

April NJ Transit meeting

Attendees:

Bill, Adam, Jason, Heidi, Marc, Peg

Discussions:

New member – It's official! - Marc d'Agusto has been formalized as a NJ Transit Committee member. .

NJ Transit Brochure - Jason has updated pictures. New pictures were already taken and distributed to the committee. Jason met with Luanne to review pictures and layout before the brochure is finalized. Jason will bring a draft to the Meet/Greet to present to the attendees and retailers

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. Marc has contacts with possible ties to federal grants, and help to support grant writing. He followed up, referencing the CDGB (Community Development Grant) Middlesex Cultural Heritage, National Arts Society, NJSCA. Marc has contacts who can help review/provide guidance on grant submissions. They recommended we write the original draft, because we are most passionate about the needs, and they will then review and provide comments.

Lamp post baskets - Adam found a web site, englishcreekgardens.com \$60-\$325 each for English planters. Will float the concept of "adopt a basket" by retailers near high-traffic corners at the upcoming Meet/Greet. Next steps will be based on retailer feedback.

Beautification of Dunellen - Revised sign ordinance was passed and should provide more clarity which will result in improved enforcement. Some improvement seen in a reduced number of Towne pharmacy temporary banners.

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 drafted and distributed a letter to invite non-profit organizations. Members provided feedback on additional invitees, including churches and other non-profits. Heidi drafted invitation to retailers for distribution by members. Bill to make copies available – members to pick up from Bill and to hand deliver invitations by April 30. Jason/Marc to take Rte 28 East to Plainfield. Peg to take Washington Avenue to Rt 28 and down to Lilly Yips. Heidi to take Dunellen Theatre to Lilly Yips. Marc to invite Rush Holdt. Bill to invite Mayor and Council members. Agenda: introduction, explanation of NJ transit program and association, history and mission. Review plans, Octoberfest (if approved), spotlight on activities, Gravity, Dunellen Skylight Theatre, If I only had a Brain.

Welcome to Dunellen - 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 and Peg 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. Committee supports the “pop up” white space as temporary use for vacancies, to improve façade, showcase artists. Marc to work with Bill for direct contact to building owners.

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. Jason will complete forms on behalf of the committee.

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 to 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. Beer garden costs/profits to be borne by Noreen. Other 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. Committee to f/up with Walter Tunison to see if he has a contact for port-o-potty and if they are interested in donating to support the event/non-profit.

Rotary Committee (who previously sponsored Art on the Green) agreed to integrate the Arts/Crafts elements of Art on the Green into the Oktoberfest.

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. Heidi to send to Jason, to be included in the draft brochure.

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. Jason to highlight during Meet/Greet event.

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. Interested in supporting retail interest in the redevelopment of Art Color, based on redevelopment around the arts and discussions with Keane college. Marc to highlight during Meet/Greet event.

Next meeting - will be held **Tuesday May 14 at Roxy and Dukes, 6-8 for the Meet and Greet!**