



Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.
February 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes
6:00 PM - Office Evolution

Jane Kobuta called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on February 10, 2020. Kevin Sluka conducted roll call. The following Board Members were present:

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

Absent: Jenn Pearson, Mark Aziz

The assembly joined in a salute to the flag.

Rick St. Pierre called for a motion to approve the last board meeting minutes of January 13, 2020. John Flores seconded same.

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Remarks from Chairperson

Jane Kobuta reported that her only remarks are Downtown Somerville's winter igloos have been a hit and we are very pleased with the feedback given from the community.

Executive Director Report

Update on Pending Items

Natalie reported that Streetplus ambassador hospitality services deemed Somerville is not a large enough town for their services.

The DSA will be hosting a conference call with Smart City Media to discuss digital kiosks through Downtown Somerville on February 18, 2020.

Support Center and Oxford Communication will host a second round of focus groups with the DSA, business owners, property owners, real estate agents and borough council. These groups

are anticipated to occur during the week of March 2, 2020. Natalie will email for availability for the first half day board session in mid-March. The final half day board session is projected to occur by April, with final documentation available by the end of April 2020.

Debut of Billboard Windows

Decorative billboard window coverings have been installed at the old Hungry Hound location across the street, as well as the old Electrolux location, 96 W Main Street. These showcase statistics for Downtown Somerville, highlight major events, and promote reasons for opening up shop in Downtown Somerville. Feedback has been very well received for this project. Next upcoming target locations are replacing graffiti panels next to Mannion's in front of construction site, old Provident Bank location, and upcoming Vitamin & Juice shop location. These locations are still awaiting approval.

Concept for Retail Advertisement

The DSA hopes to hire an outside consultant to streamline retail businesses recruited into vacant Somerville storefronts. This individual would act as a peacekeeper with local brokers and handle recruitment for these vacant stores based on a wishlist that the DSA would create. The desire is to pay the individual a consultant fee on a month to month basis rather than commission. John Flores suggests creating additional marketing materials as resources for prospective business owners. All discuss the divide between property owners renting to anyone, and the need for Somerville to streamline businesses that are coming into town. This consultant may act as a pathway to move forward and reach property owners. Natalie will reach out for a proposal, and put together reasonable costs.

Proposal for the curation of strategic Public Art by Weingarten Art Group

Natalie reported that artistic installations in Downtown Somerville have had a positive reaction among the community - Seward Johnson sculptures, igloos as creative placemaking, murals, and more. Natalie advised focusing on using Division Street as an experiential public art space and adding other engaging public art opportunities in addition to static murals. The board discussed involving Somerset County's Cultural & Heritage department - Caitlin Bundy, as well as AOD for support and potentially finding grant funding. Weingarten Art Group (based in Houston & NYC) would be available to visit for a proposal to see which exhibits would fit our needs best. The desire is that Somerville will consistently showcase something fresh and new.

Kevin Sluka made a motion to approve moving forward with a proposal by Weingarten Art Group. Rick St. Pierre seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Jane Kobuta, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre, Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre
Nay: Tony Brokenborough, John Flores (contingent upon waiting for the rollout of the Strategic Plan)
Abstain: None
Recuse: None

Explanation of Advertising Contract with Edible Jersey/ Proposal of Advertising Co-op

Natalie mentioned that Edible Jersey is publishing a Somerville edition featuring many of Downtown Somerville's eateries like Carol's Creative Chocolatez, Village Brewing Company, Verve,

Salted Lime, Blue Sheep Bake Shop, etc. Natalie reported that Edible Jersey has offered the DSA a discounted rate for advertising space due to our non-profit status. Their proposal includes a full page ad contract featured in 4 different issues.

