Montclair.
- 54% of attendees were not from neighboring towns; 30% travelled further than 10 miles

We have received 40 responses from our stakeholder post-event survey so far, with mixed results. Some businesses had sales well-above average, some did not. However, 87% of respondents said, in terms of community impact, festivals of this sort are definitely worth the time and investment. There were a couple of complaints about deliveries and Uber eats not being able to access businesses due to the street closures. We would love to get together with these stakeholders and the Economic Development and Stakeholder Committees to help come up with a solution to these issues.

Two respondents were disappointed there are no events in the 4<sup>th</sup> ward, although clearly that perception is untrue. David Cummings mentioned that because of construction at Glenfield Park several of the usual events did not take place in that ward this year, so that probably added to that assumption.

Lori Price Abrams mentioned perhaps we could do some micro neighborhood pop-ups or small-scale festivals in this area.

Parking for the event seemed to go smoothly. At one point the Crescent deck had only 28 spaces left, so was greatly utilized. With each event we learn better practices. Out Montclair provided great communication regarding parking and restroom placement. They created a comprehensive map of the event, which was pushed out and shared on all media and social platforms.

C. New and noteworthy in Montclair Center

- Since the last board meeting, we have had four business openings and zero closings. However, in the last three months only two openings have been restaurants. Is the Township's "change of use" ordinance affecting restaurant openings?
- The Church Street traffic circle is looking neglected. The BID helped out last year with plantings and watering with funds from a grant. However, the \$18,000 cost of planting and maintenance is not within our budget this year. Jason Gleason has reached out to Jose German to try and find a solution. Perhaps we can get perennials, that need little water, as there is no sprinkler/water connectivity here. Consideration is also needed for plants that do not grow too tall, to obstruct the view for vehicular safety. David Placek mentioned he has a landscaping contact who might be able to do something in the circle in exchange for putting up a business sign there.
- Jason Gleason announced that AnnMarie Sekeres is leaving the BID in a couple of weeks. She has been a great asset to our organization for the last six years.
- Meetings with Jazz Fest have been positive recently. We are changing up our sponsorship title to 'Collaborative Partner.' There is a slew of meetings coming up for the first event in July. The festival will be wonderful this year. David Placek said the musical line-ups are being released shortly, and it will be bigger and better than last year. Using knowledge from last year's event and also the recent Pride Fest, Jazz House is more organized, and trying to getting festival information out sooner.
- The small DMO grant for \$25,000 will be submitted tomorrow.

**V. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Celestina Ando reviewed the modified vs proposed budget in a bridge report. The BID is fiscally sound and on track. However, due to increases in contracted services, audit lines, insurance and legal fees, along with utilities, small movements in budget lines have been necessary. We have banner and grant overages. The BID is starting to budget for 2023, along with preparing a capital budget.

**VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

A. Executive Director Review

Jaji Packard reported the survey is coming out shortly. The executive committee will conduct a review in August and report results and recommendations at the September board meeting. There will be an opportunity for full board discussion.

## VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jaji Packard said recent committee meeting reports will be coming out soon. There is one more marketing meeting scheduled for June 29, before the summer break.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

### A. June 21 Council Meeting re: Glenridge Parking Deck

Jaji Packard would love the board to advocate for our businesses by attending the council meeting when they discuss the issues with the Glenridge parking deck. The deck was scheduled to be finished at end of 2021, and no work has been done on it since January. The answers given by Township are not making sense. The garbage is being stored out on Bloomfield Avenue and has led to an increase in the rat population. It also smells terrible, especially on hotter days. Jason Gleason will speak on behalf of all the many businesses impacted by this. He is asking for better communication. It is embarrassing for the BID and town councilors. No one put a sanitation plan together before the construction.

Both council members, Lori Price Abrams and David Cummings, acknowledged the frustration but said they are unable to comment.

### B. Strategic Plan One Year Out

Ashley Cyrus and Jason Gleason gave a review of the strategic plan – one year out based on key conclusions as outlined by PUMA:

1. *Post COVID, growth is likely to attract new residents, businesses and investment, and also intensify pressure on displacement.*
  - 65 new businesses opened all throughout the district in the last year and half. Most that closed were due to the pandemic and raises in rents.
  - How will rent control impact our district? What about displacement? Jaji Packard said her buildings were fully rented with no one planning to move out. She only lost one commercial tenant due to COVID and the others that made it through are booming. Kristen Zachares said some businesses on her block figured out how to navigate the pandemic better than others, it also depended on the type of industry. Roger Mazzeo said if businesses pivoted correctly and got through the pandemic they are most likely thriving now.
2. *The BID should strive to adopt a hybrid management model that includes initiatives more commonly found in urban districts that are market-based, revenue diversified, and property owner focused.*
  - New pole banner system coming online
  - Placer Ai and business inventory being established, can then fine tune marketing efforts.

- Shared services agreement still important and will continue to work in this area.
3. *A stronger working partnership with the Township will benefit Montclair Center and the community-at-large.*
    - Working with department heads more consistently, trying to work with Township, some wins some losses, address accordingly.
    - Huge help to have David and Lori sit on the board and be active participants. Really appreciate these councilors efforts. Already come a long way.
  4. *The BID can strengthen its role in helping guide a prosperous business district by offering new economic development services.*
    - Built better partnerships with community non-profit organizations, including festival partners.
    - Better partnership with EDA, Department of Community Affairs, Secretary of State's Office, Governor's Office, Montclair State University.
    - Placer Ai information is key, including a void analysis report, looking at vacant spaces. What would be the best business for a particular vacant space, based on all kinds of data and analytics. This is fantastic as a recruitment tool.
    - Advocacy for better ordinances, including vendor permits, sanitation, building permits, pedlets and parklets, etc.
    - If awarded the DMO grant that would be a major component to offering new economic development services.
  5. *The BID should distribute benefits throughout the entire district.*
    - Supporting numerous activities at Lackawanna Plaza. Partnership with Studio Montclair and incubator space at the Leach Building is bringing focus at the end of the district.
    - Will be working on a partnership with the new MAM administrative board.
  6. *The BID should employ new operational practices and systems.*
    - Possibly outsourcing services to improve services in our district.

Ashley will post a review of these conclusions and goals to Basecamp. The original PUMA Strategic Plan is posted for new board members.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Ambassador Program: Exploring our options  
 Jaji Packard announced that the BID is considering outsourcing our ambassador program. This has been reviewed by several past executive directors and was also mentioned to be standard practice in larger BIDs by PUMA. There have been lots of challenges in the ambassador program this year, including hiring employees for this position. The BID will consult with the Clean, Safe and Green committee to look at the pros and cons of outsourcing and consider the options. Meanwhile, the executive committee has authorized the BID to accept RFPs.

B. Wellmont Arts Plaza Summer Events

We are waiting to hear from Township regarding this. Funds are set aside for these events.

C. Montclair Film Festival October 21-30

The BID is excited to be partnered with Montclair Film for their festival this year.

X. **OPEN DISCUSSION** – New Ideas, Comments, Questions

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Celestina Ando moved to adjourn the meeting. Jill Montague seconded.

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:**

September 14, 2022 • 7:00 p.m.