

Toms River Business Development Corporation
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 4, 2023; 8:00 a.m.
(Meeting conducted in person and via Zoom)

MINUTES

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

- Called to order at 8:04 a.m.
- Introductions & Announcements: M. Bennett shared with the board that the Comfort Food Festival was a great event. There were approximately 7,000 people on the street.
- Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes from August and September was made by B. Beining and second by J. Brown; the minutes were unanimously approved.
- Committee Report
- Cultural Committee (L. Cifaretto) – L. Cifaretto shared that TRAC will be holding their grand opening on October 1, 2023 4pm-9pm. The TRAC gallery will be open six days a week and will be closed on Mondays. The Adirondack chair has been placed in Huddy Park. There will be a ribbon cutting at a future date.
- Design (B. Beining)- B. Beining reported that the committee is waiting on MSNJ to formally put out their grant application for facades. The idea is that The BID will apply for a grant to help business owners apply to improve the facades in the downtown district. The trimming that has been done on trees on Main Street was done by DOT. The committee is looking to get those trees replaced with ones that don't lift up the sidewalk. L. Cifaretto inquired about adding "Arts District" to the downtown signs that The BID owns. M. Bennett will look into that. The township does the other signs so M. Bennett will inquire how to have that added to the signs. The building is all ok. The committee has had a mason come out to look at the exterior front of the building and are awaiting an estimate. It was reported that we are no longer running the rental units downstairs as an "incubator". We will be running it more as a traditional landlord/tenant relationship with an emphasis of food oriented tenants. Mullers Ice Cream has signed their lease and will be doing work with the goal of opening on 3/1/24. The BID will only be responsible for making sure there are sinks in each unit.

- Economic Restructuring/Land Use (B. Shea)- B. Hudak reported that there is a planning board meeting on 10/18/23 regarding the Capodagli property change from ten stories to 6 stories.
- Finance (L. Pelton)- L. Pelton gave a review of the 2024 draft budget. The budget was sent out to the members who were in the zoom call via email. The only committee to submit a formal budget was the Design Committee so L. Pelton encouraged the other committees to please review the draft and let him or L. Thomson know of any changes.
- Organization (D. Szczypinski)- D. Szczypinski reported that the committee had held a Zoom meeting. The Scarecrow Walk is up. They are looking into doing a wreath walk, this idea has been brought to the committee by A. Anderson. There was discussion about The Wells Fargo building and having signage about The Arts District being there. M. Fernandez reported that the second floor will be ready for more occupants in January. M. Bennett reported that The BID is focusing a lot of effort on bringing retail to the downtown.
- Promotions (vacant)- M. Fernandez reported that The Comfort Food Festival was a great success. It went off smoothly. Our next event is the Harvest Arts Festival which is a juried art show with food trucks, petting zoo, pumpkin painting etc. The Scarecrow Walk will be up and there have been a lot of submissions. Small Business Saturday will take place the Saturday after Thanksgiving. M. Fernandez would like the Promotions Committee and the Resident Committee to collaborate to come up with ideas that would bring people downtown for Small Business Saturday. M. Fernandez shared data that we have reached 176,000 people on social media in the past thirty days. The Comfort Food Festival was shared by 68,000 people. Facebook reached 14,000 people in the last week. That is the power of sharing posts.
- Colleague Reports:
 - Township (Mayor Hill, Lou Amoruso and R. Hudak) – B. Hudak reported that they are working on amendments to the Capodagli project. The next council meeting is October 25, 2024.
 - Parking Authority (P. Piner)- B. Beining reported that The Parking Authority is moving forward slowly. Things are improving.
 - County (S. Lazarro) – No report.
 - Library (Taya Petina, Nicole DeMatteo)- T. Petino reported that Sandra Brown is coming to the library on October 5, 2024. The doors will open at 5:30. There are currently 175 people who have signed up but there is still room for anyone interested in attending the event. Fan Nation will take place on Saturday, 10:00 am-4:00 pm. Capones, Thyme For All Seasons and Crave have generously given a 10% discount to those who attend so they can grab lunch or dinner. She thanked the restaurants for their support.
 - Chamber of Commerce (M. Papanikolas, Phil Brilliant)- P. Brilliant reported that there is a new chairperson, Steve Green of Green Lable Title.

P. Brilliant is now the Chair of the Chamber Foundation. The Chamber continues with their four networking events a month. They are gearing up for the award ceremony on November 30th.

Old Business: M. Bennett shared that it has been a good season and that there are a lot of great things on the horizon.

New Business: M. Bennett reminded the board that the Incubator change out is taking place with the ice cream store moving in. M. Buchanan shared that Ocean Partnership for Children will be hosting the 4th Annual Domestic Violence Vigil on October 12, 2023 from 6pm-7 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. She also shared that OPC is looking for a full time Medicare Coordinator. D. Gresek inquired about whether the Parking Authority would consider installing change machines. He has been approached many times about needing change for the meters. P. Piner shared that option on the meters was removed as it was extremely labor intensive. There are many options for paying by phone or card. L. Pelton inquired as to when construction may start on the Capodagli project on Water Street. If the reduction of height is approved, then they will be looking to move ahead quickly. A. Marin inquired about the Water Street construction. This construction is due to water pipe replacement.

Adjournment: a motion to adjourn was made by B. Beining and second by J. Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 am.