

South Orange Village Center Alliance

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Bob Zuckerman, *Executive Director*

Melissa Hodge, *Events and Operations*

Board of Directors

Steven Pedigo

Mark Murphy

Mark Hartwyk

Deborah Engel

Courtney Bryan

Cat Fisher

Danny Harrison

Jonathan Javins

Michael Maza

Leslie Pogany

Sunny Uberoi

Matt Wonski

Freddy Arsenault

Fahim Abedrabbo

Steven Schnall

Adam Loehner

Open Minutes

October 17, 2019

A regular meeting of the South Orange Village Center Alliance was held at Village Hall offices at 76 South Orange Avenue on September 26, 2018 and called to order by Chairman Pedigo at 8:33 a.m. The meeting was certified by Director Engel as being duly advertised.

Meeting Notice Statement:

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the press in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A 10:4-6. In addition, notice of this meeting was posted in Village Hall and on the Village's website, and has been filed by the Office of the Village Clerk. Official action may be taken.

A roll call of those in attendance was taken.

Present: Steven Pedigo, Mark Murphy, Mark Hartwyk, Deborah Engel, Courtney Bryan, Cat Fisher, Jonathan Javins, Michael Maza, Matt Wonski, Steven Schnall, Freddy Arsenault, Fahim Abedrabbo

Also Present: Bob Zuckerman (ED) and Melissa Hodge (EOA)

Absent: Danny Harrison, Leslie Pogany, Sunny Uberoi, Adam Loehner

Public: Alyssa Aronson (resident), Neil Chambers (resident)

Next Meeting Date: November 20, 2018

Adoption of the Open Minutes for September 26, 2018:

A motion was made by Director Hartwyk and seconded by Trustee Schnall to approve the Open Minutes for September 26, 2018, all were in favor.

Board Report Summary

Paid sick leave workshop: 10 people attended. Powerpoint will be sent around to all business owners. Bob to set meeting with Mila Jasey to talk about upcoming minimum wage legislation to ensure they receive feedback from small businesses.

Train lights: Electrician coming on 10/18, and installation date will be set after the walk through.

Mural: Latest circulated.

How to do business in SO Guide: Started with initial meetings with building dept. A few directors commented that signage is one of the trickiest issues.

Seton Hall: Bob and Fahim meeting with new marketing contact Valerie Gomez to discuss SO Days with the Pirates and to update on what has been done in the past.

IDA Conference: Bob attending and speaking on a panel. Lessons learned will be presented in November.

Discussion: 2018 End of Year Budget Forecast

Not as much surplus as we thought. Projected net income for the year is a little over \$12,000. Learned much of what we make from PlayDay are part of our operational budget, so these big events are critically important to the organization.

Business Summit: In-Review

Big takeaways: Comments from the Board Directors in attendance included: people were engaged, what we've been doing may not have been what merchants want, communication seems to be an issue. It wasn't just retailers but independent businesses and second floor businesses that attended. If we focus more on second floor, it will help with ground floor businesses. We need to ask business owners what is the best way to communicate with them (text, email, FB, slack, etc.). There is a need for a calendar of events set in advance. Parking is not the problem but there is no wayfinding signage. Plan a retailer/shopping event (in addition to food events.)

How to better inform our work: Think about our business support programs and communication plans. Ask for feedback on the events that we're planning and directly ask business owners to join the new Business Council.

Board Expectations and Committees: Executive, Business Retention, Beautification, Communications and Fundraising

Chairman Pedigo believes this organization is missing some clear deliverables. He noted we need a clear sense of direction, what that means in terms of the budget, and clear expectations of board members and staff.

Committees and structure were discussed. Committee chairs will decide on individual committee structure and deliverables that will be reported back on. First task of each committee: Look at the action plan and ensure that the committee's work aligns with the action plan.

Committees formed include:

Business Retention:

Members of Committee: Mark Murphy (chair), Deborah Engel, Cat Fisher, Danny Harrison.

Action Items: Tied to Business Council committee. Work on the workshops, how to do business in SO (road map for opening a business in SO), storefront grants and business visits.

Beautification:

Members of Committee: Mark Hartwyk (chair), Steve Schnall, Michael Maza, Courtney Bryan, Jonathan Javins and Mark Murphy.

Action Items: They've already met once and established some goals. They will use a digital map of the downtown to aid with their planning. Group will determine the mission and scope of this committee, and then bring in experts from the community to help and advise. Management of cleaning program and capital improvement should fall to this committee, but not placemaking activities (such as Downtown after Sundown).

Development/Fundraising

Members of Committee: Freddy Arsenault, Steven Pedigo, Courtney Bryan

Action Items: What is the product being sold? Annual appeal, possible annual fundraising event (instead of end of annual meeting in Feb).

Marketing & Communication

Members of Committee: Deborah Engel (chair), Cat Fisher

Action Items: Graphic Design and Advertising Budget review (two question items from the Action Plan presentation) can fall under this committee. Task force with community volunteers being brought together to discuss internal and external communications as well as brand identity and positioning. This committee will conduct a communications audit and help identify the identity of Downtown.

Expectations of Staff on Committees:

The question arose about whether Bob and Melissa should attend all committee meetings. The group decided that the Committee chairs will reach out to Melissa with clear items/notes outlined with action steps, follow ups, etc. Staff expectations will be to help with scheduling, outreach and follow up, with periodic attendance at each committee meeting. However, attending every meeting of every single committee would be too time intensive.

2019 Action Plan and Budget Presentation (SOVCA Staff)

Bob walked through the proposed budget and action plan. All comments on the action plan should be delivered via a shared google doc by October 31. A working session is schedule for Oct 31 and the revised plan will be presented to the board for a vote in November.

Annual Appeal

Skipped further discussion on this topic, although touched upon above. Bob will communicate about plans and ideas over email.

Public Comment

Trustee Schnall moved to open Public Comment, with Director Murphy seconding.

Neil Chambers spoke about the parklet and rapid lounging, and mentioned South Orange has won awards for these initiatives two years in a row. He also said he and the Arts Council is trying to start a land art program. He said when thinking about beautification, we should also think about how these initiatives create downtown South Orange as a destination. Chairman Pedigo recommended Neil and team reach out to local businesses for sponsorships of initiatives like the parklet.

Alissa Aronson asked if the board is still doing business visits (yes they will be continuing), and suggested that South Orange should do more to welcome parents during University weekend at Seton Hall. Director Hartwyk noted that town tour buses are provided on Friday and Saturday, and Bob said SOVCA provided maps to distribute. A note was made to plan an event next year.

Trustee Schnall motioned to close public comment, which Director Hartwyk seconded.

Executive Session

The Directors then moved into Executive Session.

Adjournment: There being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Schnall and seconded by Director Hartwyk; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.