

April 8, 2022

The Borough continues to work toward the creation of the Metuchen Arts District. When the Borough acquired the Forum Theatre in July 2019 entirely with grant monies received from Middlesex County, our primary objective was to ensure that: 1) the Forum remained a theatre; and 2) we eventually create a Metuchen Arts District on South Main. For the last few years, we have continued to draw upon the County grant funds to engage a consultant to help the Borough develop a strategic plan that explores the most effective uses and ensure long-term economic viability for the Forum. Simultaneously, the Borough has been involved in extensive negotiations with the owner of the adjacent gas station for the purposes of acquiring the property without encumbering the financial responsibility of the environmental cleanup that may be required there. These steps are specifically designed to ensure that the Borough continues to carefully pursue this important project while ensuring that it does not straddle our residents with any significant costs or unnecessary debt. As we continue through this process, the Council at our meeting on Monday will be considering the approval of an environmental testing firm to perform important exploratory work at the gas station property.

We would all love to be able attend shows and performances at the Forum Theatre now but to ensure that the “show goes on,” we must continue to proceed in the most deliberative manner possible to ensure its success for generations to come.



October 20, 2020

The Borough has begun taking steps toward soliciting extensive public input with respect to the Forum Theater.

In August, the Borough hired theatre consultant Webb Management, LLC to perform a feasibility study which is essential to determining the eventual development and operational needs of the Forum. As part of this important initial step, Webb representatives will be interviewing a wide-range of leaders, including those in the arts, civic, business, and entertainment communities, over the next few weeks. These findings will be shared at a public forum which will enable all residents to provide feasibility study input on the Forum.

August 24, 2020

Many people have asked, what's going on with the Forum Theatre and plans for the Metuchen Arts District? Lots actually.

Throughout the pandemic, we have been carefully preparing for a time in the hopefully not too distant future when we will be able to gather together again, eat indoors, and attend shows at The Forum Theatre.

Over these last six or so months, we have continued to forge ahead with plans for the Metuchen Arts District by working with DEVCO, the Borough's planners and others who specialize in the arts. At tonight's Council Meeting, we approved a contract for arts consulting services with Webb Management that was made possible by the \$3.5 million grant given to us by Middlesex County last year.

Webb has worked on similar-type projects throughout the country, including the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and White Eagle Hall in Jersey City. Webb is second to none in this field and will be performing a feasibility study for our community to help us understand the best use of the Forum. This process will take months but it is specifically designed to gather extensive public input and consult with experts from throughout the arts industry in an effort to provide guidance on the District's eventual business operations to ensure that the project is as successful for our community as possible.

Once we identify ways for residents to become more involved in the public input process, we will let you know.



February 6, 2020

Continuing our work on plans for the Metuchen Arts District with the Borough's project advisors from New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO) and officials from Middlesex County.



October 21, 2019

METUCHEN ARTS DISTRICT UPDATE

Since purchasing the Forum Theatre in July with the help of Middlesex County, the Borough has been working on a number of simultaneous steps toward the development of the Metuchen Arts District.

We have engaged New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO) to be project advisors as we explore a public-private partnership to assist with financing, constructing, operating, and managing the Arts District. DEVCO is responsible for more than \$2 billion of revitalization projects throughout New Jersey. Just last month, DEVCO opened the world class New Brunswick Performing Arts Center, which is home to Crossroads Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts, and American Repertory Ballet. We are excited to be working with DEVCO on this very important project for the Borough.

NJDEP Compliance and Enforcement has commenced an action against the current and former owners of the abandoned gas station property on the corner of Amboy and Main. The purpose of the action is to reinforce the property owners' responsibility for any possible cleanup and related closure costs on the site.

In November, the Borough Planning Board will continue the redevelopment process it began last winter for the designated Arts District Properties. This process will help determine whether or not the properties are an area in need of redevelopment. Once the Planning Board makes this determination, it will be reviewed by the Borough Council for a determination and for the development of a redevelopment ordinance.

As we have said before, this transformation will not occur overnight but these steps are necessary to ensure the development of a Metuchen Arts District with the Forum as its centerpiece. We will continue to provide further updates when we have them.



July 2, 2019

We are excited to announce that after nearly four months of numerous inspections and extensive negotiations, the Borough closed on its purchase of the Forum Theatre today. Thanks to the Middlesex County Freeholders, our purchase was made entirely with grant funds from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund.

The acquisition of the Forum will ensure that the property remains a theatre for future generations and it will serve as the centerpiece of the Metuchen Arts District. The District will eventually result in the redevelopment and reactivation of an underutilized block of Main Street into a hub for arts and culture in the center of the Brainy Borough and in the heart of northern Middlesex County.

This transformation will not occur overnight and will require patience and determination. Redevelopment projects like these often take years. Once completed, the Metuchen Arts District will play a significant role in the Borough's resurgence as a regional destination and as a leader in the arts.

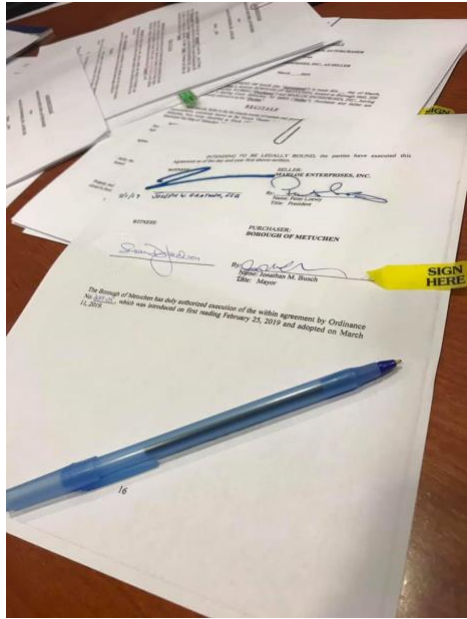


March 11, 2019

We are very excited to announce that the Borough has reached an agreement to purchase the Forum Theatre. This is another significant step toward the development of a Metuchen Arts District.

This agreement was reached after months of constructive and ultimately productive negotiations and we are grateful to the Loewy family for their service to our community for 37 years. Over the next couple of months, a variety of experts will carefully inspect the theatre as part of our due diligence effort to identify any possible issues that might require further investigation. Once the parties close on the contract, we expect to commence more formal negotiations with the owners of the adjacent gas station and small landscaped properties.

We are enthusiastic about the possibilities for the Metuchen Arts District and will continue to provide updates to the Metuchen community throughout this process.



ACCEPTED TO BE LEGALLY BOUND, the parties have executed this agreement as follows:

BY: *[Signature]*
WILLIAM W. FARRAR, III
Vice President

BY: *[Signature]*
RICHARD W. METUCHEN
Director of Operations

The Board of Directors has duly authorized execution of the within agreement by Ordinance No. 12,202, which was introduced on first reading February 22, 2015 and adopted on March 11, 2015.