



OYSTER BAY

MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION NEWS

Volume 8

Winter 2020/21

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A Year of Changes in Oyster Bay

Difficult situations, creative solutions, and new traditions.

The Oyster Bay Main Street Association for the first time since our founding had to re-assess each of our programs and initiatives in light of the pandemic. Could we host an event in a manner that would be safe for the community? Are there new initiatives that would be a better use of our funds during this immediate crisis?

While we were disappointed to postpone our 10th season of DIITS, we were excited about the opportunity to bring back an outdoor market to Oyster Bay. Thanks to careful planning with the **Town of Oyster Bay**, we were able to partner with **Laura Escobar**, local resident and owner of Mockingbird Wings, to host **The Oyster Bay Market** - a safe, open-air market - every other Sunday from the end of July through November.

The market was such a success in 2020, we are pleased to bring it back for a second season. In response to demand, we have expanded the 2021 market - elongating the season and increasing the footprint to accommodate more vendors. The season opened on March 28th and will continue every other Sunday through November. **Mark your calendars for our upcoming markets - April 11th and 26th from 10am to 2pm - in the municipal parking lot adjacent to 101 Audrey Avenue.** Looking forward to seeing you there!

(Continued on p. 6)

MAIN STREET NEWS | 1

Working to Bring Oyster Bay Back


Prior to the pandemic, Oyster Bay was booming - articles were written about the "restaurant renaissance" happening in the Hamlet and retail stores had made a comeback in the downtown. By the end of 2019, after several years of consistent growth, we had achieved the lowest vacancy rate our downtown had experienced in over 20 years.

And then the global events of 2020 happened and everything changed - everything except our organization's commitment to supporting our community and the small businesses that serve as its backbone.

Throughout the year, OBMSA staff remained available to our small businesses - providing vital information, resources and guidance through the shut down and advocating for them through the re-opening process, alongside the Oyster Bay - East Norwich Chamber of Commerce as part of the Town of Oyster Bay's Small Business Economic Recovery Taskforce.

Although we worked hard to minimize the impact - shifting our resources and adapting our programs, the shut down did cause our commercial vacancy rate to rise once again.

Now we are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel! As we continue to recover and rebuild our downtown, demand for our business support programs has ramped up dramatically. As we transition back to assisting with site selection, permitting, individualized market data, grant opportunities and more - we hope you will join us in supporting our local businesses by shopping, eating and drinking in Oyster Bay!

A photograph of an outdoor patio area. In the foreground, there is a table with a light-colored, patterned tablecloth. On the table, there are several blue ceramic containers and a white napkin. To the right, there is a wooden chair with a blue and white patterned cushion. In the background, there is a brick building with a window. A string of warm white lights is strung across the patio area. There are some green plants and a tall, thin tree-like structure in the background.

MAY OUR
COMEBACK
BE GREATER
THAN OUR
SETBACK

Stronger Than Ever

More than anything else, the request we consistently hear from our businesses is for us to encourage the community to **shop local first**. In response, we launched **three** shop local campaigns:

BOO-tiques by the Bay

Beginning in October, OBMSA hosted a fun, Halloween-themed shop local initiative in the downtown, complete with: four days of sales and promotions, costumes, a pumpkin hunt, and of course, a raffle! Despite a soggy first few days, the event was well received with over 20 businesses participating and we are already looking forward to bringing it back for 2021!

JOIN US FOR 4 DAYS OF SALES!



Small Business Saturday

In November, in the lead up to **Small Business Saturday**, we also launched a **social media awareness campaign** to make sure that the positive impact of shopping local was on the forefront of everyone's mind as the holiday shopping season got underway.

#ShopOysterBay Gift Card Giveaway

And in February we launched our first ever **#ShopOysterBay Gift Card Giveaway!**

What started as a simple premise - to support our small businesses by giving them a small influx of cash during the quieter winter months by purchasing gift cards and inspiring the community to shop local by then raffling off those gift cards - quickly evolved into a massively successful social media campaign for our downtown.

Over a four week period, we intended to post about our local businesses - highlighting where they are located, what they offer, and how customers can safely access them - as a way to remind the community of all the great businesses that are still open and operating in the downtown. What we did not expect was the amount of buzz the campaign created or the level of engagement each post would garner. We received so much positive feedback from the residents and the businesses, we decided to extend the campaign another week for a total of five weeks!

Campaign results:





Forming the Oyster Bay Beautification Committee

The Oyster Bay Main Street Association is pleased to announce the formation of a Beautification Committee for Oyster Bay!

Coordinated with the help of local residents Colleen McKean, Councilwoman Vicki Walsh, and Town Clerk Rich LaMarca, we are excited to launch this new committee with a renewed focus on tackling the quality of life issues that face our downtown. We believe that we all have a role to play in beautifying Oyster Bay and to that end we are looking forward to partnering with a variety of local residents, community organizations, businesses, property owners, utility companies, and governmental officials at the Town, County, and State levels to take a fresh look at the unique issues that face the Hamlet of Oyster Bay and finding innovative ways to tackle them.

