

Summit Downtown, Inc.
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 29, 2026, 8:00AM
In-Person/Zoom Meeting

Members Present: Mayor Elizabeth Fagan, Peter Lloyd, Ray Merritt (ZOOM), Bob Pawlowski, Chantal Landman (ZOOM), Rocco Flores, Kristen Scalia, Annette Dwyer, Bill Robb, Karen Schneider, Beth Welsh; Staff: Nancy Adams, Wyndham Rothblatt.

Members Absent: Leslie Herman, Tammie Baldwin

Members of the Public: No members of the public.

Bill Robb called the meeting to order at 8:04am. Bill asked for a motion to approve the March 25th Board of Trustees meeting minutes. Beth asked a question on the minutes about looking for Mexican ones for World Cup first match at the event. Wyndham noted that Tacoria, local new business, is going to be participating. Beth asked that it be noted in the minutes that local businesses were solicited for involvement. Bill asked that it be added to the minutes then Kristen motioned for approval, Karen seconded, all approved.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

Financials –Ray Merritt

Ray was on Zoom so Bill read out the financials. Balance Sheet: As of March 31, 2026, balance sheet assets were about \$318,667.52 and liabilities and equity of the same amount. We're starting to get vendor payments that will show more cash flow from that in the April report. Mayor moved the financial report and Karen seconded, all approved. Budget hearing is at the council meeting on May 5th; Ray and Bill will attend.

Appointment of New Board Member – Bill

With Antonietta LeVecchia's resignation at the February meeting due to her sale of her business, The UPS Store, Bill reported that the only one nomination, that of Daniela from Maison 53 and she's joining by Zoom today. At the last meeting, Kristen nominated Daniela and the Mayor seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve Daniela to serve the remainder of Anch's term, which ends Dec 31, 2026.

Main Street America – Nancy

Nancy sent around a sample agenda of the May 6th visit and will try to accommodate everyone's schedules for the interviews by Main Street America (MSA) representative and the Main Street New Jersey State Coordinator Gina Fischetti who will also be here. Nancy explained that downtown organizations all operate differently across the country, so there is not necessarily explicit rules of operations but kind of more of an assessment by them of how SDI operates and if the work SDI does is in line with MSA's four-point approach to downtown revitalization. Wyndham explained how he learned about the Main Street approach at the national conference he attended this month in Tulsa. Nancy explained that MSA also has some training courses online so that we may be able to get some for our Board. MSA will talk with some business owners as well as city officials and board members.

Bill asked Nancy to update the Board about the recent HGTV announcement ranking the best towns in the country based on walkability, downtowns, schools, homes, etc. Summit was ranked number 3, the only town in NJ, just behind a couple of towns in NY. Nancy circulated it to the Board a week earlier and said we will promote it on our social media and share it with the local press.

Maple Street – Nancy

Nancy explained that Council discussed closing the street this summer at their last meeting; it will be discussed again this coming Tuesday May 5 and up for final vote. The ordinance passed on first reading at the April 21st meeting, 5-2. If it passes, this Board will vote probably via email (as permitted in the bylaws) as to any purchases from reserves for street furniture, etc for Maple St. Bill explained that if we do buy some equipment, executive committee had brainstormed a little as to planters, chairs, tables, games that if the closure doesn't happen again in the future, we can use someplace else after. Nancy reviewed some prices for like the tables and chairs currently used in Lyric Park and other places downtown cost a few hundred dollars each, large planters cost \$1500 each or more. Lots of variables, but she will share prices and ideas to purchase that she will send to the Board for review and vote. There was discussion amongst the board that the statute allows the council to authorize the mayor to approve closing the street for more than 48 hours if she finds that closing is necessary for the preservation of public safety, health or welfare. Ray stated that it's open for interpretation and of course you can find loopholes in all things in legal language. He added that we as a board can decide whether we support it with some street equipment or not. The SDI Board made the recommendation in the past that we think it's good for the downtown and good for the city's population and it draws a lot of people downtown, so the city needs to decide and then let us know if it's happening and then SDI Board will vote to see how we can support it via programming and street furniture or games.

Event Updates: Stakeholder Meeting date, World Cup – Wyndham Rothblatt

Wyndham reported some stats about the opening days of the Farmers Market this year compared to last. The attendance was about the same, notably the attendance peaked higher earlier in the day this year than last. He then reported this year vs last year for the entire downtown. Foot traffic is about the same as last year, with a little dip on the snow storm days, which means the totals align with last year's and the last few weeks is showing an increase. Peter mentioned that's interesting because businesses are reporting that they are seeing fewer people now. Wyndham will pull a zip code report to see where people are coming from. Peter and Kristen report that more people are coming from out of town and fewer Summit residents are coming; Nancy noted that this is actually also good and shows our promoting to towns outside of Summit is attracting people to Summit vs other downtowns like Montclair.

Paperwork for all vendors for Family Fun Night is underway, as well as for Street Sounds. World Cup that unfortunately the grant amounts are too high but Nancy reported that she did apply anyway and hopefully they'll change the parameters and we can get the grant anyway.

