

Toms River Business Development Corporation  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, June 7, 2023; 8:00 a.m.  
(Meeting conducted in person and via Zoom )

**MINUTES**

In attendance: Mayor Hill, Bill Beining, Phil Brilliant, Mary Jo Buchanan, Jimmy Capone, Lisa Cifaretto, Nicole DeMatteo, Dean Gresek, Mike Hovance, Bob Hudak, Lee Pelton, Pam Piner, and Bob Shea Staff: Mairin Bennett, Melissa Fernandez, Liz Thomson and Spencer Van Wagoner Guests: Not present: Lou Amoruso, John Brown, Gabe Gillen, Georgette Kyriacou, Sandra Lazzaro, Mike Little, Tony Palmucci, Danielle Szypinski. and Arleen Read.

- Called to order at 8:03 a.m.
- Introductions & Announcements: M. Bennett reported that we have received Main Street Accreditation. This will allow us to apply for and hopefully receive grants for funding façade improvements. More information will be forthcoming.
- Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes was made by B. Beining and second by M. Hovance the minutes were unanimously approved.
- Committee Report
- Cultural Committee (L. Cifaretto) – L. Cifaretto reported that she is still working on adding members to the committee. They are working with the Ocean County Historical Society and the Seaport Society on having tours downtown. B. Shea suggested L. Cifaretto reach out to Karen Homiek at OCVTS to see if she may have any students who may be interested in joining the committee.
- Design (B. Beining)- B. Beining reported that The Big Belly garbage can should be here soon. It will be placed on the corner of Washington Street and Robbins Street near the pocket park. The planters have all been moved to Washington Street to enhance the appearance during Downtown Night Out. M. Hovance has spoken to the business owners where the planters are located and they have agreed to water the planters. The committee is looking to refresh the signs at Main Street.
- Economic Restructuring/Land Use (B. Shea)- Mayor Hill reported that Capodagli Properties is getting ready to break ground. The project has been altered and will only be six stories. The Mayor clarified that contrary to the misinformation, the redevelopment plan prohibits any building being over ten stories and limits the number of buildings in the redevelopment areas. The purpose of the apartment complex is to bring more people downtown which will help with businesses in the area to continue to thrive. The VA project is moving along with the expected opening in mid-2024. The county social service building should be

opening later this year. B. Shea reported that Craig Ryno of Capodgli Properties will be sending over the new footprint of the building to The BID. He indicated that the construction fence should go up this week.

- Finance (L. Pelton)- L. Pelton reported that we have not received the second quarter check from the township to date. Sponsorships have picked up. Capodagli has agreed to sponsor Downtown Night Out for \$20,000 and Celebrity Ford will be the title sponsorship for Summer in the Street for \$10,000 and \$5,000 for Cruising Downtown.
- Organization (D. Szczypinski)- M. Bennett reported that there have been no meetings, but one will be scheduled soon.
- Promotions (vacant)- M. Fernandez reported that the events are all scheduled and the almost all full with vendors. There is discussion of an extra event in partnership with the Toms River Schools in the fall. Discussion ensued regarding the Farmer's Market. Many attendees would like an evening market or a weekend market. M. Fernandez stated that there would be no way to compete with the Brick market which is on Saturday. The only other option would be a Sunday market. M. Hovance expressed concerns about having a Sunday market considering that is a very slow day especially downtown.

- Colleague Reports:

Township (Mayor Hill, Lou Amoruso and R. Hudak) – R. Hudak reported that regarding the BUILD grant, easement letters will be going out in the next few weeks. This is a minor delay. M. Bennett inquired as to the timeline and R. Hudak indicated that there are few more items to be finalized. He reiterated that this project must be completed by 2025.

Parking Authority (P. Piner)- P. Piner reported that the Parking Authority is still looking for part-time employees. The Park and Ride is getting busier. It was at 80% capacity which is the highest since Covid. The parking machines in the core of downtown are all up and running. Many of the meters are solely pay by cell. B. Shea asked that this information and instructions on how to download the app be put on The BID website.

County (S. Lazarro) – No report.

Library (Nicole DeMatteo)- N. DeMatteo reported that there is a new head librarian coming to Toms River and her name is Taya Petino. The Summer Read program is starting and runs until September 15<sup>th</sup>. The library is currently working on a five year strategic plan. They are conducting an online public survey which can be found on their website. The committee is looking for input and information from the community.

Chamber of Commerce (M. Papanikolas, Phil Brilliant)- P. Brilliant reported that the Chamber will be having their monthly networking at B2. P. Brilliant reported that the new chair of the chamber will take over in September, Steve Green.

Old Business: M. Bennett welcomed Jimmy Capone to the meeting. She reminded the board that the Farmer's Market is taking place today and that

Cruisin Downtown starts next Wednesday, June 14. J. Capone reported that he is working with the TR Schools to have them do a mural on the side of his building. M. Bennett reminded him of the mural process. L. Cifaretto shared that TRAC started Art in the Park at Field of Dreams every Wednesday 6:30pm-8pm from now until the end of July. If anyone would like to help please reach out to her. M. Frenandez shared that Friday there will be Country Line Dancing at Downtown Night Out. Saturday Exit 82 is having their annual Pride Event on Washington Street and Sunday the brewery will be bringing a food truck downtown. She also reported that The Rotary will be having their Rockin with the Rotary in Huddy Park 6/24 12pm-8pm. She will be assisting them with their advertising. The event will feature 5 bands, vendors and food trucks.

New Business: B. Shea reminded the board that we will remain focused on the mission of The BID which is to assist in making the businesses in the downtown successful and encourage other businesses to come here. He encouraged M. Bennett to invite anyone who has criticized the organization to come to a board meeting to share their concerns and to let us share our vision with them. Our goal is to continue to serve the businesses and make downtown a wonderful place to work and visit. The one thing missing is people downtown. The businesses downtown need people to survive. Stagnation will not help. Growing downtown in an orderly manner is the best solution. The critics of this idea are invited to come and discuss the issues facing downtown at any time. M. Bennett recognized the employees of The BID and the strong team in place. She reiterated that they work extra hours for all the events and do not get paid. She is grateful for all the volunteers who come along side of the staff to make it all work so well. L. Pelton commented that there are 50+ events a year. It would be possible to hold one event with volunteers but to maintain what we have in place the employees are necessary. L. Cifaretto wanted to thank all the businesses who help as well. J. Capone shared how he was here before there as a BID. He has seen the growth downtown with The BID here and shared that there is no way for the businesses to run their business and organize all the events that take place. The weekends are big for the businesses. With out The BID this could not happen. It was decided that M. Bennett will send a letter to invite the new mayoral candidate to our next meeting to get to know the members and share the importance of what The BID does and the vision it has for downtown. M. Bennnett thanked everyone for their support and service to the downtown.

Adjournment: a motion to adjourn was made by P. Piner and second by L. Cifaretto The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 am.