



**Downtown Somerville Alliance, Inc.
September 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes
6:00 PM - In-Person / Office Evolution**

John Flores called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on September 13, 2021. Natalie Pineiro conducted a roll call. The following Board Members were present:

Present: Mark Aziz, Tony Brokenborough, Mike Kerwin, Jenn Pearson, RanD Pitts, John Flores

Late: Kevin Sluka

Absent: Iris Frank, Rick St. Pierre

The assembly joined in a salute to the flag.

For Approval: May, June, & July Meeting Minutes

Natalie sought approval for the May, June, & July Meeting Minutes.

Tony Brokenborough made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mark Aziz seconded same.

Yea: Mark Aziz, Tony Brokenborough, Mike Kerwin, Jenn Pearson, RanD Pitts, John Flores

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Chairman Remarks

John Flores opened up the meeting expressing his gratitude and happiness to be back together with in-person meetings. Although we are slowly getting back to normalcy, things continue to take a turn in the world as Somerville seems to be under a dark cloud of sadness due the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. We must continue to keep working at things and moving forward.

Executive Director Report

TOS Art Installation

Natalie reported on the Tour of Somerville art installation. Although the main event was cancelled due to the storm, there was universal happiness that the TOS was able to be honored downtown.

Jazz Fest/ Art All Day Recap

Natalie reported both events were successful over the weekend. The beauty of having mobile art panels means they can be moved throughout the district to bring versatility. The panels were inspired by those in Asbury Park. The energy at Jazz Fest was lively and prominent. Turning the Jazz Fest into a benefit ended up being a wonderful idea. The DSA was able to raise close to \$5,000 in donations.

Upcoming Events; Hispanic Heritage Month, Somerset County Diversity Festival, and Spooktacular

Natalie gave an update on the upcoming DSA events. The DSA is the co-sponsor for the Somerset County Diversity Festival happening on October 9. Our 'Spooktacular' main event is back this year with more details to follow.

RWJ Initiatives: Helping Hands Mural Project, Breast Cancer Warriors Banner Program

Natalie reported on our current initiatives with our community partner RWJ Somerset. A mural project is being created with the theme of "helping hands" to honor our frontline / healthcare heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second initiative is the Breast Cancer Warriors Banner Program honoring our survivors and warriors of Breast Cancer. Each banner raises money for the Steeplechase Cancer Center. The DSA hopes this will be a continuing long lasting project.

Introduction of Nicole Zaliwski, Program Coordinator

Nicole joined the DSA a few weeks ago coming with great energy and experience. She previously came from R&J Strategic Communications where she interned in public relations for 1.5 years.

Recognitions: *Shaun Daley and Michelle Kassik for their service to the DSA coordinating the Summer Stage Concert Series*

Natalie took a moment to honor and thank Shaun Daley and Michelle Kassik for their continued hard work and support of the Summer Stage Concert Series.

Hurricane IDA Impact on District

Kevin Sluka stated that Hurricane Ida is the worst storm Somerville has seen. There are parts of the town that are inhabitable for human living. If housing was in place of the majority of our parks in Somerville there would be even more devastation in town. (Park

across from YMCA - ended up being a lake.) East Main Street redevelopment plan - should something like this happen again we won't see much devastation.

Update on AOD Memorandum of Understanding

Natalie reported that an MOU was sent to AOD and the DSA is awaiting response. 2 resolutions were in play, one from 2017 and one from 2018 that made them the curators of art in Somerville. The DSA asked the Borough to rescind the 2018 resolution due to redundancy.

Weingarten Art Group Proposal for ongoing relationship regarding Public Art Installations

Natalie reported the Weingarten Art Group had a wonderful meeting with the county. The next step is solidifying our relationship with Weingarten Art Group.

Weingarten Art Group will:

- Create the application for funding from the county
- Curate the art
- Engage in the RIQ process
- Site visits
- Timeline & Budget development
- Advisory to contract between the DSA and artists
- Activation (coordinate logistics, installers, subcontractors, onsite installation, material for rollout, and measure success of project)
- "Soup to nuts" - proposal

"Avant garde but in moderation"

Natalie asked for approval to sign a 1 year contract with Weingarten Art Group.

Mark Aziz made a motion to approve the 1 year contract. Jenn Pearson seconded same

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Oxford Communications Branding: Logo Color Palettes

Oxford Communications proposed 4 different color palettes to select a master color palette and seasonal color palette.

Overall consensus:

- 4 = everyday color palette

Overall rank:

- 4 (teal / blue / black)
- 1 (orange / blue)
- 3 (yellow / orange / black)
- 2 (green / black / red)

1 year with the master color palette before introducing seasonal color palettes.

Proposal for Grant Writing

Greener by design will write grants for infrastructure and arts related grant writing. Essentially they will charge for writing the grant but if they get the grant they will charge us a percentage of the grant. No long term contract discussed - grant to grant basis. The DSA would charge them by the amount of hours it takes them to put together the grant proposal that makes the most sense.

- They also identify available grants

Downtown Somerville Plan for Inclement Weather

Micro-grid? Natalie will look for contact at PSEG.

- PSEG is also a great community sponsor or partner

Motion to Move Monthly Meetings to In-Person

RanD Pitts made a motion to resume monthly in-person meetings. Tony Brokenborough seconded same

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Payment Authorizations

Kevin Sluka made a motion to approve the payment authorizations. RanD Pitts seconded same

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Finance Reports

Kevin Sluka made a motion to approve the finance reports. RanD Pitts seconded same

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

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Public Comment

John Flores opened up the meeting for comments from the Public. Tony Brokenborough commented on the summer music and the opportunity to upgrade it to a “mini Asbury Park”. Next summer the DSA is working on tentative “street music” on Friday nights.

Jenn Pearson commented on a conversation she had with the owner of Thrifts & Gifts. Some business owners are feeling unsafe due to some unsavory characters. Safety

needs to become a first priority - once an incident occurs the reputation is essentially ruined. If contract is approved for new service there will be a safety guard that can assist people in getting to their cars if they feel unsafe.

Upgrade some infrastructure that might include backless benches that are less comfortable.

Adjournment

John Flores adjourned the meeting.

Meeting minutes recorded by Nicole Zaliwski, Program Coordinator on October 6, 2021.