

Illinois Main Street Council Minutes of the May 22, 2003 Meeting

Call to Order: Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 14th meeting of the Council to order at 2:45 p.m. in his Springfield office.

Roll Call: Members present were: IHPA Director Maynard Crossland, Mary Blankenbaker, Carolyn Oxtoby, with Mayor Sue Klinkhamer, Jim Baum and Marc Gordon via conference call.

Other attendees: Wendy Bell (LTG/IMS Staff), Mike Jackson (IHPA Staff), Carolyn Brown-Hodge (Director of Rural Affairs), Pat Harrison (LTG Staff), Gayle Kaiser (Galesburg, Invited guest of Lt. Governor Quinn).

Those absent: Director Jack Lavin, Dr. John Guyon

Call to Order and Opening Remarks:

Lt. Governor Quinn opened the Council meeting with words of welcome and asked for roll to be taken by Wendy Bell. Bell called the roll and announced that she had received a telephone message that afternoon from Dr. John Guyon, and that he was unable to make the meeting. Further, that due to ill health, he felt it was best for him to resign from the Council at this point. Lt. Governor Quinn expressed his appreciation for Dr. Guyon's time and noted that he would send a letter of thanks. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on the minutes of the March 26, 2003 meeting. Mayor Klinkhamer made the motion to accept the minutes as written, Mary Blankenbaker seconded the motion and approval was made by acclamation.

Review & Progress Report of "Focus List":

Lt. Governor Quinn asked Illinois Main Street staff member, Wendy Bell, to review and explain the status of the focus list created at the last Council Meeting. She asked for everyone to refer to the document entitled "Scope of Services", which encompassed points one through six. Bell explained the points on the document, the highlights of which were:

- This scenario assumes one full time staff person based in the Lt. Governor's office.
- Majority of printing would be done in house from the copying machine.
- Have made some progress with the return of files and equipment from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. She reported she had been to DCEO last week, that all Main Street files were now boxed, totaling more than 150.
- Explained the Standard Coordinator Package from the National Main Street Center; what it included and the cost savings of the package.
- Suggested a Staff Training Day presented by the National Main Street Center for all Lt. Governor's staff that could be video-conferenced to the Chicago office and the Council could take part in if they so wish. Lt. Governor Quinn expressed his belief that this would be beneficial, as he wanted his staff to have a more holistic approach to all office programs.
- Noted that last year Main Street staff had made more than 200 training visits to communities, and this approach is not possible to maintain at this time. Lt. Governor Quinn asked how long the training took. Bell explained the session itself may take only 2 to 2½ hours, but often the state staff planned the day to also meet with the program manager, board members, mayors, etc., and so a day was usually allotted. Quinn said that in the coming fiscal year this should be something we should aspire to. Bell said in the meantime we were going to try to accomplish these training sessions by doing them on a regional basis. Currently she is working on Board and Staff Training over the next two months. The Lt. Governor noted that ideally, it would be best to do the training on site, and if Bell had more help this could be accomplished.
- Other committee training sessions would be scheduled in various regions throughout the year, with different host communities each time.

- New Manager Training sessions will be scheduled quarterly as in the past, with the attendees coming to Springfield, unless there was a core group in one area that it would be efficient to travel to. The training scheduled in June will be in Mundelein.
- Tentative State Conference dates of October 8 and 9, culminating in the Awards Banquet. IHPA staff will assist by teaching several sessions and helping with the awards.
- National Main Street Center will hold Basic Training 101 Session in Chicago in the fall of 2003 instead of in Washington, D.C.. This decision means we do not need to hold this annual training session, those that want to attend can go to Chicago, thus saving us the cost associated with it.
- Manager's Meetings to be held in June, 2003 and February, 2004.
- Program Coordinator to attend National Main Street's Certification Institute in February.
- Intermediate Training session for more mature towns through NMSC staff.
- Four promised Field Team visits accomplished in the most economical way possible by using Mike Jackson, Wendy Bell, Sheri Stuart from the National Main Street center and a consultant from Illinois.
- Annual Program Reviews accomplished on a three year rotation with visits, and the remaining two-thirds would submit the required information.
- National Town Meeting in late spring of 2004.
- Summer Manager's Meeting would be packaged with the Tri-State Meeting with Wisconsin and Iowa. The date all could agree on would be June 24 and 25, 2004. It is Illinois' turn to host. Mary Blankenbaker suggested Galena as an option, Mike Jackson noted Rock Island has offered.
- Potential Application Workshop for new communities in the spring. Bell noted that the list of interested communities had increased by about ten percent after seeing the roster at the National Town Meeting. Communities that sent delegates but were not previously on our list include: Sterling, Sycamore, Normal, Freeport, and the Greater Southwest Development Corporation of Chicago. Lt. Governor Quinn asked if the Development Corporation would be eligible. Bell noted they would probably be interested in an urban neighborhood program, which is something Illinois does not have at the present time. A few other states do, and we would have to investigate whether or not we wanted to expand into this area. Applications would then be due in the early fall with new communities announced at the 2004 State Conference.
- This proposal would mean a staff member would be on the road approximately 137 days per year; the National Main Street Center contract would be reduced by 68% and the overall expenses for Illinois Main Street would be reduced by 74% over the last full budget year. Lt. Governor Quinn asked if the National Main Street Center contract was approximately \$52,000. Bell confirmed the amount given the present Scope of Services. Quinn asked how that was paid previously and Bell explained the contract was drawn up and signed but the payments were made as the services were used. The Lt. Governor asked if it could be paid quarterly, and asked Bell to check on it.

