

**Springfield Avenue Maplewood - Community Summit  
March 23, 2018  
Meeting Notes**

**Presenting:**

Jim Nering, President, SAP

Vic De Luca, Mayor, SAP Board Member

Julie Doran, SAP District Manager

Dani Geraci, SAP Board Member, Chair, SAP Marketing Committee

Karen Pisciotta, Chair, SAP Public Art Committee

**Presentation Deck Attached:  
(SA Summit March 2018 FINAL.pdf)**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Board President Jim Nering welcomed the attendees, introduced the Springfield Avenue Partnership (SAP) Board of Trustees, The Township Committee members and turned over presentation to Mayor De Luca and SAP District Manager, Julie Doran.

**History of Springfield Avenue:**

Mayor De Luca gave a brief history of the Avenue highlighting the Township's takeover of State Road 124 and the Town's receipt of a 1.5 Million grant for roadway improvements.

“The idea of taking over jurisdiction, was to gain control of the Avenue to create a more attractive shopping district, fostering a sense of place where residents and visitors could shop, dine and enjoy. The vision also included erasing the image of Springfield Avenue as a “dividing line” in the community.”

**Economic Development:**

De Luca outlined past economic development efforts highlighting major developments and business expansions that have replaced vacant and underutilized sites such as Avalon Maplewood, Walgreens, WaWa, and the Police Station. Other notable strategies and improvements included:

- New Rental Units: The Township has focused on supporting new housing/rental units on and around the Avenue over the last several years as a strategy to support Springfield Avenue businesses.
- It was noted that there is an increase in inquires from business owners looking to open on the Avenue in the last 1 to 2 years due to increased activity and development on the Avenue.

- De Luca noted the 2013 JGSC Commercial Assessment Study commissioned by the Township to help identify and focus business recruitment efforts. Recent business recruitment outreach efforts were discussed and include: Jersey Mikes, Deans Food Markets and Pastosa and others.
- Based on the JGSC Study business recruitments efforts have focused on food establishments and the home goods category.
- Currently the Township and SAP are talking to a florist, national burger franchise, cosmetic retailer and other food establishments, among others.
- Bringing a dry cleaner and a bank to the Avenue are two areas of focus.

### **Springfield Avenue Partnership Initiatives**

Julie Doran gave a brief overview the origin, mission and programs of the Partnership. Doran then announced new initiatives coming to fruition in 2018:

1. New Branding for The Avenue
2. Public Art Initiatives
3. New Events and Promotions

### **Branding**

Julie introduced SAP Board member and Marketing Committee chair Dani Geraci to walk through the background research and strategy development undertaken by the committee and unveil the new graphics and tagline for Springfield Avenue Maplewood.

The new branding is meant to convey a tone that can be used in marketing and advertising the entire district as a whole and also help create an experience both online and on the avenue that conveys the spirit and aspirations of Springfield Avenue Maplewood: “SAM Personality for Miles”



The new logo is bold, colorful and graphic and will work well in the online environment. The nickname “SAM” will always be used in conjunction with “Springfield Avenue Maplewood.” This logo leverages the equity we have in

“Springfield Avenue” and ties us to “Maplewood,” while beginning to create a shorthand (“SAM”) that can be used online and colloquially to quickly convey the business district and at the same time it sets up a sense of place that is unique to the business district.

See presentation deck for logo treatment and sample graphic uses of the new logo.

## **Public Art**

- Julie introduced Karen Piscotta, Chair of the Public Art Committee. Karen announced that two artists for mural installations on Springfield Avenue have been selected and would be announced once contracts are signed.
- The SAP Public Art Committee expects the mural installations to be completed this spring at 1978 Springfield Avenue and 1883 Springfield Avenue.
- Karen also mentioned that the committee is searching for a 3<sup>rd</sup> mural location and will reissue the RFP for utility boxes.
- Fundraising will continue with an IOBY fundraiser starting in April and a craft beer tasting in October. Sponsorships are also being sought to help fund street art on in “SAM.”

## **New Events and Promotions**

Julie Doran talked about changes to the events and promotions run by SAP. While traditional favorites, MayFest and the Holiday Celebration will continue, the Partnership is adding new events and promotions in an effort to create new reasons to visit “SAM” and to generate new buzz and excitement about happening on the Avenue. In 2018 we the SAP plans to:

1. Repeat the popular Craft Beer Tasting in October
2. Add a Wine Tasting Event in June
3. Work toward adding an outdoor café area that allows BYOB

See presentation deck for a complete listing of events planned for 2018 and those being discussed for the longer term.

## **Open Discussion**

Mayor De Luca asked attendees to discuss what they heard being presented to blue-sky the types of businesses they would like to see on Springfield Avenue. The following questions and items were discussed:

- **New Business Ideas**
  - Co-op/Shared Work Space
  - Grocery
  - Dry Cleaner
  - Specialty Food Store
  - Co-op space for artists
  - Coffee Roaster
  - Large Art Store (e.g. Dick Blick)
  - Pizza Parlor
  - Hotel
  - Spice Store
  - Music Venue/Bar/Night Life

- Beer Garden
  - Ramen Food Establishment
  - Home Brew Space with retail supplies (e.g. Boonton, Hackettstown)
  - Just Be Claws – e.g. of restaurant
  - Sky Zone
  - Bike Shop
  - Bowling Alley
  - Bread/Pâtisserie
  - Shake Shack
  - Movie Theater
  - Ice Cream/Rita’s Italian Ices
  - Food Hall
  - Habitat for Humanity Retail Store
  - Spin Studio (Julie mentioned Lifestyle Personal Fitness has a spin studio)
- Mayor De Luca and Doran discussed the challenges in bringing new businesses to the Avenue including:
    - Geographic layout of the Maplewood roads – these direct residents to South Orange and Millburn while one needs to be approaching SAM as a destination
    - Inventory of commercial space – available space is limited and much of the commercial space is not in good condition and/or up to current standards
    - Many landlords are not local making it more challenging to form relationships and work with them to recruit the most viable businesses
  - **Other ideas/issues for the Avenue:**
    - Pedestrian Safety – Enhance crosswalk visibility: raised crosswalks, colorful crosswalks, 3-D crosswalks
      - Officer Lieutenant Niheema Malloy addressed the audience and explained that increased enforcement efforts were underway including more patrols and a public awareness campaign will be instituted including reflective armbands.
      - The officers also explained the need for balance in enforcement as “over policing” can become a deterrent in a business districts.
    - Online Menus/Grub Hub – can SAP help those restaurants that don’t have a viable online presence
    - Vertical Promotions – like the “Fitness Pass” – let’s look at the Avenues businesses from a vertical perspective and promote as such:
      - Health and Beauty
      - Home Goods
      - Food Establishments
      - Automotive
      - Financial and Insurance Services
    - Density Bonus – can we implement as a planning tool as used in other communities to incent development
    - Jitney Use to help explore the Avenue

- Vic mentioned plans to improve/incent senior transportation
  - Cost is a factor that limits this proposal
- Commercial Office Space – There is a need for more usable, higher quality office space
  - This would help support other businesses especially lunch traffic
- How can we work to integrate new renters into large community?
  - SAM welcome packets
  - Work with Neighborhood Associations
  - Liaison with property managers to communicate with tenants
- New Promo Idea: “Shop Hops”