**EDC Meeting Minutes**

**3/2/2023 7pm**

Roll Call Attendance:

**Present**: Andrew Schallenhammer, Mario DiNatale, Joseph Perno, Stella Sytnik, Nadine Grinbergs, Mike Cherkas, Scott Levy

**Absent**: Harry Platt, Emily Morgan, Neal Cupersmith, Kristina Rieders

Ms. Sytnik provided a detailed update on the status of the Shop Voorhees revamped program. She passed the list of current businesses which included only front stores and establishments that would be a good fit for participating in Shop Voorhees program.

* We reached out to SJ Chamber of Commerce, they are on board with providing membership discount as an additional perk to SV merchants.
* VBA proposal has been drafted and Stella will present to VBA Board next week. We are hoping they will offer similar discount and a free monthly lunch pass.
* Promotional video. Mario and Stella met with Eastern High Superintendent, Mr. Clotier and Vice Chair of Technology Department Mr. Phil Smart and Media/TV supervisor Jeff Holmes. They loved the concept and will assign volunteer to shoot the video. Logistics and legalities will be worked out.

Mario stated once we complete all the items on the new benefits list, we will do an email blast, then committee can start making cold calls and visits to each merchant.

Stella will work on the list to add addresses and phone numbers.

Mario explained we could add geographic locations to the website map, this way each committee member can focus on a certain geographic location for visits. He will create a map and we will share it once completed.

Joe mentioned some of them may have previous connections and know the people on the list.

Andy said he will take care of residents once we are done with merchants.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Nadine made a presentation based on the 45 min zoom meeting she and Mario had with a vendor from Texas. “Making Voorhees a Better Place” would be the objective of hiring the vendor. Nadine found out about them via podcast. It is a non-profit company based in Dallas, TX, focused on making the neighborhoods places where people have a higher level of happiness. They identify areas in need and call them Blue Zones. They go around the world and find underutilized malls. They analyze the situation, survey the location, and in 120 days create a plan to improve the neighborhood. They provide volunteers to create semi-permanent structures.

Nadine shared their portfolio on screen. Committee members were able to see examples of the neighborhoods where things were falling apart and were turned around.

Stella asked about the cost of the project. Nadine stated it costs $88,000. The price will include survey, design and recruitment/management of volunteers.

Mike said he was truly excited about the previous plan for the mall, E-Sport and Eds and Meds. Mario stated he continues to work on that project.

Joe asked if the vendor had any experience with communities similar to Voorhees. Nadine was not sure about that. Everyone agreed we need to check on that.

Mario reminded about similar actions we took when we built our playground on Main Street.

After more collaborative discussion, the committee reached consensus that we may ask the vendor to quote the price for just a survey to see what our residents actually want.

Andy asked about summer 2023 concerts schedule. Stella provided an update: June – Santana tribute band, July- Elvis tribute band, August – Springsteen tribute band. She mentioned we may have a standup comedy or sax & drummer players for the fall. Need to be cautious of the content of the standup comedy to make it kids and family friendly.

The committee discussed an idea of having a farmer’s market. Another new venue opening this year for our residents is Bill Green’s winery at the Stafford Farm.

With no one in public wishing to comment, the chairman announced the next meeting date April 6, 2023 and asked for adjournment.

Motioned by Mr. Perno and seconded by Mr. Cherkas the meeting was adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Stella R. Sytnik

Vice Chair/Secretary Pro Tempore