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MAIN STREET BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DOWNTOWN 2020 STEERING COMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES **JANUARY 24, 2012**

Call to Order

Chuck Broad (Chairman) called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

Present

Main Street Board of Directors: Chuck Broad (Reading DID), Johanny Cepeda (Mi Casa Su Casa), Ellen Horan (Chamber of Commerce & Industry), Bill Woolworth (Dan's Restaurant), Brian Fichthorn (Genesis Theatre) and Mike Leifer (The Peanut Bar).

DT 2020 Committee: Sam Loth (CDS), Yohalna Jimenez (CD Administration) Donna Reed (Reading City Council MSP Liaison) and Lee Olsen (Olsen Design).

Absent

Main Street Board of Directors: Tony Calvaresi (Wells Fargo Bank), Zane Collings (SMG/Sovereign Center) and Rene Placido (Josephina's Bakery).

DT 2020 Committee: Steve Haver (CD Administration), Andrew Miller (Reading Planning), Charlie Jones (Reading Public Works), Dan Wright (CD Manager), Carl Geffken (Acting CD Director) and Kevin Barnhardt (Berks County Commissioner).

Guests

Marcelino Colon (Berks United Way).

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Brian Fichthorn to approve the minutes of October 25, 2011 and November 22, 2011. **Second by Johanny Cepeda.** Motion passed unanimously.

Main Street Program Sub-Committees

Design Sub-Committee

CDBG Façade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines Updated

- Sam Loth and Amy Johnson cooperated to update and clarify the City's CDBG Façade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines booklet.
- Sam will distribute the newly updated guidelines booklets via e-mail to all.
- Yohalna Jimenez reported that the following applies to the program in FY-2012 according to Amy Johnson (City Historic Preservation Officer):
 - The Program has an allocation of \$35,000 for commercial facades; no residential. This will allow for up to two façade projects in FY-2012.
 - Any project may apply for up to \$20,000 in maximum grant funding; a 1-1 match is required.
 - If the building is mixed use i.e. commercial/residential it must meet codes for both exterior and interior spaces.
 - Davis Bacon wages must be applied to any project.
- Donna Reed asked if the Guidelines update is available in a bi-lingual format. Sam Loth responded that yes, Rene Placido (Board Member & Design Committee member) agreed to translate the English guidelines into a Spanish version. The Board discussed how to achieve high quality translations of English to Spanish documents issued by the Main Street Program and by the City in general.
- Yohalna Jimenez (CD Administrator) volunteered to edit Mr. Placido's translation. The Board agreed but also stated that it would be a productive idea to consider having the City invest in the services of a professional translator.
- The Board directed Sam Loth to research the new PA DCED guidelines for Façade Improvement Grant Programs and report to the Board in February on his findings with the thought that Reading's MSP may want to apply for the State funding.

DT 2020/MSP Design Sub-committee Master Plan

- Lee Olsen (Design Committee Chair) reported that the Isset & Associates final draft of the Design Master Plan was completed in the fall of 2011 was reviewed by the Managing Director's office, the City Council and then released to the press for publication. Subsequent news articles have been published and some public comment was printed as well.
- He said that the committee's plan now is to schedule 3 public meetings in order to receive comments from the general public. The meetings are tentatively scheduled for Tuesdays February 7th, February 21st and March 6th. After the last public meeting the Design committee will meet one last time on the project before submitting the final draft with additions (if any) to the Main Street Board for further action. At that time Lee suggests that the work of the Downtown 2020 Committee would be completed and that the committee could dissolve.
- Sam Loth & Chuck Broad thanked Lee for his report. Sam reminded Lee that the Design Committee has many additional projects in the future and invited Lee to remain as the Committee's chair.

Penn Street Medians & Planters

- Chuck Broad reviewed the Penn Street median planting history. The DT 2020 Committee said in 2010 that the medians would not receive plantings for some time. The DID has determined to act on behalf of the 'city greening desires' and develop a Penn Street Median Planting Project. Merlin Miller (Duryea Hill Climb & Median Project Volunteer) and other interested parties plan to adopt individual planters and medians along Penn Street for spring 2012 plantings. He will approach County Nurseries about the "Adopt-a-Planter" project.
- The Board added suggestions; Eron Lloyd of the Permaculture group, Mr. Vrabic of the Berks Career and Technology Center (Landscaping Division), the Master Gardeners and community/fraternal groups like the Boy & Girl Scouts.
- The Board requested that Chuck Broad schedule a specific meeting for this project to be able to share ideas with other stakeholders.
- Bill Woolworth said that now Senator Judy Schwank was involved in the "Ribbon of Gold" planting program a few years ago.
- Chuck said that the DID will provide weeding, maintenance and upkeep of the median installations once the planting is completed. Nurseries could locate small signage in the medians to promote their business' community support. There could be a friendly competition with winners receiving ribbons and media exposure.
- Ellen Horan suggested that the project could be called "Extreme Makeover". The title was favorably received.

