

***Illinois Main Street Council
Minutes of the September 15, 2006 Meeting***

Call to Order and Opening Remarks: Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 27th meeting of the Council to order at 10:55 AM in the 15th Floor Conference Room of the James R. Thompson Center.

Lt. Governor Quinn noted the full agenda and asked everyone to introduce him or herself.

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

Other attendees: Wendy Bell, IMS Coordinator; Les Cavada, IMS Program Associate; Navonna Bunn, IMS Fellow; and Carol Dyson, IHPA.

Minutes: Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on the minutes of the June 21, 2006 meeting. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Ms. Oxtoby seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Review & Progress Report:

Bell gives a progress report of happenings since the last meeting. There has been one basic training in Benton and sixty-nine people registered for the event.

Bell explained the Looking for Lincoln program, which is scattered throughout Central Illinois. Looking for Lincoln locations include: Bloomington, Danville, Galesburg, Lincoln, Pittsfield, Springfield, Taylorville, and Vandalia. The Lt. Governor also suggested that the program should try to broaden the Lincoln program to other communities as well as other Main Street communities. Looking for Lincoln is a heritage corridor, which focuses on places where Abraham Lincoln has been. Mrs. Bell also handed out information on the program. Lt. Governor commented that the two-hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth is approaching in 2009 and a commission has been set up to recognize this event. This will give people outside of Illinois to recognize Lincoln and his accomplishments in a creative way. In 2010 it will be the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's election of President. At this time we want to remember our historic buildings and our heritage throughout the state.

Bell updated the council on the departures and arrivals of executive directors. Departures include: Libertyville, Blue Island, Alton, Marshall, Rushville, Paxton, Collinsville, Bloomington, and Lombard. It was noted that many of these departures were do to better opportunities in Main Street or opportunities to be economic directors of a specific area. Arrivals include: Marshall, Blue Island, Winfield, Dixon, Plainfield, and Paxton. Training is in the forecast for these new directors to bring them up to pace in the Main Street program.

A new designation ceremony for Hardin County was held on August 10, 2006 in Elizabethtown at the Rose Hotel. The Lt. Governor mentioned that Hardin County was filled with history and had a very cohesive program. IMS will have to work with them on organizing good community activities.

Ms. Bunn commented that the Main Street Day, which was on August 12th at the Fair, was well accepted. Main Street towns that aided in the success were Marshall, Pontiac, Springfield, and Taylorville. Taylorville brought a band to the Fair and Marshall set up a lemonade stand. She also mentioned that having two Main Street days at the Fair might also be beneficial in the future.

Mrs. Bell next gave an update on the Wi-Fi Grant. Mt. Vernon and Quincy are putting the finishing touches on their Wi-Fi. Also, a grant in the amount of \$20,000 was given to Belleville. Norcom is helping this community with service and equipment to make the process more efficient and productive. Pending Wi-Fi grants at the time include: Carbondale, Jacksonsville, Macomb, and Marshall. There are two more grants to be given out in the amount of \$18,000 to \$20,000. The Wi-Fi grants are being given out to help downtown districts stride forward into the 21st century of technology. The Lt. Governor mentioned that the grant opens another base of customers to retailers. Mr. Baum also applauded the Lt. Governor for helping get the resources and aide to these downtown districts. Mr. Baum explained that the Internet allows for more communication between the seller and the consumer.

The next update involved Greening Main Street. Mrs. Bell explained that Quincy is now renting bikes and are looking to add more bikes. They are also in the process of placing new bike racks. Lincoln has a bike program and has received new bike racks, which are getting ready to be placed. Lincoln is also in the process of making signs to show where bike routes can be traveled in and out of the downtown district. Crystal Lake has just put in cement pad banks for bikes. Cambridge is underway with a rain garden project. They are looking to put up an ornamental fence around the rain garden, which will be featured later in September. Genoa has just purchased canoes, which can be rented at the local Ace Hardware. Lt. Governor challenged the Main Street Council to think the "Green Way." He mentioned that he would like to see more soy and garden rooftops. Mr. Bahlman noted that people are constantly asking his organization about sustainable projects and where to get the funds. Illinois Clean Energy has been very successful in funding soy roofs and other geothermal things. It may also be an advantage to team up with the Clean Energy commission from time to time. It would also be helpful to do a few workshops on the Secretary of Interior Standards, rehabilitation standards, sustainability, and the environment. This would compile many issues into one. Lt. Governor would like to see some of the more historic buildings be converted to soy or green rooftops. The Clean Energy Foundation can give grants to non-profit organizations, so it would be very beneficial to Main Street programs and municipalities. Lt. Governor is happy to here about the process of the bike rentals and trails. This encourages people to see their towns from a different perspective.

Mrs. Bell brought up the next topic of the Farmer's Market Grants. Monticello is in the process of receiving a check. The grant is in the amount of \$500 for each community. There are currently eighteen Farmer's Markets. The Lt. Governor would like to see a list of these towns that have Farmer's Markets.

