



Ad Hoc Business, Arts and Culture Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 5, 2024 - 5:00 P.M.

Attendees:

Anthony Armando – Special Improvement District, City of Rahway

Karin Napier – Special Improvement District, City of Rahway

Jeff Spelman – The Coffee Box

Deanna Hunt – UCPAC

Kim Farrier – UCPAC

Joann Gemenden – NJ Clean Communities

Nick Rosal – Atelier Rosal

Absent: Laura Lopez – Millie & Joy, Michelle McTamney – Edward Jones

Danni Newbury – City of Rahway, Armanii Saahd-Tann – Rahway Dance Theatre,

Dawn White – Hannum’s Harley Davidson

SAVE THE DATE: The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 1st at 5:00pm at Hamilton Stage.

Anthony Armando opened the meeting and updated the committee on a variety of projects:

- 1. SID Business Improvement Program and Facade Improvement Program Update** – The committee was updated that 36 eligible businesses have been fully funded. Another 30 continue processing. Also, some of the new businesses have recently applied.
- 2. Soup Stroll Recap** - The event was held on four Saturdays in January and was even more popular than last year’s event. The committee offered a new idea for the 2025 Soup Stroll which is to ask restaurants to consider a vegetarian choice each week.
- 3. Main Street Construction – Elizabethtown Gas Project** - Elizabethtown Gas will be replacing gas mains, services and meters on Main Street, East Milton and East Cherry Street starting on Friday, March 1, 2024. The project is expected to run through the end of April. Significant detours and vehicular traffic delays are expected while construction is ongoing. Work is Monday through Friday from 7:00AM to 4:00PM (weather permitting). During construction hours, sidewalks will remain open to pedestrians. Southbound lanes of Main Street are anticipated to remain open with exception of the section between Irving Street and Coach Street and limited times when the full road will need to be closed for construction activity. The project is scheduled to occur over several phases to minimize impact to businesses and residents within the project limits as noted below. Please note that this schedule is subject to change.

PHASE 1 – GAS MAIN REPLACEMENT = Sawcutting – Starting 3/1 through 3/21

Main Street Phase - working on various intersections between 3/4-3/21

East Milton Phase - working between Broad St & Pierce St – Full intersection closure – 3/18 to 3/19

Cherry Street Phase - working between Main St & Monroe St – Full closure of E. Cherry Street between Main Street and the Monroe Street Extension. Elizabethtown has not yet finalized the schedule for the work on E. Cherry Street Phase.

PHASE 2 – GAS SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT - Following gas main installation, Elizabethtown will begin changing the gas services and meters for each building. Elizabethtown Gas has notified the City that they will be coordinating with each building owner and tenant to schedule those replacements.

PHASE 3 – ROADWAY RESURFACING - Following completion of all gas main and service replacements, the work limits will be resurfaced by Elizabethtown.

The committee discussed if there would be any outages for the businesses and if there would be parking options available. Anthony said he would let everyone know when Cherry Street would need to be closed.

4. SID Upcoming Projects & Events

- a. Website Revamp
 - i. Public Art Map –QR codes planned to be placed at each piece of public art. A Map online would follow.
 - ii. Event Calendar – working with Wizdom Media to create a new calendar on RIH website that would allow local businesses and leasing companies to request that their own events be posted.
 - iii. Business Directory – photos of businesses will be worked on as well as link to business website.
- b. Merck Relationship – a meeting was held in December. Progress continues slowly to work with Merck to coordinate information with them about the goings on in Rahway.
- c. Restaurant Meeting – February 12th & 15th
- d. Women in Business Networking Event – March 27th – Wizdom is leading this event
- e. Taste of Spring – April 5th – 21st annual event.
- f. NJ Transit Arts Express – May 4th. UCPAC co-promotion with Avenel Arts. Anthony will speak with Nick Rosal about booking musicians for the train station plaza. There will be a mural dedication of Arts District Park.
- g. Hot Rods & Harleys – May 11th
- h. NCNW Student Art Exhibition – book exchanges and exposing kids to more art.

5. Open Discussion / New Business

Suggestions made were as follows:

- More wayfinding signage is needed throughout the city.
- Action item: Anthony will research and let the committee know his findings.
Soiree En Blanc could be theme-based such as a Caribbean or dessert theme and to consider planning the date for August or September.
Create new media functions regarding “generational update” on communications as the current formats that are not reaching or impacting millennials and Gen Z’s.
- Action Item: Invite Wizdom Media to a committee meeting regarding design changes/adaptions.
It was expressed by a committee member that he thought this change in timing would make it easier for patrons to park for dinner and would not likely have any negative impact on permit commuters.
- Action Item: Work with City council to update the ordinance allowing free surface lot parking after 5PM (its currently 7pm).
Share a restaurant guide on plastics at the Taste of Spring event.
- Action Item: Joanne will send the guide over to Anthony for review and approval to post at the event.

6. Ribbon Cuttings

X-Press Grab & Go – A ceremony happened on December 12th. Located at 1725 St Georges Avenue, owners Peter & Susan offer a varied selection of premium meats and specialty sandwiches.

Charlies Flowers & Gourmet Baskets – A ceremony happened on January 30th. Located at 1645 Irving Street, Mirlande Charles offers an enchanting world of blooms and botanical wonders. Fresh floral designs and gifts for all occasions are available to take home or ship anywhere worldwide.

Anthony thanked everyone for and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.