

# **MONTCLAIR CENTER BID**

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

**Montclair Center BID - Full Board Meeting**  
**May 25, 2022 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.**  
**In Person at BID Office or via Zoom**

Board members in attendance: David Cummings, Ashley Cyrus, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa, Ernst Goldman, David Harrison, Matt Horrigan, Jaji Packard, David Placek, Lori Price Abrams, Elizabeth Rich, Nat Testa, Kristen Zachares

Absent: Celestina Ando, Jeff Beck, Emer Featherstone, Kiahna Malloy, Roger Mazzeo, Jill Montague, Hipolito Pollantis, Robert Squires

Staff: Jason Gleason, Pauline Heaney

Guests: Craig Cornell, Amir Williams, Danny Kim DiRasa, Sian

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

Jaji Packard called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.

Welcomed new board members Ernst Goldman and David Harrison and guests.

### **II. ADOPTION OF APRIL MINUTES**

Jaji Packard moved to approve the April minutes with changes as presented.

Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Craig Cornell, owner of Diamond Cycle on Bloomfield Avenue, asked the BID board for help advocating with the Township. Due to the parking deck construction and its massive delays, he has not been able to access the back of his store in almost two years. Consequently, his business is down 70%, and he is desperate. Despite attending and speaking at numerous council meetings and communicating with the Township manager he is receiving no resolution or getting any answers. It is very dangerous for customers, particularly those with small children, to load and offload bicycles from Bloomfield Avenue; very often there is no space available to even do so. Both councilors at the meeting stated they understood his frustration but are unable to speak regarding the deck due to potential litigation.

Amir Williams, Danny Kim DiRasa, and Sian spoke about their new business at 4 Lackawanna Plaza. They are opening an arts/event space for live jazz, poetry, art gallery, and event rentals. They plan to have a soft opening Saturday, June 18, and would like to have vendors, and food trucks outside their storefront.

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

A. New and Noteworthy in Montclair Center

- seven new business openings and zero closures since last board meeting.

- the BID, along with Jazz House Kids, and BDP Holdings, LLC., was presented the Downtown NJ Award for Tools of the Trade Excellence for a Catalyst Event.
- Jeff Beck of East Side Mags was visited by Governor Murphy and Congresswoman Mikie Sherill to showcase all their state initiatives for small businesses.
- 40% of businesses have responded to the online survey. Already yielding great results, including that 80% of our businesses are female owned.
- Data project collection is ongoing.
- Onboarding begun with Placer, a very powerful data tool, with geofencing the BID district and Pride Festival footprint. It will provide such data as how many people came, how much money did they spend, where did attendees go, and where did they park? Placer can also provide a time lapse route map showing the route people took to get to the event, useful for MPD purposes.

**B. DMO Grant Update**

Consultant Judy Ross, president of the NJ DMO board, was hired to help write the grant, which has been successfully submitted. The BID has a strong case to receive this grant as an arts and cultural center in NJ. This is setting us up for the future when the Essex Hudson Greenway is finally open. The second, smaller grant will be submitted shortly.

**C. Studio Montclair Partnership Update**

Renovations are already underway at the Leach Building for the new art space with Studio Montclair. They are anticipating a ribbon cutting toward the end of June. Jason Gleason is in talks with Carlos Pomares for a show at the end of July. Many other community partners are also interested in this event space.

**V. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Jaji Packard reported on behalf of Celestina Ando that the BID is trending under budget, and we are financially fit.

**VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**A. Stormwater Update and Thanks**

Jaji Packard thanked the council members for passing Ordinance 22-09, which funds a study for the Park Street culvert.

**B. Executive Director Review: Process, timeline, and survey**

Jaji Packard said it was time for the annual executive director review. She will send a survey to the board and would like feedback before June in order to complete the review in July.

**VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Jaji Packard reported the committees had a series of productive meetings, the highlights of which are summarized on this month's agenda.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Policy Needed: When does the BID support donation/fundraising efforts by other non-profit organization?

Jaji Packard reported the BID receives numerous requests from religious organizations, schools, and other non-profits to support or publicize their fundraising efforts. We need a policy determining who we can support. The difference between partnering and sponsoring. Discussion took place on various instances such as using our WildApricot database to share flyers for Planned Parenthood or the Unitarian Church soliciting raffle prizes for their fundraiser. Some guidance from the board would be helpful. Our responses to these requests have to be consistent. Are we sharing these requests to just stakeholders or to all contacts in our public facing newsletter? Are we implying endorsement, or promoting the event? Distinction should be whether the event draws people into the BID.

David Cummings spoke about the ask of support concerning the unhoused population. Jason said this directly helps solves several BID issues, especially concerning safety, while also supporting the unhoused population who live in our district.

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Update on Pride Festival

Jason Gleason reported organization for the Pride Festival is going very well, along with regular meeting with fire officials, MPD, and solid safety plans. Festival organizers are very efficient and there is good communication. Township has been working with us, including Craig Brandon and DCS who are collaborating with us regarding sanitation. This kind of cooperation is a testament to the Out Montclair organization. There is great community excitement for this event. The organizers estimate 10-12,000 attendees. Jason Gleason believes this may be closer to 15,000.

- B. Update on Jazz Festival

David Placek reported that Jazz House are planning two Soundcheck Series events at Lackawanna Plaza on July 13 and 27 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. A larger Block Party event, also on Lackawanna Plaza, will occur on August 13, from noon to 10:00 p.m., with the big event happening on September 10 from 1:00 pm to 9:00 p.m., with an expected crowd of 30,000. All these events are free. Announcements and vendor registration will be going out soon.

- C. Main Street Now Conference Report and Discussion

Jaji Packard reported the Main Street conference in Richmond, VA, was great, with more than 2000 attendees and lots of networking opportunities.

1. Jason's impressions and take-aways

- younger, more diverse attendees than in previous years
- made lots of great connections, and affirmations he and the BID are doing the right things
- data collection is big
- open container laws have changed in VA, especially under special events permits. Could be applied to NJ?

Parks and recreations discussions were also key. How to harness your parks and downtowns. For example, the Allegany River, PA district has a quarter of their business coming off the bike trail. We have plenty of time to lay the groundwork as a start/ending point for the Essex Hudson Greenway, we can tailor our marketing messaging accordingly. Planning how to set up our infrastructure, and what public utilities will we need.

Jason also learned, and will continue to research, how we can use county Community Development Block Grants.

2. Jaji's impressions and take-aways

- growing entrepreneur programs.
- BID needs to provide a 'wow' experience to help consumers remember the space/feeling they had while there.
- build community. Create coalition builders of non-profits.
- data project and geo fencing so valuable.
- great grant resources.
- providing advocacy at state and federal levels. Board level should make connections with high level representatives and elected officials.

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

Craig Cornell discussed how busy bike rentals were throughout the pandemic. People coming from NY to ride in the area. Would like to have a bike tour app for the area. Jason Gleason mentioned bike tour ideas have been submitted as part of our destination marketing in grant.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Jaji Packard moved to adjourn the meeting. Ashley Cyrus seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**June 15, 2022 • 7:00 p.m.**