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

MEETING MINUTES **JANUARY 19, 2010**

Call to Order

Dan Robinson (Reading CD Director) called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Present

DT 2020 Committee: Dan Robinson, Yohalna Jimenez, Dan Wright, (Reading CD Administration), Donna Reed (Reading City Council), Andrew Miller (Reading Planning) Charlie Jones (Reading Public Works) and Sam Loth (CDS).

Main Street Board of Directors: Chuck Broad (Reading DID), Brian Fichthorn (Genesius Theatre), Ellen Horan (Chamber of Commerce & Industry), Bill Woolworth (Dan's Restaurant), Rene Placido (Josephina's Bakery), Mike Leifer (The Peanut Bar), Zane Collings (SMG/Sovereign Center) and Johanny Cepeda (Mi Casa Su Casa).

Absent

DT 2020 Committee: Kevin Barnhardt (Berks County Commissioner), Steve Haver (Reading CD Administration) and Lee Olsen (Olsen Design).

Main Street Board of Directors: Tony Calvaresi (Wells Fargo Bank).

Introductions

- Dan Robinson asked for introductions from those present and an overview from Sam Loth.
- Sam Loth explained that the DT 2020 Steering Committee has been at work since 2007. He said that the Main Street Program is a key goal of the Committee and that while the Program was being organized the DT 2020 Committee moved forward on certain projects to provide momentum for the Main Street Program. Specifically A) a pedestrian street lighting project that includes Washington and Franklin Streets and support for Our City Reading's companion pedestrian street lighting project on Penn Street. B) A Design Master Plan for the City's central core.
- He said that once the Reading City Council finalizes interviews with Board candidates and passes a resolution duly constituting the full Board of Directors, the Reading Main Street Program will become autonomous with oversight from the City Office of Community

Development. Ms. Donna Reed (Reading City Council) has been designated as Council's official liaison to the Main Street Program. County Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt will be designated an ex-officio member of the Board on behalf of the Berks County Commissioners. Dan Robinson (CD Director) will interact with the Board as overseer and the CD office will offer administrative resources.

Main Street Program Sub-Committees

- Sam Loth said that on June 9, 2010 a Reading Main Street Program Community Forum was held at the Reading Area Community College. At that meeting over 50 community leaders, business and property owners, city stakeholders and representatives of the PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) met to prioritize goals & objectives to be considered by the Board of Directors. He distributed the report of the Community Forum in advance of the Board meeting today.

Design Sub-Committee

❖ *Rehabilitate existing buildings using 'Green' technology and products.*

- Ellen Horan said that any guidelines for rehabilitation should be sensitive to limited financial resources of business and property owners. The Program should not mandate that green technologies be used in property rehabilitation projects.
- Sam Loth said that the Board's Sub-Committees should work to establish opportunities for projects to take advantage of green technologies but that business and property owners would have the right to choose whether to utilize these opportunities in rehabilitation projects.

❖ *Improve public street lighting in Reading's city center.*

- Charlie Jones said that installation of pedestrian lighting along Washington and Franklin Streets is underway and that Our City Reading is installing pedestrian lighting along Penn Street.

❖ *Rehabilitate buildings and facades in the 200 & 300 Blocks of Penn Street with attention to the historic aspects of those structures.*

❖ *Rehabilitate buildings and facades in the 900 Block of Penn Street and North 9th & 10th Streets to Walnut Street in keeping with the emerging ethnic Latino/African American businesses locating there.*

- Bill Woolworth said that the guidelines for rehabilitation should be sensitive to numerous existing businesses that have been established for many years in order to integrate the diverse nature of established businesses with new businesses entering the marketplace.
- Chuck Broad said that the City's new Citizen Service Center needs to be brought into the process in order to inform and educate workers in that office to updated City regulations and activities of the Main Street Program as these activities get underway.
- Dan Robinson said that the overall goal of his office and the City's programs is to improve city services to the business community.

❖ *Install pedestrian furnishings to support the circulation of shoppers, visitors and employees in and around Penn Square (400 to 600 Penn Street); use traffic calming techniques to support pedestrian circulation.*

- Sam Loth reported that the Design Sub-Committee includes members of the DT 2020 Committee and will include those members of the Main Street Board that join this Sub-Committee. The Design Sub-Committee has been at work with Barry Issett & Associates to deliver a Design Master Plan for the City's central core.
- He said that Issett & Associates has introduced some design concepts for Penn Square that address the Community Forum's recommendations.

Economic Sub-Committee

❖ *Develop a diverse business base/mix.*

❖ *Create market rate and upper floor housing.*

❖ *Offer financial incentives for business & property improvements.*

- ❖ *Attract entrepreneurs using marketing encouragement from existing businesses.*
- ❖ *Secure private investment in anchor buildings using permitting incentives.*
- Zane Collings said that he is concerned about the Main Street Program creating yet another economic development group with the same goals as many other already operating economic organizations.
- Sam Loth said that the Community Forum included many representatives of the existing organizations and that the Main Street Program should organize an Economic Sub-Committee made up of Main Street Board members and these representatives as a means of integrating ongoing projects and strategies. He added that the City can draw upon resources that are not available to other non-profit agencies and that shared resources will strengthen everyone.

Promotion Sub-Committee

- ❖ *Attract ethnic businesses by embracing diversity; promote variety & choice in the City Center to the public.*
- ❖ *Recruit businesses that enhance a vibrant downtown daily environment.*
- ❖ *Create a Merchant/Business group for existing downtown property and business owners.*
- ❖ *Use web sites, community media and existing venues to market the Greater Reading audience and outside consumers.*
- ❖ *Celebrate and enhance the riverfront with public attractions and destination venues.*
- Chuck Broad said that there is a Marketing Committee already operating as part of the Downtown Investment District (DID) program.
- Dan Robinson said that members of the Main Street Board that wish to serve on the Promotion Sub-Committee would integrate with the DID's Marketing Committee; in effect, the DID Marketing Committee would be recognized as one and the same as Main Street's Promotion Sub-Committee.

Board Volunteers for Main Street Sub-Committees

- The following Main Street Board members volunteered to serve as follows:
 - Design – Mike Leifer
 - Design – Rene Placido
 - Economic – Brian Fichthorn
 - Economic – Johanny Cepeda
 - Economic – Zane Collings
 - Economic – Ellen Horan
 - Economic – Bill Woolworth
 - Promotion – Chuck Broad
- Board member Tony Calvaresi was not present; his choice will be forthcoming.

Logistics

- The Board discussed establishing a set date and time for monthly meetings in FY-2011. The consensus is that Tuesday or Wednesday are the two best days and an afternoon time either 4:30 or 6:00 PM are the two best hours. Dan Robinson will issue an e-mail establishing Board meeting dates.
- The Board discussed moving the meeting location from the City Hall Planning conference room every other month. Dan Robinson said his office will provide for a dinner meeting at the Peanut Bar every other month if the Board desires.
- Chuck Broad reminded the Board that meeting locations must be advertised at least 30 days in advance.

Adjourn

- Dan Robinson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at 4:30 PM
City Hall 3rd Floor Planning Conference Room