As an organization we will be continuing our more popular beautification initiatives like our Clean Sweep Initiative, organizing community clean up days, and bringing 168 colorful hanging baskets to the downtown every spring (as you can see on the next page), but with your help and guidance we are hoping to focus our efforts, expand our initiatives, and increase our impact in the downtown and along Pine Hollow Road.

If you are interested in joining the committee or supporting this effort in any way, please fill out our simple form - available by scanning the QR code to the right or by visiting http://tiny.cc/OBMSA_Beautification - and we will be in touch!



JOIN TODAY!

Where flowers bloom
so does hope.

Lady Bird Johnson

Flower Basket Campaign

At the peak of the shutdown in 2020, we purchased, installed and maintained the 168 hanging baskets that went up on the lamp posts in the downtown. While typically just a welcoming sign of spring and warmer weather to come, the hanging baskets took on additional meaning in 2020 - as the bright colorful baskets brought a touch of normalcy and a much-needed injection of life into our downtown streets.

Keep an eye out for an invitation to sponsor a hanging basket for the 2021 season this May!

Community Clean-Up

In November OBMSA teamed up with **Friends of the Bay** to coordinate a Community Clean-Up of South Street. We lucked out with a beautiful, warm Saturday, and a large group of volunteers helped us clean up a lot of the loose debris that was scattered along the curbs, in the sewer grates, and along fences. These days are important not only because they beautify the hamlet, but because the pile of 20 bags of garbage we collected was picked up by **Town of Oyster Bay Sanitation** instead of finding it's way into our bay.



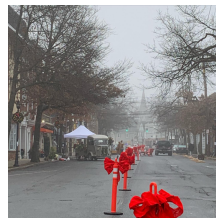
We are also incredibly excited to announce that the 6th season of our **Clean Sweep Initiative** is underway in the downtown. We are so thankful for the hard work of our part-time employee, Michael, and all that he does to help keep litter issues in check during our peak visitor season. We are looking forward to working closely with the volunteers of the new Beautification Committee to see how we can make the community clean-up days a more regular event and expand the impact of our Clean Sweep Initiative. If you have ideas - we would love to hear them!

A Year of Changes in Oyster Bay (cont'd)

(continued from page 1)

To replicate this success during the holidays, we partnered with the **Oyster Bay-East Noriwich Chamber of Commerce** to re-work the traditional tree lighting and holiday market for the current climate. On December 12th we brought the Oyster Bay Market back for the day; converted Audrey Avenue into a pedestrian walkway to encourage shopping local, while allowing for social distancing; and created a warm and festive atmosphere with live music, roaring fire pits, and - of course - a socially-distanced visit from Santa!

The day was such a festive success we are already working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Oyster Bay to make the Holiday Stroll part of the downtown traditions moving forward!



OBMSA Facade & Sign Grant Program

The Oyster Bay Main Street Association has a privately funded Façade and Sign grant program for businesses in the downtown. We began this small grant in 2013 as a means to help business owners and building owners in the downtown with small improvements while simultaneously keeping true to our design guidelines. This grant serves as an incentive for businesses to avoid cheap flashy signs and to draw attention to businesses with well-designed, durable signs to last them for years to come!

Over eight cycles of funding, this grant program has assisted 55 businesses in the downtown - disbursing over \$105,000 in grant funds and leveraging an additional private investment of over \$215,000 - for a total investment of over \$320,000 into the downtown!

The 9th cycle is currently open. Visit the grant section of our website to access the application.



A Selection of Our 2020 Grant Recipients



Thank you to our Fiscal Year 2020 Contributors!

Founding Contributor

The Bahnik Foundation
Claude & Marie Bahnik
Nancy P. Durr
Frederic R. Coudert Foundation
Todd & Sandra Graham
Judith Marino
Richard & Colleen McKean
Hamid & Ladan Nazif
Oyster Bay Community Foundation
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Michael & Claudia Taglich
Jim & Rita Tully
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James & Mary Ellen Meyerdierks
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Zahida Nadeem, T-Mobile
Amanda Nesis
Northwestern Mutual
Frank & Meredith Olt
Theresa & Keith Orlovski
Oyster Bay Brewing Co
Oyster Bay Marine Center
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Thomas Pulling
Paula Rand
Dawn Riley
Elizabeth Roosevelt
Patricia Sands
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Joan Shepard
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Sailor

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Kathryn D'Amico
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Cynthia Duras
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Michael Eberlin
Daniel J. Epp
Lillian Evans-Soricillo
Greg & Shannon Fairbend
Pinky Feakes
Frank M. Flowers & Sons, Inc.
Friends of Sagamore Hill
Girl Scout Troop #122
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Barry Goldsmith
Martin Greenberg
Thomas & Maureen Hartly
Italian-American Citizens Club
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Fran Johnston
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Janine Kyritsis
Donna Laconti
Legislator Josh Lafazan
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Nancy Marshall
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Michael & Kathy Weiss
Wild Honey Restaurant
Donald & Susan Zoeller

**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR SUPPORT!**