



Rahway Special Improvement District Report

Monday, June 12, 2023

I. **New SID Specialist: Karin Napier**

With Anthony Armando moving to the position of SID Project Manager, there was a need for a person to fill the role of SID Specialist. Karin Napier was transferred from the Finance Department as of June 1. With her experience within the City, previous arts-related jobs, and knowledge of Rahway, we feel she will be a great fit for this role. Karin's main duties will be coordinating events for the SID and connecting businesses to events that take place throughout the year in Rahway. She will also focus on building relationships with our businesses and continue to foster the connection between the business and arts community.

II. **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 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.

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.

Update: The SID is in the final stages of verifying eligible businesses. 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.

III. **ServSafe Food Handler & Manager Training**

- SID is sponsoring ServSafe Manager training for restaurant food handlers. Training will be offered by the Rahway Department of Health.
- The cost is \$60 per participant for Rahway Restaurants and \$120 for non-Rahway restaurants. The training will take place on Tuesday, June 20 from 8:30am-4:30pm in the Rahway Recreation Center Room 110.

IV. **Musicfest for Downtown Restaurants**

- Originally scheduled for Saturday, May 20th was rescheduled to Sunday, May 21 due to rain.
- The SID purchased samples from Coffee Box, the Lounge at Watt, Gigi's, New Fon Garden and La Malinche for distribution to concert goers.

- Attendees of the concert could submit a receipt from that day from a Rahway eatery to be entered into a contest for a gift card from their favorite Rahway Restaurant. There were 26 entries. The winner selected a gift card from La Chula as their prize.

V. SID Meeting with Restaurant Owners

- Meeting was held on May 9, 2023, at 10am at City Hall
- Police Director Nicholas Breiner introduced himself and spoke about working with the business community to ensure the city is a safe place for people to live, work, dine, and shop.
- Deanna Hunt, Executive Director of UCPAC spoke about all that is happening at the theater and invited the restaurant community to provide feedback and recommendations for shows that will attract people to Rahway. She also spoke about the success of the Dinner and Show Deals.
- Andrea Alvare, Director of the Health Department, introduced herself and spoke about updates in food safety and ServSafe Training.
- Anthony Armando provided updates on upcoming events and initiatives that were discussed at the previous Restaurant Meeting and answered questions and concerns from the owners.
- 12 restaurant owners were present.

VI. Lewis Street Market

- The Lewis Street Market seeks to offer locally produced goods as well as offering local businesses an opportunity to showcase their products and services.
- The market will take place on Fridays from June-August from 4-8pm behind the pavilion on the corner of Lewis and Main Street and will coincide with music at the Paseo (6:30-9pm).
- Last year, the Lewis Street Market took place 5 times from July-September with 8-10 vendors and local businesses participating. Vendors sold items including candles, clothes, honey, hand carved wood signs, jewelry and flowers.
- Dates for 2023: June 23, July 14, July 28, August 11, and August 25.

VII. New Business Openings

- **Rahway Pharmacy** had a ribbon cutting on Wednesday, May 11th at 12:30pm. They are located at 1421 Irving Street.