



Ad Hoc Business, Arts and Culture Committee Mayor's Advisory Committee Combined Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 5, 2024, 5:00 PM - 6:30PM
In Person at Hamilton Stage, 360 Hamilton Street

Ad Hoc Committee Members in Attendance:

JoAnn Gemenden – NJ Clean Communities
Deanna Hunt – UCPAC
Laura Lopez – Millie & Joy
Michelle McTamney – Edward Jones
Nick Rosal – Atelier Rosal
Armanii Saahd-Tann – Rahway Dance Theatre
Jeff Spelman – The Coffee Box

Mayor's Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Laura Bellevue
Heidi Loder-Rosal

Absent:

Danni Newbury – City of Rahway
Dawn White – Hannum's Harley Davidson
Herve Gaspard – Gaspard Arts Academy
Peter Kowal – Butch Kowal's Tavern
Rafael Ortiz – Academy Glass

Staff: Anthony Armando – Special Improvement District, City of Rahway
Karin Napier – Special Improvement District, City of Rahway

Guest: Kim Farrier - UCPAC

Welcome: Anthony Armando opened the meeting and updated both committees on a variety of projects and then opened discussions for new business amongst committee members:

I. Recaps of Past Event and Projects:

SID Business Improvement Program & Facade Improvement Program: The committee was updated about additional eligible businesses that have been funded.

Website revamp: *Rahwayishappening.com* has been redesigned and has had many new functions added in such as a public art map, event calendar, business directory that includes all 600+ Rahway businesses, and Advisory and Ad Hoc committee meeting minutes are posted. Additional features will be rolled out in 2024, such as additional parking detail and direction, a vacant property list and additional business support section.

A committee member wondered if there would be any marketing efforts budgeted and put into place to help build awareness of Rahwayishappening outside of Rahway.

Action: Anthony will review ways to report on the metrics of the Rahwayishappening website at future meetings.

II. SID Upcoming Projects & Events:

- a. New Façade Improvement Program Public Art Incentive will be funded through the SID to encourage new murals, sculptures or light art into Rahway. Installation requirements are that they art would need to be visible from a public gathering standpoint.
- b. Extra Space Storage on 2255 Elizabeth Avenue, has a mural being painted on a façade wall has begun with a goal to finish by the end of the month (weather permitting).
- c. ArtsFest: 9/21 on Irving Street will bring lots of attendees and business to downtown Rahway.
- d. Hispanic Heritage Month - September/October with multiple events below:
Celebración – 8/29, 9/12, and 9/19 in Arts District Park.
Hispanic Business Gathering on October 9th - 3:00pm-5:00pm at CubaNu
No Sin Mi Bocadillo ‘Not Without my Small Bites’ Food Stroll: October 5th and October 12th- various restaurants
- e. Paint The Town Pink – October
We will engage our businesses to participate through special events, deals and offers
Breast Cancer Awareness Walk is scheduled for October 12th at 10:00am at the Train Station Plaza
- f. Small Business Saturday/Shop Local Committee will begin meeting in late August/Early September to prepare for the holiday season which begins November 29th.
- g. Holiday Lights – More Holiday décor information will be supplied at the next meeting.
- h. Sabor Peruano rebranded as Quilla by Sabor Peruano. The restaurant held a July 31st special event announcing their new name, showed off their new retractable awnings and opened the gorgeous outdoor dining seating area in the yard behind the building.

III. Old Business:

Anthony updated the committee that the new wayfinding signage discussed at a prior meeting is moving forward. He will update the members at a future committee meeting.

Free parking is in place after 7:00pm. A committee member has asked if the request to move the time to after 4 or 5pm to allow for the dinner crowd to park for free was being considered. It is under review with the council and will be addressed at a future council meeting.

The Merck Discount Program discussion continues to be under review.

IV. Open Discussion / New Business:

- a. Meet the State Event on October 9th at Hamilton Stage – An opportunity to learn about various State Departments and Divisions and what programs they have to offer.
- b. Delicias Restaurant will be re-opening at 1524 Irving Street soon.

V. Ribbon Cuttings

a. World of Beauty – 84 Monroe Street

On June 3rd, Mayor Giacobbe officially welcomed World of Beauty to downtown Rahway. Teresa Grande and their team of licensed professionals offer the latest beauty services and treatments for all ages and styles. To feel and look your best. Stop by and indulge in a world of beauty located at 84 Monroe Street.

b. The Lymphatic Massage - 1544 Irving Street, Suite 2

Owner, Yamilca Montero, specializes in medical and therapeutic modalities, post operative and lymphatic drainage massage. Check out her full range of services. The business is open Monday through Saturday.

c. Akasa Yoga - 208 Central Avenue

On June 24th, Rahway welcomed Akasa Yoga Studio located at 208 Central Avenue. Owner Melanie Gonzalez Kennedy strives to bring the community together through movement. Akasa offers a safe place for all to connect their mind, body, soul and heart through the beautiful practice of yoga.

d. The Chicken Box – 47 E. Cherry Street

On July 17th, Rahway native Melvin Crawley opened The Chicken Box, conveniently located at 47 E. Cherry Street. Using recipes learned in his mother’s kitchen, Melvin serves delicious, satisfying soul food fit for the heartiest appetites.

VI. Guest Presenter – Wizdom Media: Marketing Trends

Jacki Lombardo and Sheryl Rosenstock, partners of Wizdom Media, presented ‘Look At Me’ to committee members. The presentation stressed the importance of cutting through the noise, gaining attention, defining your audience, personalizing your message, and crafting a customer experience. Engaging video content and marketing trends in 2024 were also focus points. Storytelling and value-based content are key factors in what type of videos business owners should spend the time and plan out throughout the year. Lastly, the importance of trained staff to answer the phone right away and responding to emails and direct messages from future customers in a timely manner was a big part of successful business.

VII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

Mondays at 5pm at Hamilton Stage

October 7th

December 2nd

Mayor’s Advisory Committee Meetings

Tuesdays at 5pm at the SID Office

October 8th

December 3rd

In 2025, the committee meetings might be changed to the third Monday and Tuesday of the month to allow additional attendees to attend more regularly.

Adjournment: Anthony Armando thanked everyone for and the meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.