



Rahway Special Improvement District Report

Monday, May 8, 2023

- I. SID Business Improvement Program** – Forgivable loans for new and existing Rahway businesses for the following areas:
- Fit Out/Interior Improvements = \$2,000 per business
 - Signage = \$2,000 per business
 - Brand Marketing/Design Services = \$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 through April 30th
- Facade Improvement Program** - \$250,000 has been allocated for property owners to improve their exterior facades and storefronts as \$10,000 forgivable loans.

Update: Applications for existing businesses closed on April 30th. A total of 139 applications were received by UCEDC for the Business Improvement Program & Façade Improvement Programs.

A letter will be mailed to all eligible applicants to let them know the next steps in the process. Anyone who has been verified as an eligible business must now submit a vendor quote, proposal or other documentation showing how funds will be used. In the case of signage, applicants will also need to provide a sign rendering and a commercial zoning permit to receive approval.

- II. Rahway Taste of Spring 2023 – 20th Anniversary, Friday, April 14th from 5:30-9PM**
- First time the event has been held in-person since 2019.
 - The event sold out with over 1,000 tickets sold online and at various locations.
 - Rahway Taste of Spring Participants are as Follows:
 - 25 Eating & Drinking Establishments from Rahway
 - 1 Brewery – Wet Ticket
 - 11 Restaurants from out of town
 - 2 breweries from out of town
 - 35 national wine, beer and liquor distributors
 - **Event Sponsors:** Covanta, Northfield Bank, Metro & Reva Rahway, ShopRite – Clark, Witty’s Fine Wine & Liquors, and UCPAC.
 - We had 15 volunteers plus recreation staff working at the event.
 - Coordination and communication between Recreation, Police, Fire, Health, and Department of Public Works to coordinate the day of logistics worked very well.
 - The 9 judges sampled food and drinks from entrants and selected winners in 11 different categories. Our judges ranged from social media influencers, Rahway Business Owners, the Rahway High School culinary teacher, and former Rahway’s Own honoree Gary Gonzalez.

- Rahway Restaurants won 6 of the 11 awards, including Alfonso's Catering, who won Best of Taste as the best overall restaurant.
 - Best App- Moazz Mediterranean, Rahway
 - Best Salad- Gigi's Latin Bistro, Rahway
 - Best Dessert- D'Orsi's Bakery, Port Reading
 - Best Drink- Chevy's Fresh Mex, Linden
 - Best Meat Entree- Hugo's Restaurant, Rahway
 - Best Seafood Entree- Craven BBQ, Linden
 - Best Pasta Entree- Il Forno a Legna, Rahway
 - Best Other Entree- Moazz Mediterranean, Rahway
 - Best Bakery- Pinhos Bakery, Roselle
 - Best Vendor Display- Herradura Tequila
 - Best of Taste (Best Overall)- Alfonso's Catering, Rahway

III. **Hot Rods & Harleys**

- We worked with Wizdom Media and the Hot Rods & Harleys Committee to put together a coupon booklet that will be distributed in the registration packets to participants and attendees on the day of the event on May 13.
- The coupons are valid from May 14-28th to encourage those who attend Hot Rods & Harleys to come back and patronize Rahway businesses.
- 26 businesses submitted offers for coupons and 8 businesses purchased display ads.

IV. **New Business Openings**

- **Dayrin Decorations**, a retail shop specializing in event décor, flowers, and gifts, had a ribbon cutting on Wednesday, April 19th at 3:30pm. They are located at 33 E. Milton Ave.
- **Garden of Ink**, a tattoo shop, had a ribbon cutting on Saturday, April 22nd at 12PM. They are located at 75 E. Cherry Street, Unit 11.