

*Illinois Main Street Council
Minutes of the March 8, 2005 Meeting*

Call to Order: Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 21st meeting of the Council to order at 2:50 p.m. in dual locations of his office in Springfield and Conference room in Chicago.

Roll Call: Per roll call taken by Wendy Bell, members present were: Mark Harris for Director Lavin, Mary Blankenbaker, Mike Jackson for Director Coomer; Jim Baum, and Mayor Sue Klinkhamer via Conference Call.

Other attendees: Wendy Bell, IMS Coordinator, Les Cavada and Ryan Mouw, LTG/IMS Staff.

Call to Order and Opening Remarks:

Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on the minutes of the December 6, 2004 meeting. Jim Baum made the motion to accept the minutes as written, Mary Blankenbaker seconded the motion and approval was made by acclamation.

Review & Progress Report Report:

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked Wendy Bell to report on the Main Street efforts of the last several months and highlight the coming months.

Bell passed out sheets that highlighted Fiscal Year 2005 Accomplishments so far. She pointed out the reinvestment figures of \$53,306,177 for private reinvestment and \$11, 157, 320 in public reinvestment, noting these were very good numbers.

Initial visits for Lombard, Hardin County and Mt. Vernon have been completed and we will be working with them on their mission/vision/workplans beginning next week. While in southern Illinois, an Introductory presentation was made to Benton that DuQuoin also attended. Havana has also been visited and Abingdon has requested a visit.

Letters with Main Street information were sent to all of the target towns as discussed at the prior meeting, with appointments to be made to visit and give presentations. Wendy passed out a list of target towns and Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked her to go through it. Bell explained that "Target Towns", numbering 24, were those identified as good possibilities with adequate resources to be a Main Street town. The towns represent a wide cross-section across the state including county seats, river towns, and diverse sizes. Quinn asked about visiting the towns to make personal presentations and have them sign up for Introductory status and Bell responded that was the intention. There are currently 17 Introductory towns as shown on a list of all Introductory, Associate and Designated towns passed out by Bell. Peoria and Litchfield have made appointments to come to Springfield to talk about what they are doing as Introductory towns.

Les Cavada has been holding ER Committee trainings on his own time. Les said the training has been held in Pontiac and Paris with about 15 people representing 3 communities attending at each location. Staunton and Rushville have each requested these trainings.

The Winter Director's Workshop was held in Paris at the end of February. Bell expressed her thanks to the staff for picking up the ball at the times she could not attend due to her grandmother's funeral. Margie Johnson held training in window and retail displays during the first morning followed by hands-on creations by directors and volunteers in eight downtown windows. A dinner was held for all that evening with the "best and brightest ideas" from communities shared. The following morning information about the upcoming transportation enhancement grants was shared by the Illinois Department of Transportation as well as a program update from Illinois Main Street. The Workshop wrapped up with

a presentation by E-Knowledge Institute on fundraising possibilities on e-bay. The towns were very receptive to this idea. They could hold an auction on their own or we could do this as a group through the state program. E-Knowledge is putting together some ideas of how we could put this together for our communities. Lieutenant Governor Quinn expressed that we should pursue this idea.

Staff has also been completing Annual Program Review reports. Quinn asked if all towns had received APRs and Bell said yes for 2004 except for those without managers. Quinn asked how many did not have managers/directors and Bell noted Galesburg, O'Fallon, Princeton is interviewing, Lincoln is getting ready to announce their new director, Forest Park, Elmhurst, Tuscola and Harvard has an interim manager.

Updated Contact Lists; Annual Reports from the Lieutenant Governor's Office; Schedule of Activities; and after extensive research, updated Letters of Agreement have been sent to all communities. Bell pointed out the Schedule included everything planned for the year except the Annual Program Reviews for 2005, which will be scheduled individually. The towns were very pleased to have this information so they can plan ahead and put it in their budget based on what is required to attend. Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked Bell to go through the schedule.

She turned the first event, the Retailer's Training in Utica, over to Les. He said it was very successful. They had anticipated 20 people attending but 42 showed up, necessitating moving the location. Jim Baum asked if all were from Utica and Les confirmed they were. Private consultations were held with 5 businesses and all the retailers were very appreciative of our efforts.

Bell noted this event precluded Margie's work in Paris the next day. One of the most significant activities ahead is the Designation Ceremonies for Momence and Bloomington, six Regional Board Training sessions are scheduled over three months throughout the state, a Main Street presentation at the Tree City USA workshops in Lisle and Springfield and also the Nature Based Tourism Symposium in Godfrey. Ryan Mouw said approximately half of the Main Street towns were Tree City towns, and explained some of the benefits.

