

***Illinois Main Street Council
Minutes of the June 21, 2006 Meeting***

Call to Order and Opening Remarks: Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 26th meeting of the Council to order at 10:30 AM in the 15th Floor Conference Room of the James R. Thompson Center.

Lt. Governor Quinn noted the full agenda including a report on the 2006 National Main Street Conference held in New Orleans. He announced that Illinois will be hosting the 2009 Main Street National Conference in Chicago and that part of our Mission is to make our Main Street the best in the country.

New Members of the Council were welcomed to the Council: Tasha Green - Bronzeville and John Penn – leader of International Union - Bloomington (not present).

Roll Call: Per roll call taken by Wendy Bell, members present in addition to Lieutenant Governor Quinn were: David Bahlman, Tasha Green, Jason Tyszko for Director Jack Lavin, and Carolyn Oxtoby via Conference Call.

Other attendees: Wendy Bell, IMS Coordinator; Les Cavada, IMS Program Assistant; Navonna Bunn, IMS Fello; Mike Jackson, IHPA Chief Architect.

Minutes: Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on the minutes of the March 30, 2006 meeting. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Mike Jackson seconded. Motion was approved.

Discussion and Approvals/Disapprovals:

Bell updates the council on two new applicants for introductory communities and explains what “introductory status” means. It is something that a town can apply for at anytime via the web-site. The point is to “get” them into the family as far as downtown is concerned. The town may already have an existing program. An introductory community can receive access to the electronic newsletter as well as get answers to questions. It is a very basic level. Marengo and Nokomis are the two introductory applicants. Marengo is in northern Illinois. Nokomis is in Montgomery County, which is south of Springfield. Both communities were approved for Introductory Status.

Review & Progress Report:

Bell gives a progress report of happenings since the last meeting. At the end of March, IMS sponsored one of the two yearly director’s workshops in Alton, the focus of this workshop being money. Forty-eight directors attended the workshop. For this workshop, IMS brought in S.B. Freidman to talk about special service areas how they work, how to set them up, and utilize them.

Cory Jobe from the Treasurer’s office spoke on the programs available through that office. Sherri Stewart from the National Trust/National Main Street Center was invited to speak on advanced fundraising.

The next update is on Basic Training. This is a training held over two days with intensive half-day training on each point: design, organization, economic restructuring, and promotion. In the evening of the first day board training is also held. Basic training was held in Rockford with about 15 people attending each of the four sessions; about 35-40 were in attendance for board training. Wendy comments that those are good attendance numbers.

Next week Wendy, Les, and Navonna are on their way to Benton for Basic Training on Monday and Tuesday. Currently there are two basic trainings scheduled in September, one in Midway and the other in Paxton or Monticello.

The next update is on the Grainger Grants. Grainger previously provided funds for Utica when hit by a tornado two years ago. When tornados hit Springfield on March 12th, Grainger contacted IMS and said they wanted to give a grant of \$50,000 to the businesses affected in Springfield. The attitude regarding the grants is a bit different in Springfield since no one was killed and because Springfield is much larger so one may not see the damage if not looking closely. In addition, many of the retailers have said that they didn't need the money. At first, IMS was not receiving much interest in the grant, so IMS began calling all of the businesses affected by the tornados to make sure that they had received the information and answer any questions or concerns they may have had. IMS is now beginning to receive requests for the grant money.

Bell updated the council the Illinois Dept. of Transportation releasing a list of communities that received transportation enhancement grants. The list showed main street communities that had received a grant from IDOT. Mike Jackson stated that any of these are streetscape projects and Main Street communities did quite well. The Lt. Governor noted that Bloomington was the recipient of a streetscape grant too. Mike Jackson said that Taylorville was another community that received an IDOT grant. Jackson also commented that this is another competitive advantage of being a Main Street community.

The Lt. Governor is on the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. The committee is planning events for the 150th anniversary of the Lincoln Douglas debates in 2008 and 200th anniversary of his birthday in 2009 and there is a program "Looking for Lincoln." The Lt. Governor suggests that at the next meeting, the council should have some material on the program. Quinn proposes that IMS look into how Main Street communities can celebrate these anniversaries. Quinn notes that both Galesburg and Alton were sites for Lincoln-Douglas debates.

The next update is on the Greening Main Street Grants, the first of such grants. Twenty-three applications were received, and six grants were awarded. Various types of projects were awarded: everything from rain gardens to bike baths. Money awarded through grant was a little over \$20,000. The Lt. Governor says that the goal is to do this in the next fiscal year and have municipalities in MS communities have 'green ways' of thinking. He says that he thinks it should be more hands-on for the next year. Mike Jackson states that the majority of the applications were for landscape planting as opposed to energy efficiency. The Lt. Governor states that the architects can help with issues of energy efficiency, with products such as soy roofs.

Bell next give an update on Farmer's Market grants, this year marks the third year for this \$500 grant. These grants are utilized for downtown farmer's markets. The grant money can be used for any purpose as long as it is farmer's market related. The goal of the farmer's markets is to show what is available locally and downtown. About two dozen have farmer's markets.

