

## **Attendees:**

Bill, Ken, Adam, Walter, Jason, Heidi, Marc, Peg

## **Discussions:**

**New potential member** – Marc d’Agusto – attended meeting. Artist/education background with ties to non-profit, Gravity. Marc is very interested in helping to fill vacancies with pop up white space for artists. Tax advantages for retailers, benefits downtown with artists, traffic, and improved facades. Bill Robins to propose Marc to council for review/approval.

**NJ Transit Brochure** - Jason is updating pictures. New pictures were already taken and distributed to the committee. Jason has scheduled a meeting with Luanne to review pictures and layout before the brochure is finalized. Bill Robins confirmed that \$500 is encumbered from 2012 to 2013 budget for printing expense.

**Grant** - discussed grant submitted for a continuation of street lamps for both beauty and safety. Three grant requests were submitted for Dunellen and are pending. Committee discussed other potential grants. A written proposal was submitted by another grant writer, Ellen Stein, circulated to the committee, reviewed and discussed at the meeting. Peg followed up with grant writer to request specifics on investigating specific grants and costs. Ellen Stein agreed to meet with the mayor or other council members to discuss next steps. Committee thought it best not to engage at this point, due to lack of funding to support a grant writer. Marc has contacts with possible ties to federal grants, and help to support grant writing - will follow up with them for additional information.

**Lamp post baskets** - Adam found a web site, englishcreekgardens.com \$60-\$325 each for English planters. Committee discussed the concept of “adopt a basket” by retailers near high-traffic corners. Next steps would be to assess cost and retailer interest/support.

**Beautification of Dunellen** - beyond fundraising, discussed support for beautification of Dunellen. Revised sign ordinance was passed and should provide more clarity which will result in improved enforcement. Specific short term issues: moving manikin in Cash for gold window, new neon lights in Town Pharmacy and full Spanish language signs. Committee recommended focused enforcement – moving role to someone who was tasked specifically with enforcement, rather than a full time workload.

**Retailer meeting** - last spring we hosted a retailer event at Roxy and Dukes and invited retailers as a venue for presentation of NJ Transit activities and additional participation from the local retailers. Proposed a tentative date of **Tuesday, May 14**, at Roxy and Dukes for 2013 retailer meeting. Committee members agreed to help with appetizers and set up. Bill to invite non-profit organizations – will draft letter and circulate to members for comments. (complete) Heidi to draft invitation and send draft to committee for comments. Target date for final brochure, April 15, so that committee can hand deliver.

**Welcome to Dunellen** - Discussed new retailers in town and an introduction to Dunellen from

the NJ Transit Committee. Committee proposed that we deliver to new retailers, a bottle of wine, welcome letter, and new brochure, and an invitation to participate in the committee. Noreen volunteered to purchase the wine at cost, we could rotate responsibility for who makes the introduction on behalf of the committee. New Businesses referenced: pastrami store (across from Rock Skating), Futbol Extreme (next to Astra cleaners), Boost mobile (cellular store) new Italian ice store replacing Al's deli (across from movie theatre). No new discussion.

**Retailer Vacancy** – 12 vacant storefronts in Dunellen. Committee discussed ways to solicit new retailers to Dunellen. Ken made inquiries with NJ Transit and purchased a booklet to find ways to solicit retailers for Dunellen.

**Street Fair** - scheduled for **September 8**. Jason received forms to assure our participation in this year's street fair. Bill purchased two NJ Transit Village signs, \$35/each in preparation for the event.

**Oktoberfest Festival** - discussed the concept of the committee playing a more active role in support of an Oktoberfest. Discussed creation of a "beer garden" atmosphere in Washington Park, with German dancers in gazebo, local restaurants/merchants could set up tables to feature their foods at a reduced cost of \$25/table for in town retailers. (2 days for \$20/day) Noreen can provide singers, dancers puppeteers, fairy tale plays (much of which she already has from the Renaissance support), Fairy Grotto, art show, games, minstrels, and additionally, the Oktoberfest would feature Shakespeare Vignettes. Proposed Committee responsibilities would include: publicity, fundraising to cover costs, program, permits, insurance, police, EMT, Port O Johns, Food, Vendors. Profits to be retained by the NJ Transit Committee. Committee chose Columbus Day weekend, **October 12,13** as tentative dates for the Oktoberfest. Bill/Ken discussed with the Council, who expressed concerns regarding liability for serving alcohol, the damage to the lawn and clean up after the event.

Bill Robins had recently met with the Rotary Committee (who previously sponsored Art on the Green) and suggested that we integrate the Arts/Crafts elements of Art on the Green into the Oktoberfest. Committee agreed with this recommendation.

**Logo for NJ Transit Village** - Heidi's husband had drafted a few logos for review circulated sketches. Logo was positively received by the committee and adopted.

**Retailer Support** - Heidi - has ties to magazines - and spoke with them about a social media program, and tying to the magazine links for helpful information to retailers - i.e., decorating their window or store front, business ideas, suggestions. Received approval from two: Gift Shop and Smart Retailer.

**NJ Transit – new forms of revenue** – Jason reported that he started a non-profit, Dunellen Skylight Theatre. They plan to perform in the park and have offered the NJ Transit committee an opportunity to sell refreshments for fundraising on selected nights of the performance.

**Gravity** – Marc d'Agusto involved in this non-profit organization with ties to Bananna Republic, Trader Joes and other national retailers –interested in “pop up” use of vacant retail space for

temporary artist space. Also may be interested in supporting retail interest in the redevelopment of Art Color, based on redevelopment around the arts.

**Next meeting - will be held **April 16** at Roxy and Dukes, 7:00 pm.**