Mr. Cavada discussed the past program reviews. Towns that were reviewed were Prophetstown, Pittsfield, Crystal Lake, and Orion. In two weeks he will be reviewing Jacksonville, Pontiac, Harvard, and Genoa. The reviews have gone well so far and it has given the towns a better picture on their strengths and weaknesses. The cities have been cooperating very well with the Main Street programs so far. As of right now, IMS will continue to educate, teach, and distribute information to help aide Main Street towns.

Mrs. Bell gave the next update on how the Director's Workshop in Lincoln went. Fifty people registered for the event. The event consisted of two focuses. The main focus was a facilitated discussion that helped pinpoint what the directors liked and disliked about the Main Street program. The IMS staff learned that the trainings are very difficult for the volunteers to attend, because they must take time off of work. They would prefer a videoconference or weekend training. This will be rethought for future workshops. The Directors agreed that the training has been getting better and they enjoy learning more life skills that they can apply to the Main Street program. It would also be well worth it to expand this life skills training into a two-day session. The Director's would also like to see us in their towns more often. They also want examples and samples. This problem is being worked out at the time. Currently an online lending library is being developed. Director's can fill out a form online to borrow a book for our library for thirty days. A new organizational chart has also been created to show what IMS looks like.

Design Services:

Dyson presented a quick summary of things that happened with design services. The design wing of IMS, the fourth point, is in the IHPA. A lot of things have been done since the last meeting especially in the administrative part. Two project designers Anna Margaret and Darius were able to be brought on as permanent staff. Twenty-two design services projects and twelve site visits were completed. One of the fun things that has been added to the IMS site is build your own Main Street. New additions to build your own Main Street include a building in Momence, Illinois. So now we have three build your own Main Street and three color your own Main Streets on the website which are aimed at trying to bring the younger generation to appreciate Main Street. Architects also participated with Mrs. Bell and Mr. Cavada on ten Main Street assessment visits. There is a new press release working with IHPA's press officer to do more intensive press releases when we go on design visits to towns. When they receive their design and they implement the design they get a more intensive press coverage for those Main Street programs. IHPA was also encouraged to submit for an AIA award for the Main Street work in the architecture section that is done by design services. Dyson noted that a choice for the AIA award would be some time this fall. Mike Jackson could not attend because he was at association for preservation technology conference dealing with green design and historic preservation.

Assessment visits:

Bell discussed how the IMS staff completed ten different assessment visits to communities who were interested in applying to the Associate level. A diverse group of towns applied. In general the towns are very supportive and very excited about the program. There is a lot of good building stock. This year IMS did something a little different, instead of doing just a small group tour, a public presentation was added, which was very effective. Dyson agreed that it went well. Dyson also complimented Mrs. Bell on an excellent job at the public presentation.

Looking ahead:**Announcement of new towns:**

Bell said that the IMS hopes to announce new towns to the public in the next few weeks instead of at the fall conference. This will give the towns attention in their own areas.

Basic training:

Bell gave information stating that twenty-five people registered for each of the sessions in Chicago. Town's are making a good effort to come to the meetings even though it is difficult at times.

Fall conference:

Bell stated that the conference would be on November 14th and 15th in Waukegan. The primary location will be the Genesee Theater, which is a restored building. The theme is Reaching for the Stars. The Lt. Governor suggested that they try to incorporate part of the water-centered location into the conference. Bell commented that some of the sessions are going to highlight the award winners that were chosen last year. Some of the best towns from last year will present in the sessions this year. This will allow for some of the other town's to learn from successful towns. This is a new setup for sessions. The awards dinner will be on the second night.

Organization visits:

Bell discussed that organization visits will come after the conference to get all the new towns on board. This will make for a very busy December and part of January for the IMS staff.

Associate Level Applicants:

Mrs. Bell gave information on the Associate Level Applicants. IMS program was started in 1993, which originally started with 9 towns.

Mendota:

Bell explained that Darius Bryjka went to Mendota to assess the design. They have a great building stock and a good group of people with good intentions. They are very excited to work with IMS. It is also the corn capital of Illinois with a sweet corn festival that brings 60,000 people. They had approximately 30 people at their public meeting and the city pledged \$24,000. They have a large district and a lot of it is historic. They have a lot of long-term business owners and they are very eager for training on historic preservation. They have a local commission and have recently opened two new restaurants. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Mendota. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Mrs. Oxtoby seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Mendota was unanimously accepted.

Decatur:

Bell informed the Council that Decatur had the top score out of all the new applicants. They were nearly perfect on their application. Their downtown size is 27 block and 132 buildings total. Fifty-two people helped fill out the application and 96 people at the public meeting. Huge support. A letter of support from Rep. Flider as well as 22 other people. They have a downtown incentives program that fixes up facades, an elevator grant program, and Abraham Lincoln has visited Decatur. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Decatur. Mr. Baum made the motion; Mrs. Oxtoby seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Decatur was unanimously accepted.