Bell next updates the council on the Springfield Wi-Fi Grant. Last year, two were given one to Quincy and the other to Mt. Vernon. Right now, IMS is getting ready to announce a grant for Springfield. This one has taken a great deal of time due to many moving parts. Wi-Fi access will go from the Presidential Library to the Capitol. IMS is looking to offer grants in other communities again, applications have already gone out to the towns. Applications are also left over from last year. Bell comments that Quincy's Wi-Fi program is progressing well; however

Mt. Vernon's program is still waiting on agreement with Ameren. In order to solve these issues with Ameren, a new location to put the nodes may need to be found.

Two new communities that were recently designated are Lombard and Mt. Vernon. Dates are discussed for the Hardin County designation ceremony. The afternoon of July 12th was tentatively decided upon for the ceremony in Hardin County.

Three application workshops recently took place; two in Springfield and one in St. Charles. Twenty communities have attended one of the application workshops; nine have sent in Intent to Apply; and a couple towns have completed the introductory application. Bell notes that a wide variety of communities have shown interest in the program. The Lt. Governor wants to identify all of the Mississippi River communities because of the new Mississippi River Coordinating Council.

Assessment visits for towns applying for Associate level will begin soon and will be handled differently this year. In addition to the tour and meeting with key members, a public meeting will also be scheduled. Bell thought that this was a good way to include the public as well as to encourage their involvement in the development of the program. Applications must be turned in by September 1st.

Design Services:

Mike Jackson presented a handout to the council detailing the sixteen projects and fifty-six site inspections performed by the IHPA Design Team that will become projects at a later date. Education and training on design issues is a big part of what the IHPA Design Team does. The Design Team trains and works with building owners individually. Members of the Design Team presented at the National Conference in New Orleans. The team has been putting many of the program documents on the website to ensure continuous learning. Jackson said that Design Team puts a great deal of extra time into the Main Street Program. Jackson adds a special thank you to the Lt. Governor because as of July 1st, the two MS designers that have been on contract for last 3-5 years will become permanent state employees.

Jackson gives update on Darius and the Mesker buildings. Buildings that are designed by the Mesker brothers are designated as Mesker buildings. There are more in Illinois than any other state. Meskers are fabricated metal building facades. Darius began the "Build Your Own Mesker" activity that can be found on-line. Everyone on the team has one special area that they focus on. Carol Dyson focuses on the "Build Your Own" program; Anna Margaret coordinated the "Upper Story" program. Jackson believes there are approximately 50,000 vacant upper-floor spaces in downstate Illinois.

The Lt. Governor asked Bell to update the council on the National Conference. It was in New Orleans and was delayed to June because of the hurricanes Bell notes that the most rewarding aspect of the National Conference is that it gives the state staff the opportunity to network with fellow state coordinators. Bell found that Illinois is doing quite well in comparison to other state programs. Potential legislation regarding the Main Street program was discussed in detail. Bell will bring more information to the council as it becomes available. Bell discusses a few of the simple ideas learned that can be implemented in Illinois to improve the program. On the national level, the National Trust has put together a national volunteer database on the National Trust web site; furthermore one can apply for a National Trust credit card, as well as funding projects. The National Trust is currently working on becoming CDFI, and there are new regulations with which to comply. This will give the National Trust the ability to offer financial services. The Lt. Governor requests more information on this at the next meeting. The National Trust is trying to

reach out and let people know what the National Trust is as well as what the Main Street Program is; "Share Your Heritage" web site was developed with this end in mind. Also in New Orleans, the National Trust also wrapped up a yearlong visioning session in conjunction with the twenty-fifth year of the Main Street Program. Bell distributed the new visioning statement to the council. The National Trust distributes a salary survey of Coordinating Programs; this was distributed to the Council as well.

The Lt. Governor requested an update on the Illinois State Fair. IHPA will have a booth in the Expo Building and will be distributing Main Street materials. Navonna details Main Street Day at the fair and activities will be taking place throughout that day.

Main Street in Chicago was held in May. Ten communities attended the exhibition. It was an opportunity for those communities to show off what makes their town special.

Les and Navonna then discuss the Main Street Day at the Capitol. This is a day when the communities bring a display showing all the activities as well as design and economic projects to the Capitol. The communities were encouraged to meet with their legislators. IMS sponsored a breakfast for the towns. Fifty towns came to Springfield to participate in Main Street Day at the Capitol.

The Lt. Governor wants the Main Street agenda for the coming year to include attracting more towns to the Main Street program. He also wants to encourage a focus on green, farmer's markets, wireless, connecting to tourism, and inviting the world to visit Illinois. The Lt. Governor is particularly interested in the urban initiative.

A director's workshop is coming up at the end of August in Lincoln, with a focus on design.

Bell discusses some of the sessions from the National MS Convention. Bell mentions that the Lt. Governor of Louisiana there gave a great speech. While in New Orleans, a great deal was being said about the "Cultural Economy" and the economic impact one's culture has on one's community. The Lt. Governor wants to connect the IMS program to tourism in the future.

Date for Next Quarterly Meeting

Date for the next meeting was set for the week of September 15, 2006

Adjournment

Lieutenant Governor Quinn Called for a motion for adjournment, and the meeting was adjourned.