



Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.
September 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes
6:00 PM - Council Chambers

Jane Kobuta called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on September 9, 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

Absent: Mark Aziz, Mike Kerwin

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

Remarks from Chairperson

Jane Kobuta provided jaywalking flyers for businesses to hand out in efforts to try and curb jaywalking on Main Street. These will be distributed within businesses to remind the public to take care and use crosswalks when crossing the street.

The Environmental Commission is hosting a walk on September 10 to discuss trees on Main Street. Kevin Sluka, Rod Hadley, Mike Kerwin & Sam Shaw will attend.

Jane reported that the groundbreaking event at DGM Management's Station House Project hosted by the Storms family was a great and successful evening.

Executive Director Report

Old Business

Kevin Sluka reported that an initial meeting has been conducted with a supplier regarding cameras on Division St. There will be a site visit on Oct. 2, 2019. Looking at having 2 cameras on Division, which will be a partnership with Borough Hall. Natalie received a quote, and the company is willing to work with us to make this project cost efficient. Jenn Pearson has a contact for another quote if necessary.

Natalie reported that the meeting with Arts on Division (AOD) went well and we will begin working on proposals for art installations in town. Any previous misconceptions are clear, both DSA & AOD agree that it is in the best interest of both organizations to work together to increase traffic in town. AOD is on board to help with the arts plan. Natalie has been in touch with Nishuane and they are working on a proposal.

There will be a meeting later in the week (week of Sep. 9, 2019) between DSA & Greg Storms to discuss potential locations for pop up shops.

Natalie reported the presentation with Branchburg Rotary went well, and people are very excited about the direction of the DSA & progress made over last few years. Stuart Johnson sculptures were received well. Questions were raised about parking, and Natalie reiterated DSA will work with the Borough on this. It is possible to explore one seat ride service transportation options.

There will be a Main Street New Jersey meeting on October 10, 2019. This will be a day long workshop with DSA's Exec. committee (Jane K., Mike K., Kevin S.) as they meet with key stakeholders and discuss 4-5 key strategies (agenda in meeting packet). Natalie is asking board to review and put together additional key stakeholders they should be looking at to get involved.

There is confusion about the future of cruise nights in Somerville, why there's been more enforcement this season, and who is in charge. Feedback is some folks who have been attending for years would like to sit on a committee. Natalie asked who would like to be involved in items such as promotions, music, more sponsors, smoothening event logistics, creating reservations, etc — Randy P. will recruit businesses, and Jane K., Tony B., John F., Laurie (Thrifts & Gifts) are also interested in getting involved. DSA is in support of this event. Tony B., Iris F. & Jane K. add Cruise Night is a great event out in town and deserves a focus and partnership with cruisers - it would be good to restructure guidelines.

Natalie reported that banners will be shipped by 9/11/2019, and we are anticipating receipt by 9/16/2019. DSA is also looking into pricing for road banner poles - some property owners have rejected this idea in the past, currently looking at quotes again to re explore the idea.

Future Events: Art All Day & Jazz Fest are coming up, marketing materials have been created. Village brew Oktoberfest, Project Pub & Tapastre Oktoberfest, Somerville 5k Challenge are all receiving print and social media marketing. Several cultural groups will be participating in the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration event Fri, Sept. 27 from 6pm-9pm. Somerset County is having their first ever Diversity Festival, happening Sat, Oct. 12 (DSA will sponsor). Medly Pharmacy wellness event will be pushed to spring as a large scale event. Medly will be doing a small scale senior citizen event for now, including yoga with Bodhi and meal prep for seniors. John Flores asks about photography at these events, Natalie confirms that Christina Meerloo will be present at most events for photography.

Jane Kobuta calls for a motion to approve minutes from August 12 meeting. Jenn made a motion, Rick seconded same.

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

New Business

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve Village Brewing Company Oktoberfest on Division St. Jane Kobuta seconded same.

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

Natalie reported that Downtown Somerville does not currently have an Exhibitor table at the League of Municipalities, starting November 18 2019. DSA will look into attending. Iris mentions exploring additional Downtown Somerville marketing materials such as vinyl banners, backdrops, giveaways, etc. The objective at this conference would be to increase our PR awareness among municipalities and other districts, see what other towns are doing, etc. Marketing committee reported that after receiving a scope of work from Oxford, DSA will consider them only for the rebrand and break apart website from that contract as other entities came back with cheaper pricing for the website restructure. Kevin Sluka updated the board that the Giardina Walk has been cleaned. The goal is to put 50k a year into infrastructure. Natalie mentioned that mums will be planted in the next few weeks. DSA hopes to continue to further transform Giardina Walk over time.

Natalie reported that the mural has begun in the alley near Gallery on Main, and will be completed at Art All Day. The board discussed talks with AOD to put plaques up with a consistent design at each mural, explaining their significance. Natalie discussed priority of visual arts projects for people to come and see in Downtown Somerville in addition to a thriving music scene. John added looking into opportunities for art around town to incorporate selfie stations and use a hashtag i.e. #artinsomerville

Jane Kobuta called for a motion to approve financial report. Rick St Pierre made a motion to approve, Jenn Pearson seconded same.

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

Rick St Pierre made a motion to approve payment authorization.

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

Jane Kobuta opened meeting for public comment.

Laurie, General Manager of Thrifts & Gifts brought up parking concerns with employees, and suggests providing stickers for reduced cost. Jane and Kevin mentioned Lot 7 and Lot 8 have less expensive parking options. The farther away the lot is from Main Street, the cheaper it is to

park with even a potential for free parking. Iris Frank agreed there is a struggle for employee parking in town, asked if a map exists with lots listed. Kevin Sluka will communicate parking options with Laurie and Iris. DSA can share any parking information with all business owners through constant contact.

Laurie brought up idea of purchasing reusable merchandise bags branded for Downtown Somerville to support shopping local. Community sponsors, i.e. Shoprite may be able to partner on this. DSA can reach out to retailers to see who is interested and explore pricing options.

Jane Kobuta closed public portion of board meeting.

Tony Brokenborough made a motion to adjourn meeting and Jenn Pearson seconded same.