



Rahway Special Improvement District Report

Monday, November 20, 2023

I. **SID Business Improvement Program** – Forgivable loans for new and existing Rahway businesses for the following areas:

- Fit Out/Interior Improvements = Up to \$2,000 per business
- Signage = Up to \$2,000 per business
- Brand Marketing/Design Services = Up to \$2,000 per business
- MBE Certified – Minority, Women, Veteran, LGBTQ = \$1,000 per business that has or gets the certification
- The maximum given to one business is \$7,000.
- Businesses must stay in operation for one year to have it be 50% forgiven and two years to have it be 100% forgiven.
- Applications were open from March 1st and closed on April 30th.

Update

- There was a total of 130 applicants for the BIP. 109 businesses met the established criteria for eligibility.
- Funding requests were due by September 1, 2023.
- 62 businesses have submitted their funding requests.
- The funding requests have been reviewed by SID staff. The City Planner has reviewed all requests for signage to ensure that all proposed signs are compliant with municipal zoning ordinances.
- At present, 17 of 57 businesses have completed everything and are in the final stages of receiving funding.

Facade Improvement Program - \$250,000 has been allocated for property owners to improve their exterior facades and storefronts as \$10,000 forgivable loans.

Update

- A letter was sent to all applicants of the FIP notifying them of their eligibility status. Eligible applicants will need to schedule a consultation by October 1st with the SID Project Manager and City Planner about proposed improvements.
- There was a total of 32 applicants for the FIP. 24 applicants met the established criteria for eligibility.
- The SID Project Manager and City Planner have met with 14 applicants and are awaiting further paperwork for approval.
- 6 property owners are ready to receive funding and are working with the SID and UCEDC to finalize paperwork.

II. **News 12 NJ Main Street New Jersey**

- Rahway was selected by News 12 NJ to be featured in their Friday morning segment called Main Street New Jersey.
- Lauren Due of News 12 NJ visited 6 different businesses in downtown Rahway on Friday, November 3rd to showcase just a few of our great small businesses and interviewed Mayor Giacobbe to find out what makes Rahway special.
- Wet Ticket Brewing, River City Gaming, Garden of Ink, Atelier Rosal, La Chula and Gigi's Latin Bistro were featured during live segments that ran from 5am-8:30am.
- After the live segments were aired, an edited piece featuring all of the businesses aired at 12:25pm.
- All the features can be viewed by visiting www.newjersey.news12.com/category/main-street-new-jersey

III. **Small Business Weekend**

- For the second year in a row, the SID and the Rahway Chamber of Commerce are working together on some initiatives for Small Business Weekend.
- The initiative has grown from just focusing on Small Business Saturday to encourage residents and visitors to support small businesses from Black Friday-Cyber Monday (November 24-27) and throughout the holiday shopping season.
- As part of the Small Business Weekend initiative, participating retail establishments will receive a social media marketing graphic to advertise their promotions, swag bags to distribute to customers and shopping bags with Shop Local branding on it.
- The SID will provide 150 reusable giveaway bags that will be given away at participating businesses. All businesses in the City of Rahway have been invited to send promotional items that will be stuffed in these bags on Monday, November 20 at Atelier Rosal.
- The SID will also be sponsoring a raffle for gift cards to Rahway businesses and UCPAC. Anyone who makes a purchase at one of our participating businesses during Small Business Weekend can enter for a chance to win. In addition, postcards will be distributed on Black Friday during the Tree Lighting with a bonus raffle ticket to encourage people to visit one of our participating retail businesses during the weekend.
- Together with the Chamber of Commerce, there will once again be a Holiday Window Decorating Contest. Individuals will be able to vote at RahwayRising.com and the winning business will win a cash prize and business feature in the next Rahway Review.
- To support local artists and creators, there will be a Pop-up Holiday Market at the Cherry Street Mall (75 E Cherry St) and in several other locations downtown (Watt Hotel, Wholly Cow, Coffee Box, and Atelier Rosal) on Saturday, November 25 from 11am-3pm. All vendors will sell locally produced, handcrafted, or designed products.
- The Union County Department of Economic Development is also supporting small businesses through their #UCLovesSmallBiz campaign. They will help support local businesses via marketing and promotion. They will also provide the reusable bags for our swag bags.

IV. **Ribbon Cuttings**

- **Blossoms Brunch Bar** - Blossoms Brunch Bar, Rahway's newest breakfast and brunch spot, celebrated its grand opening with an official ribbon cutting on October 18. Blossoms is located at 289 Monroe Street and offers a variety of southern-style home-cooked food and mocktails that provide the perfect start to your day.
- **Rahway Refillery** – On November 8, we officially welcomed Rahway Refillery to 1425 Main Street. Rahway Refillery is Rahway's very own no-waste marketplace that offers an assortment of non-toxic, organic, and sustainable products that eliminate the accumulation of waste for a positive impact on our environment.

V. **Upcoming Events**

- Christmas Tree Lighting – Friday, November 24th
- Small Business Saturday – Saturday, November 25th
 - Holiday Pop-Up Market on Cherry Street and throughout the downtown 11am-3pm
- Dinner & Show with UCPAC on December 3rd for the show Cherish the Ladies
- Soup Stroll 2024 – January 6, 13, 20 and 27