



**Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.**

**April 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

**6:00 PM - Virtual via Zoom**

Mike Kerwin called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on April 11, 2022.

Kevin Sluka conducted roll call the following Board Members were present:

Present: Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokeborough, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

Late: Iris Frank, Sejal Sharma

Absent: Ed Rebenack

**Approval of March Meeting Minutes**

RanD Pitts made a motion to approve February Meeting Minutes. Rick St. Pierre seconded same

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokeborough, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

**Nay:** None

**Recuse:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Chairperson Remarks**

Mike spoke on the new platform, Boardable, and expressed how he believes the platform will benefit the board in receiving important documents. The County has specific money dedicated to tourism, we need to think of the big picture. We have a huge opportunity to present Downtown Somerville in a very favorable way.

**Executive Director's Report**

**Old Business**



### **Update on ARP Funding & Public Art**

Natalie did hear back from the county. The County will be sending out a new RFP, meaning that we will have to resubmit our applications. We are still in the running for public art. As part of the new RFP and grant funds we can resubmit the applications for Soofa Signs & the Banner System.

Natalie spoke with Weingarten Art Group last week. Lea will be sending an artist package so we can move forward. Mike spoke about the meeting with the courts last week. The public art on the courthouse lawn looks as though it will happen.

### **Sponsorship Update**

Sejal helped connect the DSA with the proper contacts at RWJ to secure a yearly sponsorship. The DSA also connected with Somerset County Tourism to secure a yearly sponsorship with them as well.

Girls Night Out sponsorships have come in. We currently have Beneath It All as a Platinum sponsor.

Small Business Sponsors:

- Office Evolution
- Design Studio of Somerville
- Blue Sheep Bake Shop
- RAM Law

RWJ - Financial & in-kind support

### **Update on CDS Clean & Safe Program**

We have welcomed CDS into the district as well as two new police officers that have been walking the district. Many businesses have been very pleased to see police on foot in the district. We want to make sure we are creating a clean and safe environment.

Two police officers have also helped the homeless situation in connecting them with Richard Hall Mental Health services. Richard Hall will then take them to the Carrier Clinic.

Garbage cans in the parking lots



## **New Business**

### **Sponsorship Request: Tour of Somerville**

Opportunity to save the tour and put some strength to keep it going. This would help the DSA take a leadership role this year and years to come.

Sejal: \$7500

- We are able to help the initiative but also be mindful of our own budget

Alison: long term it would make the most sense because this is a historic and loved event

- \$7500 it's a good counter but does it actually save the race for this year?

Rick: the race will happen but AOD is overwhelmed with the amount of work in short time

- We have a gem at no cost to us
- AOD owns all rights to the bike race
- This is a golden asset

RanD: DSA just took over jazzfest & we are short staffed now

- How much can we put on two people

Overall: We agree to support the tour - future discussion on long-term collaboration

- \$7500
- There is not a surplus, some wiggle room in marketing budget
- We can look into other areas to see where we can wiggle (\$20,000 in trust fund balance)
- Condition of any support will be conditioned upon accountability
- Memorandum with AOD
- TOS also reached out to Somerset County, Unity Bank

Mike: \$15,000

RanD: \$5,000

Kevin: \$10,000

Alison: \$10,000

Tony: \$3,000-\$5,000

Rick: We have to look at the budget, find out a number and commit to it.

Theresa: \$7500 - \$10,000



Sejal: \$7500

Iris: \$5000-\$7500

Kevin Sluka made a motion for \$7500. Mike Kerwin seconded same

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Iris Frank, Alison Masick, Kevin Sluka, Mike Kerwin, Sejal Sharma

**Nay:** Tony Brokeborough, RanD Pitts

**Recuse:** Rick St. Pierre

**Abstain:** None

### **Advertising Opportunity: Somerset County Tourism Destination Guide**

The DSA will get a discounted rate on the back cover of the destination guide. This is essentially a 3-year lease.

The perk of this guide is that it goes beyond Somerville and can get our reach even further. Not only can this target local but also business travelers who are looking for things to do. They go out as far as Virginia to drop these off. It is a great way to take advantage of the traffic.

Sejal Sharma made a motion to approve advertising. Rick St. Pierre seconded the same.

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokeborough, Iris Frank, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

**Nay:** None

**Recuse:** None

**Abstain:** None

### **Committee Reports**

- **Marketing Committee: John Flores**

- Natalie reached out to several agency and got back three proposals
- Areli Group: Far too expensive, we did not think they would offer value at that price
- LaMountain: Websites they gave in proposals were not up-to-date therefore it led us to believe that this is not a strong suit for them
- Three Summers: They had best pricing & We agreed to have a follow up conversation with three summers to better understand proposal



Rick St. Pierre made a motion to move forward with Three Summers. RanD Pitts seconded same

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokeborough, Iris Frank, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

**Nay:** None

**Recuse:** None

**Abstain:** None

- **Infrastructure Committee: Rick St. Pierre**

- We had a very productive meeting with the Infrastructure Committee
- Committee unanimously came to the decision to approve the big belly cans and sanitizer hands
- Sanitizer stands to go in high traffic and visible areas
- Still some challenges as to how trash will be picked up, Natalie and Kevin will discuss that

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve big belly cans and sanitizer stands. Kevin seconded same

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokeborough, Iris Frank, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

**Nay:** None

**Recuse:** None

**Abstain:** None

- **Events Committee (Girls Night Out): Tony Brokenborough**

- We have selected a date for Girls Night Out
- We went out to business community for help in selection of date
- Two types of tickets with add-ons



### **Other New Business**

- Father Ron sent an email regarding the homeless population and would like to hold a meeting to further discuss the situation.
- A deeper discussion needs to be had regarding stabilizing signs and confirming that signs like our BHM panels do not fly off or hurt other people.
  - We are looking to put medal weights on the bottom of the panels.
- Streetfairs.org has sent in an application for a spring street fair. Natalie will work alongside the organization for the Fall street fair.

### **Finance Report**

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve finance reports. Tony Brokenborough seconded same

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokenborough, Iris Frank, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

**Nay:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Recuse:** None

### **Payment Authorizations**

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve payment authorizations. Kevin Sluka seconded same

**Yea:** Theresa Bonner, Tony Brokenborough, Iris Frank, RanD Pitts, Alison Masick, Rick St. Pierre, Mike Kerwin

**Nay:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Recuse:** None

### **Comments from the Public**

Darryl Walker asks for the DSA and Borough to consider having two fairs this year instead of the already approved October fair.



**Adjournment**

Mike Kerwin adjourned the meeting.

Meeting minutes recorded by Nicole Zaliwski, Program Coordinator, on April 11, 2022.