



Rahway Special Improvement District Report

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

I. **RECAP: ArtsFest – Saturday, September 21st from 2-6pm**

- ArtsFest returned to the Arts District on Irving Street after having to move inside due to rain in 2023.
- The performing arts were on display throughout the day with local musicians, an aerialist and contortionist performing. Steppaz With Attitude and Dance Starz Academy brought their students to show off the talent of our local dance groups.
- The interactive areas were very popular especially the painting workshops from Art 4 Change and Wine & Design, the cartooning workshop for children.
- Over 65 artists, art vendors and artisans participated in the event.
- Local businesses saw more foot traffic especially at the height of the event from 3-5pm.

II. **Paint Rahway Pink – October 2024**

- This October, the City of Rahway is again looking to Paint Rahway Pink and put a bigger spotlight on Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The goal of the Paint Rahway Pink initiative is to raise awareness about early detection through screenings and to support those who are going through treatments, their families and healthcare providers.
- The Special Improvement District has invited all our businesses to create specific pink specials, provide special classes or services, or by decorating store fronts in pink decor for #PaintRahwayPink.
- This year 45 businesses are participating in the Paint Rahway Pink campaign. 26 of them are offering special “pink” menu items, deals or specials while others are decorating their storefronts in pink, wearing pink as a staff or making a donation.
- Participating businesses include:

Adeline Deli & Grocery	Millie & Joy
Alfonso's	Mr. B Printing
Antojitos Salvadoreños Pupuseria	Nancy's Towne House
Arista Yoga	Pampered Paws
Beauty & the Chic	Protein Corner
Bianca's Deli	Pupz Club
Butch Kowal's Tavern	Rahway Best-Tiger Martial Arts
Caido del Cielo	R & J Pizza
Cubanu	Salsa Y Sabor
Delicias	Spanish Restaurant III
Edward Jones	Tasa Teahouse
Garden of Ink	The Coffee Box
Gelber & Associates	The Waiting Room
Gilded Lily	The Watt
Herbs for Life	Travel Skate Shop
Hugo's Restaurant	UCPAC
Irving Inn Social	Vendee Events
Juice Hub	Wholly Cow
La Chula	Wine & Design
La Malinche	Witty's
Liberty Harley	Wizdom Media
Michelino's	

III. **Hispanic Heritage Month**

- The City of Rahway is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept 15-Oct 15) with many different events to highlight the contributions and wonderful heritage of our Hispanic residents and business owners. Food is an important part of every cultural and heritage and is often an extension of the people and their history. We want to highlight the unique foods from our Hispanic restaurants while helping people learn about its significance to their culture.
- On Saturday, October 5th & 12th, residents and visitors can take part in our Hispanic Heritage Food Stroll called: *No Sin Mi Bocado!* (Not Without My Small Bites!)
- Restaurants will feature small bites unique to the culture or heritage of the restaurant for a small price ranging between \$3-\$7.
- 12 restaurants are participating in the event:
 - Adeline Deli - 45 E Milton Ave
 - Alfonso's Catering Services - 952 St. Georges Ave
 - Caído del Cielo - 221 W Main St
 - Cholao El P'tas - 1831 Paterson St
 - CubaNu - 1467 Main St
 - Delicias Restaurant - 1524 Irving St
 - Hugo's Peruvian Restaurant - 1505 Main St
 - La Malinche Restaurant - 1588 Irving St
 - La Chula - 78 E Cherry St
 - Mana Spanish Food 2 - 1311 Madison Hill Rd
 - Spanish Restaurant III - 988 St. Georges Ave
 - Quilla by Sabor Peruano - 1576 Irving St

IV. **Training & Continuing Education Opportunities for Businesses**

- The SID will host a networking event for Hispanic business owners on October 9th from 3-5pm at Cubanu. This event will feature a short presentation from the New Jersey Business Action Center (NJBAC) about the services that they can provide to business owners. There will be time for the SID to answer questions as well and then give people a chance to meet and network.
- **UPDATE: Social Media and Branding Program**
 - The City of Rahway, in conjunction with the Rahway Special Improvement District, sponsored a Social Media and Branding Program to help businesses improve their current promotional practices while learning during the process. The program will be awarded to three businesses who will receive social media services, social media training and mentoring, as well as a strategic branding analysis and plan over a six-month period. Services will be carried out by the SID Social Media and Branding Specialist, Heather Dube. The program was open to all current and new brick and mortar businesses in the City of Rahway.
 - The first business that is participating is Wet Ticket Brewing from May-October 2024.
 - Quilla by Sabor Peruano is the second business participating in the program and began working with Heather Dube on August 1st.