Marketing Committee Updates – Kristen Scalia

Kristen reported that the retailers' roundtable was very productive and there's a great energy from retailers wanting to work together to attract more shoppers. She provided a summary:

Our next meetup is scheduled for Monday, May 18 at 5:30 PM.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

Many retailers noted a shift in who is shopping Downtown Summit — and when. Foot traffic has softened, and long-time “regulars” are appearing less frequently. At the same time, there's been an increase in visitors from outside the area.

Opportunity: *Re-engage local customers while also intentionally capturing and converting this newer, outside audience.*

LATE NIGHT THURSDAYS

There was strong interest in creating a consistent late-night shopping experience. Two potential approaches emerged:

- *Aligning with **First Thursdays** (one late night per month, excluding Jan–March)*
- *A **weekly late night** from Thanksgiving through Christmas*

Convenience and consistency were the biggest priorities in shaping this initiative.

REINTRODUCTION CAMPAIGN

There was consensus that it's time to reintroduce Summit retail in a way that entices new residents, re-engages longtime residents, and encourages out-of-town shoppers to keep coming back. A shared, umbrella campaign (e.g., Shop Summit, Love Local) could spotlight the personality and diversity of our businesses.

This could potentially be developed in partnership with SDI and integrated across multiple touchpoints (EDDM, local map, welcome packets, etc.).

HOLIDAY 2026

Interest in creating a strong, retailer-focused kickoff to the holiday season around Small Business Weekend.

Initial ideas included:

- *Shop Crawl*
- *Small Business Bingo*
- *Meet & Greet with Santa*

We'll dig further into feasibility and structure at the next meeting.

MAPLE STREET + SUMMER ACTIVATION

Regardless of whether Maple Street is closed from Memorial Day through Labor Day, there's a clear need for more retailer-driven summer programming.

Key considerations included:

- *If Maple St is Closed > How to activate the space in a way that benefits all businesses; Focus on beautification and safety*
- *Overall Thoughts: Creating reasons for people to shop, not just stroll in Downtown Summit*

ADDITIONAL IDEAS + INITIATIVES

- *Seasonal Shop Crawls with a charitable component (Spring, Summer, Holiday)*
- *Valentine's "Love Local" campaign (2027 planning)*
- *New resident welcome packages featuring local businesses*
- *A custom Downtown Summit fold-out map/directory*
- *A unified, city-wide Sidewalk Sale day*
- *EDDM mailer campaign targeted at Summit residents*
- *Social media storytelling in partnership with HTTV/SDI to highlight local businesses and community voices in a fresh, new way*

Discussion ensued: Peter noted that the moms with strollers group seems to have disappeared. Karen pointed out a stroller group that apparently walks through downtowns on different days and there is a huge following and maybe we can connect with the organizer. The Instagram is Mamas Who Walk. Annette noted that she would love to hear from the retailer group how the property owners could support their efforts. She'd like to figure out how to send a message to the retailers that the property owners can help but please don't say lower rents etc., because this should be business to business. Bill and Nancy noted and Kristen agreed that SDI with its small staff can only do so much, but to the extent that SDI can help promote and also make businesses aware of initiatives by the retailers group. All agreed to harness the momentum and figure out what SDI can and can't help with.

Design Committee Updates – Annette

Annette thanked the Executive Board and the full Board on their patience as she's worked through this process for the tree wells. She reached out to Castlepoint and he decided he couldn't do the job this year, so she went back to Back to Nature and they came back that they would be willing to do labor, mulch, high quality soil for \$20k. For the purchase of the plantings (annuals) will be from Halls and Annette is waiting back from her but hoping for \$5k at most for the planting materials. A great team effort. So, not displacing the perennials but fixing the soil, mulch etc., and planting the annuals. Hoping to do the planting by mid-May.

Business Updates – Nancy

Nancy reported some things happening downtown with regard to businesses openings/closings/moving. Mark Yeager has purchased the building at 15 Beechwood where Peter Wallburg and MK Linens are. He's been trying to relocate them both because he has substantial structural improvements to the property. Mark connected with our landlord at 18 Bank to make the other front office into a retail space like 12 Bank St did over the last couple years, creating more interesting retail along Bank St rather than first floor offices. MK will be moving into the new retail space at 18 Bank and Peter Wallburg is moving into Beth's 57 Union Place, second floor. There is a new tenant coming into where Nest Seekers on Springfield next to John Hyatt, which will also extend the retail down that eastern end of downtown, which is great. A prominent long-term tenant is not renewing their 15 year lease when it expires at the end of October, so there is a lot of activity in finding a replacement tenant. The Tito's space was originally going to transfer the lease that wasn't up yet, but that didn't work out, so the landlord took one of the food businesses who had reached out to Nancy about finding a location and that seems to be working out so that business will be doing more of a takeout version of their existing business model which is a regular sit-down restaurant. Lastly, Nancy reported that Pottery Barn is closing its Short Hills Mall store and moving into the old Bank of America building at the corner of Beechwood and Springfield; Mark Yeager said there is a lot of work to be done on the interior but confirmed they are going in there. So a lot of transitioning and all of it good so far.

Summit Public Art Updates – Leslie (absent)

No Report.

Common Council Updates – Mayor Elizabeth Fagan, Bob Pawlowski, Chantal Landman

There was no Council update relevant to downtown to share other than the Maple Street discussion we had earlier in the meeting.

New Business – Bill

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34am. The next BOT meeting is at 8AM on May 27, 2026, at Lois Schneider Realtor conference room.