- The Main Street Program and DID then asked the Board for a volunteer to Chair the project. Donna Reed volunteered. Bill Woolworth also volunteered to help Donna with the project. Sam Loth will provide coordination services.
- **Main Street Board Members on the Design Sub-Committee are Rene Placido and Mike Leifer.**

Joint DID/MSP Promotion Sub-Committee

Holiday Storefront Lighting Project

- Chuck Broad reported that string lights during the holidays were successfully distributed free of charge to downtown businesses by DID Ambassadors. The \$2,000 Dollar project was jointly paid for by the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Greater Berks Development Fund with the MSP/DID acquiring and delivering the lights through Boscov's Department Stores. Approximately 350 sets were distributed. There are approximately 350 sets available for future years stored with the DID.
- The Board discussed the Penn Square (5th & Penn) decorations in 2011. Chuck Broad suggested that the DID will likely coordinate the 2012 decorating. Chuck said he is reviewing commercial options as the first step in the research.
- The Board liked Johanny Cepeda's suggestion that each corner celebrate a different holiday tradition i.e. Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanza.
- The Board agreed with Chuck that the Tree Lighting ceremony should occur in the evening, perhaps the night before the Parade through downtown.

DID/MSP Downtown Historic Architectural Tour

- The HAT sub-committee has affiliated with the Berks Jazz Fest. Two self-guided tours are scheduled:
Friday, March 23, 2012 from 11:am to 2:pm
Saturday, March 24, 2012 from Noon to 3: pm
- The sub-committee has identified approximately 12 locations and marked them on the map. Sam Loth will meet with Lee Olsen, George Meiser and Fritz Rothermel to gather historic information on each location.
- The sub-committee will publish a HAT brochure and is already being promoted in the Jazz Fest Online catalog of concerts and activities.
- The deadline for all research for the Tour is February 3, 2012.
- Over the Edge (Building Repelling) for 2013
- Chuck Broad reported that the DID Board is currently negotiating with an out-of-state events company to bring an "Over the Edge" event to downtown Reading in 2013.
- He said that the event has been staged across the country and generates much needed funding for many Reading non-profits and their missions. He will keep the Board updated.

Second Downtown Treasure Hunt

- Sam Loth said that the DID's second event is scheduled for May 5, 2012. He suggested that the MSP Board field a team for the event.
- **Members of the Promotion Sub-Committee are Johanny Cepeda, Donna Reed and Chuck Broad.**

Economic Development Sub-Committee

Business Owner Contact List for MSP Jurisdiction

- Sam Loth is working on developing the contact data base. The Board suggested he look for information as follows:
 - State Representative Tom Caltagirone (city business list)
 - Lenny Agudo, President Hispanic CofC T: 484.225.3112 (BCCF)
 - County Tax Map
 - City Zoning Office

Block Captain System-Downtown Ambassador Network

- Chuck Broad continues to develop a DID/MSP Block Captain System with one representative acting as liaison between the merchant/property owner community and the DID/MSP per block.

DID/MSP HUB Concept Progress

- The Penn Corridor Initiative will announce a General Meeting in the 1st Quarter of 2012.

MS Toolbox

City Micro-Loan Program (\$3,000 & Up)
City One-Stop Weekly Development Meeting at City Hall
City CDBG Façade Improvement Grants Program
City Economic Resource Profile Guide
City Citizens Service Center, 1st Floor City Hall

- **Members of the Economic Sub-Committee are Brian Fichthorn, Donna Reed, Tony Calvaresi, Ellen Horan, Bill Woolworth and Zane Collings.**

Old & New Business

- Chuck Broad is attending Main Street Manager training in Harrisburg.
- The Board believes a representative from the Reading Parking Authority should attend MSP Board meetings.
- A request to hold alternative MSP Board morning & afternoon meetings was adopted. Alternate meetings on the 4th Tuesday of every month will occur as follows:
 - Tuesday FEB 28 at 4:30 PM – Peanut Bar
 - Tuesday MAR 27 at 8:00 AM – Outside In Café
 - Tuesday APR 24 at 4:30 PM – Peanut Bar
 - Tuesday MAY22 at 8:00 AM – Outside In Café
 - Tuesday JUN 26 at 4:30 PM – Peanut Bar
 - Tuesday JUL 24 at 8:00 AM – Outside In Café
 - Tuesday AUG28 at 4:30 PM – Peanut Bar
 - Tuesday SEP25 at 8:00 AM – Outside In Café
 - Tuesday OCT23 at 4:30 PM – Peanut Bar
 - Tuesday NOV27 at 8:00 AM – Outside In Café
 - No December 2012 Meeting

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Brian Fichthorn. Second by Johanny Cepeda. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 28, 2012 @ 4:30 PM
The Peanut Bar Restaurant (322 Penn Street)
Reading, PA 19601