V. **Small Business Weekend**

- The SID and Rahway Chamber of Commerce will once again collaborate on the Shop Local initiative for Small Business Saturday. We have begun meeting to discuss ways to enhance the programs that we already have in place and to add new events and activations.
- 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 and throughout the holiday shopping season.
- To support local artists and creators, we hosted a Holiday Market at the Cherry Street Mall (75 E Cherry St) and in several other locations downtown (Watt Hotel, Wholly Cow, Coffee Box, the Rahway Refillery and Atelier Rosal) on Small Business Saturday from 11am-3pm. 16 vendors participated by selling locally produced, handcrafted products. We intend to expand this program for 2024.

VI. **2255 Elizabeth Avenue Mural** – completed in August 2024

- The mural features three notable innovators with ties to Rahway, including astrophysicist Carl Sagan, inventor Nikola Tesla, and Merck biochemist Jeannette E. Brown. The design recognizes Rahway's past and future as a place where innovative thinkers can call home. The mural faces the train tracks north of Rahway station. It is visible to NJ Transit and Amtrak riders traveling on the Northeast Corridor between New York City and Rahway.
- Next steps: Public announcement planned for later in October, with the update to our public art listing and map on the SID website to follow.

VII. **Holiday Lights**

- We are currently seeking proposals and estimates for new lighting designs and holiday décor. We are looking to illuminate downtown and create curated areas that will attract residents and visitors to the city to explore all that Rahway has to offer.
 - **UPDATE: We are working with a new Christmas light design company to for the 2024 holiday season.**
 - **In addition to lighting up the downtown, there will be new décor designed for photo opportunities. We hope these photo stations can be a draw for people to come visit the downtown and while doing so visit our great businesses.**

VIII. **SID Business Improvement Program**

- Forgivable loans for new and existing Rahway businesses for Interior Improvements, Signage and Brand Marketing/Design Services up to \$2,000 in each category.
- MBE Certified Businesses (Minority, Women, Veteran, LGBTQ) that has or gets the certification are eligible for additional \$1,000.
- There were 130 applicants for the BIP. 109 businesses met the established criteria for eligibility. 62 businesses have submitted their funding requests.
- The application for the program opened on March 1, 2023, and approval letters were sent in June 2023. We gave a deadline of June 30, 2024, for those businesses who were approved to submit funding requests or to notify the SID of the status of their progress. 54 of 62 businesses have completed all the steps and have received funding. There are a few more still in the process and we are working with them to complete everything and receive funding.
- **UPDATE: There have been no new funding requests submitted. We are working with the final few businesses to help them complete their projects and receive funding.**

Business	Business Address	Total Amount
2 World Studios	1544 Irving St	\$5,000
Adeline Deli	45 E Milton Ave	\$3,226
Arch Angels NJ LLC	1600 St Georges Ave.	\$6,412
Arista Yoga and Holistic Wellness Group	75 E. Cherry St # 9A	\$5,485
B & B General Contractors	248 Wescott Dr	\$2,000
Bongiovi Chiropractic Center	764 Jefferson Ave	\$1,800
CasaMon Carriibbean Cuisine	1577 Elizabeth Ave	\$600
Chicken Delight	1685 St Georges Ave	\$3,647
Cholao El P'Tos	1831 Paterson St #3	\$6,000
Clark Animal Hospital	1075 Westfield Ave	\$2,000
Coffee Box	1465 Irving Street	\$4,290
Compliments by A Myles	156 East Milton Ave	\$4,973
Cooks Kitchn	1685 St Georges Ave	\$6,000
Copacabana Coffee	77 E. Milton Ave	\$2,000
Cultured Expressions	1417 Main St	\$2,907
Darkside Industries	1571 Irving St	\$3,822
Dason Stainless Products	1773 Elizabeth Ave	\$2,000
Davis Financial Services	1523 Irving St	\$4,034
Diamond Studio Lash & Brow	1653 Irving St	\$6,000
Dr. Gregg Schneider	1271 Westfield Ave.	\$3,755
Ebony & Ivory	39 E Milton Avenue	\$2,000
Gigi's Latin Bistro	1524 Irving St	\$2,000
Hellhound Studios	1605 Coach St	\$1,990
Instile Stone Corp	713 New Brunswick Avenue	\$2,000
La Chula Tex Mex	78 E Cherry St	\$6,000
La Malinche	1588 Irving St	\$4,000
Le Bijou Nail & Spa	382 St Georges Ave	\$1,200
Luxury Elite Wellness	1567 Irving St	\$6,831
Melao Cafe & Creamery	1425 Irving St	\$5,058
Michelino's Pizza	79 E Milton Ave	\$2,000
Millie & Joy	1361 Franklin St	\$4,000
MNM Fitness	1521 Main St	\$4,880
Nail Rehab Spa	205 W. Main St	\$5,000
Nancy's Towne House	1453 Main Street	\$3,230
Navi Salon	1673 Irving St	\$1,485
Nutradontics	1271 Westfield Ave.	\$2,000
PMU Studio	1275 Westfield Ave, Ste 4	\$4,000
Prestige Hair Salon	2343 St Georges Ave	\$5,919
Protein Corner	548 W. Grand Ave	\$2,000
Pupz Club	1419 Irving Street	\$5,865

