



April 8, 2019 Meeting Minutes

6:00 PM - Council Chambers

Jane Kobuta called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on April 8, 2019. Kevin Sluka conducted roll call. The following Board Members were present:

Present: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz, Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, John Flores, Kevin Sluka, Jane Kobuta

Absent:

The assembly joined the dais in a salute to the flag.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Approval of March 8, 2019 minutes

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve. Jane Kobuta seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz, Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, John Flores, Kevin Sluka, Jane Kobuta

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Chairperson Statement

Finance Report

Executive Director Report

Natalie Pineiro reported that last month was a really great month. From getting ready to receive the Seward Johnson sculptures to going to the National Main Street Conference where we were informed that the NJ Main Street Program was going to be refunded starting later on this month. Natalie gave a brief summary on the various workshops she attended at the conference and the benefits of attending these workshops. Natalie informed the Board of some future workshops on transformation strategies and already registered a few of the Board Members who were interested in attending. Natalie stated that there are other grant opportunities through the Main Street Program and that we should possibly consider a façade improvement program for the area going east on Main Street past the Somerset Hotel. Natalie will also be sharing the various grant programs with the Board. Jane Kobuta added that networking with people in similar positions is a tremendous opportunity to brainstorm on common issues and coming up with solutions for the downtown.

Natalie Pineiro, Mike Kerwin and Kevin Sluka met with the Environmental Committee and discussed the Treescape Program. Mike stated to the Committee that this was long-term investment to the appearance of the Main Street and that it has to be done right. There was a difference in opinion as to the chosen tree for the Main Street. Kevin stated that the sidewalk in front of Central Pizzeria and the location of the recent downed tree should be the first two locations to be taken care of.

Natalie reported that there is a new agenda for the Board training and that it is going to take place on Thursday, April 11th from 8 am to 11 am.

Approximately 30 merchants are currently signed up for Girls Night Out and we are waiting on a few more confirmations from other merchants. Natalie also reported that there are a few items on the budget for infrastructure, such as tables and tents that are zeroed out because a few of these items have not been used in the past. Going forward these items are going to be used all season long for multiple events. The 10X10 tents will be branded with the DSA, Inc. logo to use throughout the season for registration and volunteer recruitment. These expenses will go into the general Marketing expense going forward. The Red Carpet will be sponsored by the photobooth company (?) and we will be looking for volunteers to man the event as opposed to paying volunteers. We will be partnering with the high school to stuff the bags and with a couple of churches in town to man the event. A feature has been added to this year's event where they will be asking every participant 5 questions before being able to use the photobooth. The data will be turned over to the DSA which will then be turned over to the merchants. We will be utilizing the stickers to mark off the participating merchants. The event will be different this year in that general admission is free and there will be no totes. There will be a \$10 VIP "Pamper Yourself" tote which will include an eye mask, bath bomb and a turbee (?) towel. Entertainment will be provided by a house DJ and a cover band and School of Rock will be performing for free at the Giardina Walkway. There will be a palm reader at Evolve and Pinot's Palette is going to have a medium at their location by appointment only. The evening will finish off with a drag queen performance on Division Street. Provident Bank and Office Evolution have offered a \$500 sponsorship and Fulton Bank has offered a \$1,000 sponsorship for Girls Night Out.

New Business

A new bookkeeper has been hired Imani Stamper on a part-time basis. She will be setting up the DSA Quickbooks account but will not be working on the audit. Mike Kerwin asked that she be invited to the next Board Meeting.

A task force has been put together to work on the relocation of the DSA office. The task force looked at a few options; however, Jane Kobuta believes Office Evolution would be the best option since it is all inclusive. Natalie will be sending the proposed locations to the Board for approval.

Natalie reported that she will be approving two event proposals to be held on Division Street. One for Arts on Division for their Art All Day event and the other for Zarephath Church.

The vacancy report was presented, and Natalie informed the Board that out of the 30 vacancies, 16 will be filled soon.

Natalie reached out to the Shakespeare Theater of NJ to see the possibility of bringing theater to Division Street. They were able to give us a couple of options during August. The information will be passed on to the Board as soon as it is received. Rick St. Pierre suggested getting some sponsorship from the restaurants for a dinner and Shakespeare type of event. Tony Brokenborough suggested possibly created a themed event and bringing on “renaissance” type of vendors to Division Street during this event.

Diversity Report - Mike Kerwin

Mike was prompted by his Executive Committee to look at diversity and be able to discuss it. A Diversity Task Force was put together with the cooperation of the Somerset County Planning Board comparing diversity in the 90’s compared to today. In looking at the rankings Somerset County was ranked #21 as the happiest county, #29 for raising families, #1 best county to live in and #3 for millennials. Because of gentrification, the Caucasian population has increased in Somerville and the foreign-born number has gone down. Somerset County resident median age as a whole has increased; however, Somerville’s resident median age has decreased. In summary it seems that trends have changed and it’s important to know this because it can impact businesses and towns as a whole.

Natalie reported that the new cleaning company has executed their contract and will be starting on April 15th.

Motion to Approve the Purchase Orders/Payments

Rick St. Pierre made first motion, Mike Kerwin motioned second.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz. Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, John Flores, Kevin Sluka, Jane Kobuta

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Jane Kobuta made a motion to open the public. There was no comment from the public so Jane Kobuta closed the public session.

Jane Kobuta made a motion to adjourn. All approved.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz. Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, John Flores, Kevin Sluka, Jane Kobuta

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Prepared by:
Anna Diaz on May 1, 2019