Natalie proposed that the DSA would pay for half of the advertising space, and four restaurants may split the remaining balance. She proposed paying for the advertising space and using it as a co-op for restaurants to advertise. Rick St. Pierre added that general pricing for Edible Jersey ads begin at approximately \$1,000 for a quarter-page ad, featured in 3 month quarterly issues. This specific edition will focus on restaurants that had not already been highlighted by Edible Jersey, and the rest of the advertisements for each edition will shift with the theme of each edition (i.e. advertising brewpubs for brewpub editions).

The DSA hopes to help advertise the restaurants, and is looking at similar opportunities for retailers as well (i.e. Bridgewater Lifestyle magazine). The goal is to include advertising for Downtown Somerville business as a part of this year's plan.

Tony Brokenborough made a motion to approve this advertising contract with Edible Jersey. Iris Frank seconded same.

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Continuation of Contract with TAP Into Somerville

Natalie reported that last year's contract with TAPinto Somerville was a 6 month contract costing \$2,400 monthly. Rod Hirsch of TAPinto agreed to extend a one year contract to the DSA at a rate of \$1,500 per month. This would include editorial content, publishing of press releases, leaderboard ads, and more.

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve the continuation of a one-year contract with TAPinto. Tony Brokenborough seconded same.

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Proposal for a Division St Easter Egg Hunt by Destination NJ/Destination Somerville

Natalie reported that the two gentlemen of Destination Somerville are proposing a Division Street Easter Egg Hunt on April 11, 2020 - one week before Easter. The DSA board agrees to host the event as long as it remains inclusive. Natalie reported that Destination Somerville would like to work with businesses in town to encourage kids to look for eggs inside businesses. The DSA would help out with the marketing, and Destination Somerville has hired an event planner to coordinate this event.

St Patrick's Day Parade Sponsorship

Natalie proposed that the DSA presents a Gold sponsorship for the St. Patrick's Day parade this year. Last year, the DSA sponsorship helped out with trash removal which greatly helped Somerville DPW. The DSA has not had a sponsorship presence for the St. Patrick's Day parade in the past. Rick St. Pierre adds that involvement in the St. Patrick's Day Parade would be a great movement for the DSA and for the town, as an estimated 13,000 people show up to Downtown Somerville for this event.

Mike Kerwin made a motion to approve the Gold sponsorship for the 2020 St. Patrick's Day parade. Iris Frank seconds same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Jane Kobuta, Tony Brokenborough, John Flores, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre, Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre
Nay: None
Abstain: None
Recuse: None

Formation of 2020 Committees (Infrastructure, Finance, Marketing, Events)

Committees will stand as they were last year.

- 2020 Infrastructure Committee: Kevin Sluka, Mike Kerwin, Iris Frank, Natalie Pineiro
- 2020 Finance Committee: Rick St. Pierre, Jane Kobuta, Mark Aziz, Natalie Pineiro
- 2020 Marketing Committee: Natalie Pineiro, Samantha Shaw, Jenn Pearson, Iris Frank, John Flores
- 2020 Events Committee: Tony Brokenborough, Natalie Pineiro, Samantha Shaw, Shaun & Michelle of Gallery on Main, Sejal of Robert Wood Johnson (Premiere 2020 Sponsor), Dmitry of Mainly Gadgets, Brittany Burton of Revive Consignment.

Kevin Sluka advised changing the bylaws to remove the DSA nomination committee. Natalie will add this to the agenda for the March 2020 meeting.

Finance Report

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve the finance report. Kevin Sluka seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Jane Kobuta, Tony Brokenborough, John Flores, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre, Mike Kerwin, Rick St. Pierre
Nay: None
Abstain: None
Recuse: None

Public Comment/ Adjournment

Jane Kobuta opened the meeting for public comment. No members of the public were present.

Jane Kobuta called for a motion to adjourn the February 10, 2020 board meeting.

Mike Kerwin made a motion to adjourn the January 13, 2020 board meeting. Rick St. Pierre seconded same.

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Meeting minutes are provided by Samantha Shaw, Program Coordinator, on March 6, 2020.