Sterling:

About 15,000 people live in Sterling. They have 33 face blocks on their main street. They applied a number of years ago after a huge tear down of their main street. They have a chief financial backer with about \$42,000. Another organization is giving \$20,000. 40 people attended the meeting. Forty letters of support were given to Sterling. Sterling is located on the Rock River. They seem to regret their actions in the past of tearing down buildings. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Sterling. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Mrs. Oxtoby seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Sterling was unanimously accepted.

Marengo:

Bell informed that Marengo is located in McHenry County. It's a cute town with 8 face blocks. They have a population of about 6,000. They have 36 buildings. Most of the buildings are still intact. Not much reconstruction needed. They have a streetscape planned out. Thirty people were in attendance at the public meeting. The city has pledged \$15,000. Another 17 people have pledged financial support. A great fit for Main Street. Nice rehabs already. Has a lot of highway traffic. They want some truck traffic routed outside of the town. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Marengo. Mrs. Oxtoby made the motion; Mr. Baum seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Marengo was unanimously accepted.

Champaign:

Champaign has 48 face blocks, 20 people attended the public meeting. They were initially concerned about the city not backing them, but they received support just in time of the deadline. The mayor signed. The council approved them. The municipality has committed \$35,000. They have an impressive downtown. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Champaign. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Mrs. Oxtoby seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Champaign was unanimously accepted.

Beardstown:

Beardstown is located in Cass County. The town is a river town. They have about 16-18 face blocks. 100+ buildings. Forty-five people came to the public meeting. The city gave \$20,000. Fifteen letters of support were given to Beardstown. They do have some buildings that need some repair. They have the Lincoln Court room located on the square. This is where the notorious "The pig trial" was held. They have had some issues with the river flow. People can't stop when floating by Beardstown. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Beardstown. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Mrs. Oxtoby seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Beardstown was unanimously accepted.

Berwyn:

Berwyn is in Cook County and it's a very linear downtown district located on Cermak Rd. The town has 34 face blocks, 170 buildings, 13 people helped with application, and 35 attended the public meeting. They received support from Senator Sandoval. They also received another 10 letters of support. They have the largest financial support at this time with \$130,000 from the city and the tip they would put forward if accepted. They scored lower because they don't have much documented support outside of that. They are very excited about the program. The spindle is in the district. "Cars on a stick" Very unique 1950's architecture. They want to encompass this architecture and bring in more art to the area similar. It is also home to the world's largest laundry mat. It has a solar roof and solar collectors. Everything is heated by the solar. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on Berwyn. Mrs. Oxtoby made the motion; Mr. Bahlman seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Berwyn was unanimously accepted.

Bronzeville:

Bell explained that Bronzeville is under a very unique circumstance. They have more than one commercial district. IMS wants to include more than just a pocket of a downtown. They aren't quite ready. Financially they are not ready, but they do have an existing organization. They just need to pull it out together. We intend to meet at the end of the month to see how to deal with the situation and do some hands on training for the next six months and maybe bring them in as a neighborhood potentially with Pilsen around the 1st of June. Lt. Governor commented that they need to bring them in, but it needs to be done properly. We need to identify all of the history there.

North Chicago:

Bell explained that North Chicago would like to enter into the introductory level of Main Street. They want to come in and work for a more solid foundation. The town is on Lake Michigan and close to Waukegan. They have a lot of work to be done. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on North Chicago. Mr. Baum made the motion; Mr. Tyszko seconded the motion. Motion was approved. North Chicago was unanimously accepted.

DeKalb:

Bell informed the Council that DeKalb would like to be approved for a 6-month hiatus. They have had a lot of changes. The program works well there, but the city wants to support a larger portion of DeKalb. They want to call it Renew DeKalb. This would incorporate Main Street and expand it past the district boundaries. They need time to decide the direction of this new organization. Mrs. Bell gave her recommendation for the 6-month hiatus. Lt.

Governor Quinn asked for a motion on DeKalb. Mr. Bahlman made the motion; Mr. Baum seconded the motion. Motion was approved. DeKalb was unanimously accepted to go on a 6-month hiatus.

Other Comments:

Mr. Baum made a comment regarding Sterling. The town is interesting because of the renewal in the town has brought viable retail, but they destroyed buildings. They have learned lessons, which can be applied to other towns in the future.

Mr. Bahlman brought up the preservation issue in Waukegan. The town was ready to tear down the Carnegie library. A private group came together to save the building. The city wants it back. The private group is nervous about giving it back. Be aware of the issue. T

Mr. Bahlman mentioned that his organization (Landmarks, Inc.) would be happy to get more information about the spindle, to pass it onto the Bureau of Tourism.

Date for Next Quarterly Meeting

Date for the next meeting was set attentively for the week of December 8, 2006.

Adjournment

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