Quality 1st Auto Repair	300 St Georges Ave	\$3,890
Rahway Dance Theatre School	1575 Irving St	\$5,000
Rahway Primary Care	1531 Irving St	\$6,000
Rahway Sushi	75 E. Cherry St	\$2,000
Rocky's Bar & Grill	710 W Grand Ave	\$3,920
Sabor Peruano	1576 Irving Street	\$7,000
Santana Agency	75 E Cherry St	\$2,697
Spruce Industries	759 E. Lincoln Avenue	\$2,000
The Wannabees Dance Studio	40 E Cherry St	\$2,903
Tiger Martial Arts	385 St Georges Ave	\$2,000
Travel Skate Shop	43 E Cherry St	\$4,000
Vendee Events	275 E Grand Ave	\$3,000
West Carpets	385 St Georges Ave	\$3,000
Wet Ticket Brewing	1435 Main St	\$2,000

IX. Facade Improvement Program

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

Update

- o There was a total of 32 applicants for the FIP. 24 applicants met the established criteria for eligibility.
- o 10 property owners are ready to receive funding and are working with SID and UCEDC to finalize paperwork.
- o As of August 1st, 7 property owners have completed the work and received funding.
- o **UPDATE: There have been no new funding requests completed. We are still working with the property owners to assist them with completing their requests.**

X. Public Art Incentive Program Amendment to the FIP

- o The purpose of this amendment is to encourage the completion of significant public art projects on private property. Public art enriches the community and fuels the local creative economy. These projects provide artists, fabricators, and other tradespeople with income while contributing to the unique cultural identity of the community. The economic impact of public art includes supporting commerce by attracting visitors to Rahway and contributing to the enhancement of neighborhoods. It can underscore community values and engage the public in compelling ways.
- o Eligible commercial property owners located in the City of Rahway can apply for up to \$10,000 per property/location for a public art installation on their property.
- o The Public Art Incentive Program will be funded through the Rahway Special Improvement District or other funding source if and when they become available.
- o Public art may include painted murals, wall art, freestanding or suspended sculpture, mosaics and ceramics, light art, architectural metal, architectural glass, and forms of interactive art.
- o To qualify as public art, artwork must be designed to be visible or experienced by the public from within the public realm. The public realm is a collective term for spaces accessible to the public, including any publicly owned streets, pathways, sidewalks, right of ways, parks, or publicly accessible open spaces.

- If approved for the Public Art Incentive Program, the property owner and the City shall enter into an agreement that outlines the terms and responsibilities of the involved parties.
- Funding has been prioritized based on the zoning district in which a commercial property is located.
 - CBD – RA: Central Business District Redevelopment Area and RAD- RA: Rahway Arts District Redevelopment Area – Up to \$10,000
 - B-1: Neighborhood Business Zone, B-2: Regional Business Zone, B-4: Service Business Zone, WGO: West Grand Overlay – Up to \$7,500
 - B-3: Highway Business Zone, I-H: Heavy Industrial Zone, I-L: Light Industrial Zone – Up to \$2,500
- The Mural design must be pre-approved by the City and must be reflective of and consistent with the City’s values and purposes. In the case of representational artworks, an emphasis will be made on the reflection of some aspect of Rahway community/culture within the theme. Further, the design must be appropriate to the setting and architecture of the Site.
- **UPDATE: The application and Owner’s Agreement is complete. We have begun outreach and will hopefully have at least one project in process.**

XI. Ribbon Cuttings

- **Lawrence Architecture - 1850 Elizabeth Avenue Unit D - September 12, 2024**
 Licensed to practice architecture in several states, Lawrence Architecture opened its doors at 1850 Elizabeth Avenue. David Lawrence, Architect & Founder, works on residential and commercial renovations. A full-service firm they offer field measurements, permit & construction drawings, zoning analysis, interior design and 3d renderings.
- **Barber Magic - 258 East Grand Avenue - September 18, 2024**
 On September 18, 2024, Shareef Campbell opened the doors of Barber Magic located at 258 E. Grand Avenue. With over twenty years of hair styling experience, he wants his customers to know that the whole family can enjoy all of their grooming in a sleek, sophisticated comfortable atmosphere ‘where the art of grooming meets the flair of magic’.