Design Services:

Mike Jackson explained that it seems the Federal Transportation Enhancements bill will pass. This happens every six years and the money is used very quickly for 80/20 grants. In the past we've had a good relationship with IDOT, with Main Street communities receiving a competitive advantage for the grants. We're already working with IDOT and know they have a fall target date for grants. Previously we've had architectural services that covered this type of design. Since that is not available, we've looked at the design portion of the Main Street budget and found \$25,000 that could be utilized to fund grants for streetscape design plans for these enhancement grants. Mike passed out information on this potential program. Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked about the demand for this service, which Mike estimated at 6 to 10.

Jackson updated the Council on progress for the Upper Story Conference. All details are in place and currently 30 people have registered. A Workbook is being put together which will ultimately be put on the website. He said he had calculated the need for upper story development and estimates it at 40,000 in downstate alone. The Conference will be April 7th and 8th in Rock Island and Anna Margaret Borntreger is spending almost all her time on this. Quinn said this was an important initiative.

Darius Bryjka has completed 19 projects in the last quarter and has 20 on his waiting list. In addition 30 site visits were made and 10 training sessions.

Other Business

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked Wendy about grants this year. Bell said she thought it would depend on what the end of the year looked like, and recapped what had been given as grants in FY2004: \$12,500 website grants covering 25 programs, registrations for the National Conference, \$10,000 to the Labor Temple, funding the Upper Story Pilot Project as well as 21 Farmer's Market grants totaling \$16,500. She said all the towns were very appreciative in all the areas but we need to judge what we can do based on what we have in the budget and also how many towns can benefit from it in how many different ways. She noted it was necessary for the municipalities to commit to their 20 percent for the architectural services for streetscape to be effective. Quinn asked about the websites and Bell recounted that all seem to be in good shape and there should not be a need this year. He asked about Farmer's Markets and she said there had already been one inquiry. He said he liked the Farmer's Markets and it's a relatively low investment that ties into the Rural Affairs Council, and he'd like to retain them. He asked about registration grants and Bell said she felt it makes a big difference in the number of people who attend. Quinn asked Jackson about needing investment in upper stories this year and Jackson said that wasn't necessary. Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked about a survey on high-speed broadband interest. Bell explained that Ryan gave a presentation on Paris on this and we had sent a survey to all towns. Ryan said a number seem to be interested in this concept.

Jim Baum explained that high speed internet access is very important to retailers as more and more ordering is being completed online. Lieutenant Governor Quinn agreed with him, seeing it as increasingly necessary; and he may want to put some money into a Wi-Fi project.

Wendy explained Main Street Day at the Capitol on April 14th. The day will be similar to 2004 with displays in the halls, a rally in the rotunda and a group photo. We also plan to do displays of photographs of Main Street in the Thompson Center, followed by the State Fair and then in the Stratton building if possible.

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked about the annual conference plans. Bell said RFPs will be sent in the next few weeks. She explained about the summer Director's Workshop bus tour in southern Illinois starting in Marion and branching out to the other Main Street towns in the area. Bell noted the efforts to update the website, making it more tourism oriented and linked to DCEO. IHPA has updated their site as well.

Bell talked of completing her Certification Training in Washington DC. In the design section of the training they talked of a coloring book done by the Oklahoma Main Street program. The Sonic Corporation is interested in Historic Preservation and education and funds the prizes for this coloring contest in Oklahoma. Bell expressed an interest in Illinois doing a similar book.

Approval of Community Designations

Based on submission of designation binders, Bell recommended that Momence and Bloomington be approved as designated communities. Lieutenant Governor Quinn called for a motion which was made by Jim Baum and seconded by Mary Blankenbaker. Motion passed.

Bell briefly explained the schedule of "Designation Day" which also includes stops in Macomb and Pittsfield as well as the newly designated communities.

Bell explained that we had not officially accepted communities into the Introductory level. She went through the list of applications, including: Benton, Chicago Heights, DuQuoin, Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Hamilton, Litchfield, Moline, Monmouth, Mt. Sterling, Nauvoo, Olney, Oregon, Peoria, Sullivan, Urbana, Utica and Winthrop Harbor. Mary Blankenbaker moved and Jim Baum seconded to accept these 17 towns into the Introductory level.

Comments from Council Members

Jim Baum expressed his pleasure that we were working on upper stories. He also said he felt that streetscapes give the impression that “something is happening there” and this initiative is also on-target.

Jim and Mary talked of how they order online and how internet access is important.

Date for Next Quarterly Meeting

Date for the next meeting was set for June 2nd at 2:00 p.m. in Springfield.

Adjournment

Lt. Governor Quinn called for a motion for adjournment. Made by Mary Blankenbaker, seconded by Jim Baum. Meeting Adjourned.