

Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.

July 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

6:00 PM - Virtual/ GoToMeeting

John Flores called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on May 10, 2021. Kevin Sluka conducted a roll call. The following Board Members were present:

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

Absent: None

The assembly joined in a virtual salute to the flag.

Chairman Remarks

John Flores opened up the meeting with a story about his well-traveled friends from LA, who experienced the utmost pleasure of visiting Downtown Somerville. Downtown Somerville is rapidly evolving into this must-stop travel destination.

Executive Director Report

Update on Program Coordinator Search

Natalie reported that she has been conducting preliminary interviews to find a new Program Coordinator. She looks forward to scheduling round 2 interviews with the Board to lock in a new hire.

Update on John Schallert Webinar

Natalie reported 14 businesses signed on for the webinar which was then recorded and sent out to the rest of the business owners. The feedback from all of the businesses was great and many plan to use the strategies and information in their day-to-day. Looking to do these webinars quarterly for the business community.

Update on Logo Focus Group

Natalie reported on the Logo Focus Group conducted by Oxford Communications. Twenty individuals who commented and participated in the survey were asked to take part in the focus group - majority didn't respond so there was a total of 4 participants in the focus group.

Feedback included:

- Hard to distinguish the "D" and "S" in the Downtown Somerville logo
- Logo didn't seem to align with message or overall goals - no vibrance
- Move 'Downtown Somerville' horizontal under New Jersey
- Logo looks like a human head - people living in harmony
- Colors go in harmony with Somerville High School
- Sculpture that represents branding

Natalie recommended restructuring the logo to move the "Downtown Somerville" to the other side so it helps readability as well as adopting the multiple color themes to change with the

seasons. Color changes should wait until year 2 of the logo so that way the town, businesses, and residents can adapt to the new logo and color theme.

Update on Meeting Schedule

Natalie reported there will not be an August meeting however based on previous discussion in the last meeting the September meeting will be in In-Person at Office Evolution.

Update on Events

Natalie said there is a ton of energy at the events in Downtown Somerville. People are excited to be out in public and every event is extremely packed. Our new event "Open Mic Night" had a great turn out and looks as if it will continue to be a big hit among the town and those in the county.

Jazz Fest is moving full steam ahead. There is a lot of buzz for Downtown Somerville.

Update on Meeting with Somerset County Re: Public Art Plan

Mike Kerwin gave a recap on the meeting with Somerset County. The Public Art Plan was very well received; the only nuance was making sure someone who has expertise in art is part of the plan. The DSA would continue partnership with the Weingarten Art Group as they would be considered experts. Next steps - meeting with Weingarten Group on Wednesday as continued relationship on the consultant side and then having a meeting with Colleen & Weingarten to discuss budget, funding, sponsorships, etc.

Infrastructure Committee Report

Kevin Sluka reported the pavers on Main Street are not available until October therefore we need to see if we can find a modified paver. This pushes back the timeline for the treescape projects, the hope is to be able to move forward with these projects in October.

Natalie said worn benches on Main Street will be replaced with the extra lumber instead of using them for Giardina walkway. The benches will look similar to those in Palm Springs - with the intent to have local artists come out and paint them fun and vibrant. Natalie also said that Division Street needs to be resurfaced as well as some electrical work and the best calendar date looks to be October.

For Approval: StageHand App for Managing Bands and Artists

Natalie reported that the DSA is looking to consolidate bands and artists by using a new application called StageHand. It allows the DSA to create a catalog of all the performers that perform Downtown or those who want to perform Downtown.

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve the StageHand App, Mike Kerwin seconded same.

Yea: Mark Aziz, Tony Brokenborough, Iris Frank, Mike Kerwin, Jenn Pearson, RandD Pitts, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, John Flores

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Request: Sponsorship for Art All Day

Natalie reported Arts on Division is asking for a \$2,000 honorarium for their artists which would be \$250 honorarium for each artist and their live painting. They are also looking for an in-kind sponsorship to produce their panels for the live painting.

Mike Kerwin made a motion to approve the finance and in-kind proposal but subject to further discussion, Tony Brokenborough seconded same.

Yea: Mark Aziz, Tony Brokenborough, Iris Frank, Mike Kerwin, Jenn Pearson, RandD Pitts, Kevin Sluka, John Flores

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: Rick St. Pierre

Payment Authorizations

Rick St. Pierre suggested we should focus on delivering one message via the billboards. With four different events on one billboard it doesn't necessarily get one specific message achieved.

Kevin Sluka made a motion to approve the June 2021 payment authorizations, Rick St. Pierre seconded same.

Yea: Mark Aziz, Tony Brokenborough, Iris Frank, Mike Kerwin, Jenn Pearson, RandD Pitts, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, John Flores

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Finance Reports

Rick St. Pierre made a motion to approve the June 2021 finance reports, Kevin Sluka seconded same.

Yea: Mark Aziz, Tony Brokenborough, Iris Frank, Mike Kerwin, Jenn Pearson, RandD Pitts, Kevin Sluka, Rick St. Pierre, John Flores

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Public Comment

John Flores opened up the meeting for comments from the Public. Kevin Sluka made a comment that 1 Veterans Memorial will be applying for historic destination approval. The land next to it has been approved to turn the area into park space. The Somerset Development Project has sold 50 of the townhomes.

Natalie reported that Greg Storms reached out to do a ribbon cutting for Station House

Somerville.

Adjournment

John Flores adjourned the meeting.

Meeting minutes recorded by Nicole Zaliwski, Program Coordinator on September 1, 2021.