



Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.  
November 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes  
6:00 PM - Council Chambers

Jane Kobuta called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on November 12, 2019. Kevin Sluka conducted roll call. The following Board Members were present:

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

Absent: None

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

Rick St. Pierre called for a motion to approve last board meeting's minutes, Jean Pearson seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, Jane Kobuta, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

#### Remarks from Chairperson

Jane Kobuta reported that the Halloween Spooktacular was a successful event, despite weather concerns.

#### Executive Director Report

##### Old Business

Kevin Sluka reported that meetings are still being held with Avigilon about cameras on Division Street. Efforts will be made to combine what the borough is looking for and what the DSA is looking for in regards to the cameras. Majority of dollars will be spent on the server for this technology. Kevin mentioned that the main focus for now still remains on Division Street.

Natalie provided an update about the Main Street New Jersey transformation strategies workshop - MSNJ will notify the DSA when the webinar is available. There have been discussions about the focus of MSNJ & their relationship with the DSA, as MSNJ has a smaller downtown focus and Somerville reaches a larger draw. The consensus is that Main Street New Jersey, in

addition to outside consultants, would be the ideal combination to draft a strategic plan for Somerville.

Mike Kerwin brought up electric car charging in various downtowns, and asked how we can help figure out how to create an environment that promotes this movement rather than restrict it in Somerville. Kevin added that zoning is a bit behind, and the board discussed facilitating future conversations about drop-off zones for transportation services like Uber and Lyft. A pilot program for this town-wide initiative is in the works for 2020. Natalie mentioned a heavy information plan that will be in the works for parking in Downtown Somerville.

Natalie reported that the Cruise Night meeting was a productive start for discussions about the cruisers and the DSA attempting to meet in the middle. The cruiser that had initiated the meeting will be on the committee for future Cruise Night discussions, and the goal is to create strategic partnerships and set up future meetings with all stakeholders involved in Cruise Night (police, parking enforcement, etc.)

Halloween events were very successful, despite the weather. Natalie mentioned that over 80 merchants were involved in the Spooktacular, all of which ran out of candy before conclusion of the event. The large pirate ship which was intended to be placed on Division Street had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather, and this service has been credited for use with a future DSA event (i.e. next year's Spooktacular, or Starlit Cinema).

The Hungry Hound hosted their first ever Howl-O-Ween Pet Parade & Costume Contest, which was moved inside the Hungry Hound due to inclement weather. The event still turned out very well despite it being held indoors, with a pet photo booth by TapSnap and more activities and prizes.

Village Brewing Company held their Magic 98.3 Halloween Party which was a great strategic partnership with the radio station. Iris reported that Village was almost at capacity all night long. Iris also mentioned that this year there was a lot of "bar hopping" between various bars/ restaurants in Downtown Somerville, which opens the doors to have a large scale Downtown Somerville based halloween event. Natalie mentioned bringing in Jersey Girl Food Tours/ Beyond The Plate to work together to bring in an organizational perspective for a town wide, all-day Halloween event.

Natalie reported on the schedule of events for this year's Holiday Jubilee, including ice sculpting demonstrations, strolling carolers, Frozen Characters, free hot cocoa & cookies, photo spots, entertainment, and more. Jenn Pearson mentioned adding a book reading as folks wait in line for photos with Santa. There are still discussions about splitting up Small Business Saturday and Holiday Jubilee for 2020.

Mike Kerwin called for a motion to approve banner poles downtown, contingent on an allowance of \$2,500. Iris Frank seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, Jane Kobuta, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

### New Business

Natalie discussed adding an additional office space within Office Evolution for DSA Program Coordinator/ additional indoor storage. An interior office space is currently available, and can be paid month-to-month.

Rick St Pierre called for a motion to approve adding an additional office space for the DSA. Tony Brokenborough seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, Jane Kobuta, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Kevin Sluka reported that the ordinance for free parking on weekends in Downtown Somerville's Municipal lots is still in effect. Conversations were had about better advertising free parking throughout the downtown.

Natalie presented attractive Downtown Somerville related window coverings over vacant storefronts as billboard retail space for the DSA. Kevin Sluka will check on the current ordinance to see whether or not changes should be made to include this type of temporary storefront messaging. The board agrees that this type of use of space to promote starting a business in Downtown Somerville/ town-wide events would greatly benefit the downtown.

Natalie provided an IDA update, including looking into incorporating Streetplus Ambassadors for Downtown Somerville. These individuals would assist in hospitality and placemaking in the town, which Streetplus would manage. The idea is to add a team of friendly people and add a branding perspective to our cleaning services in Downtown Somerville. Natalie also included adding a digital kiosk service such as Ike to replace the current information board in front of the United Reformed Church.

Natalie reported that with Hub City skates re-opening shop on Division Street, the town will look into creating an ordinance for no skateboarding on Division Street in order to preserve the street and reduce the risk of damage.

The marketing committee reported that meetings are still being held with Oxford Communications, and focus will be on Downtown Somerville's re-brand and the strategic plan first. Website will come thereafter. Oxford will be in touch with MSNJ, and Natalie will be meeting with Ashley from Oxford on Friday and will then provide updates on timelines.

The infrastructure committee reported that igloos in Downtown Somerville are in the works. One igloo will be built to test, and if successful the DSA will build and furnish approximately 6 total.

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve the finance report. Mark Aziz seconded same.

Yea: Iris Frank, Mark Aziz, Jenn Pearson, Tony Brokenborough, Jane Kobuta, Kevin Sluka, Rick St Pierre  
Nay: None  
Abstain: None  
Recuse: None

Jane Kobuta opened meeting for public comment.

Brittany Burton, owner of Revive Consignment asked about the marketing plan for Small Business Saturday. Natalie reported that the DSA has several marketing campaigns currently in action including social media promotions, radio advertisements, billboard advertisements, and TV commercials. A-frames will be made, sidewalk stickers will be placed throughout the downtown and print brochures will also be handed out during the event in addition to increased social media posts and constant contact email blasts. Brittany also suggested looking into advertising (general events) at the fence, as Arts On Division has had items up there in the past.