Mike Jackson reported on the status of Design Services. Since January, no architectural services have been provided through the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. The architects are fielding calls, answering questions as they can, but no new services have been initiated. As they have visited Main Street towns for other reasons, they have also called on the Program Manager. One staff member from the former Main Street team is working in another position, another local person from the staff is currently a waitress (Anna Margaret Borntreger). Lt. Governor Quinn asked about her qualifications and the potential for re-hiring her. Jackson clarified the process noting that the job description is quite specific in that the candidate possess qualities that are important from the historic preservation perspective. This ensures that even though the position is a Union position, that you hire the right candidate for the job. However, currently there are no funds available to hire for this position.

Lt. Governor Quinn asked about the '04 Budget, and if these positions were funded in the IHPA portion. Director Crossland indicated they were not. The Lt. Governor said he had been told there was an increase in the IHPA budget over the previous year. Director Crossland clarified that the money for the Presidential Library is skewing the picture, and when taken out, the overall budget has had a sizeable decrease. Quinn asked about the BR8 Process, where positions within the budget can be re-classified; would this be a possibility to get an

architectural position? Crossland said the only new positions they have are for the Library and that currently all other positions are filled. To gain an architectural position would mean someone would have to resign or they would need to lay someone off. Lt. Governor Quinn suggested he and Crossland work with Budget Director Philan to see about getting at least one architectural position.

Lt. Governor Quinn asked if Bortrager were hired, would it be possible for her to be a trainer as well, since Bell is the only one “holding down the fort”. Jackson said this had not been done previously and he’d have to assess her interest. She’s been exposed to all four points but he’s uncertain of her confidence in all areas. Bell noted that the architects have previously had a training element in the design field, teaching design committee training, display techniques, signage, historic tax credits and ordinances, and other related items; that they have been doing more than just drawings. Lt. Governor Quinn noted that we are in a time crunch, and need to work together to get this accomplished.

Mike Jackson informed the Council about a special project the IHPA architects did two weeks ago, for the Labor Temple building in Jacksonville. The building has languished over the last decade and it was ready to be demolished when the AFL/CIO managed to take ownership. At this point scaffolding is in place and the building is being restored through Union labor. Bell noted that we will try to tie in an activity for this building with our Manager’s Meeting in Jacksonville. Carolyn Oxtoby asked if we would do something when it was complete as well and Bell confirmed this. The Lt. Governor said we should be certain Main Street gets some of the credit for the project. Carolyn Brown-Hodge suggested we use this as a model for future rehabilitation – linking the Union’s participation to projects.

Survey Results; and Report from National Town Meeting on Main Street

Bell reported she attended a number of different sessions and there was so much information it would be difficult to condense, but she did want to identify a few specific points. The keynote speaker was Richard Florida who wrote “The Rise of the Creative Class”. His message was that the incentive packages offered by communities to attract new business are no longer working. Instead, businesses are going where the people they need are. The “creative classes” of Gen X and Gen Y are looking for authentic experiences which is a trend that is good for Main Street communities. Specifically, they look for who’s there, what’s there, and what is going on – a much more diverse community with various events and resources to offer. She noted that this same theme was echoed by Rebecca Ryan, the keynote speaker at the Tri-State Conference.

Attendees learned of a piece of federal legislation, the HOPE VI Reauthorization Bill sponsored by Representative Leach of Iowa, with eleven other co-sponsors, unfortunately none of these are from Illinois. There is a specific section that addresses the affordable housing needs of Main Street communities with less than 30,000 in population. She noted that if there’s no place to live, there’s fewer people to shop in the town. Currently the bill is going well, but she suggested the Council encourage our legislators to sign on as co-sponsors. The Lt. Governor suggested we contact Speaker Hastert. Brown-Hodge suggested Wendy send a letter to each community that they could just sign off on.

Bell reported that the National Main Street Center is working hard to keep their brand intact – the Main Street name, Four Point Approach, the Main Street logo, and other key phrases that go along with the Main Street movement are all trademarked and copyrighted. The problem is that as other towns see how well Main Street communities are doing they think because they have a Main Street, they can latch on and call themselves “Main Street towns” as well. This undermines the legitimacy of the designated communities. Currently the Center is investigating ways to address the issue.

The Lt. Governor asked about the spontaneous interest from other Illinois communities indicated at the National Town Meeting. Bell confirmed this and said she had put together a State Dinner for one evening that 42 had

attended. Oxtoby inquired about the next Town Meeting location and Bell informed the Council it would be held in Albuquerque in April/May.

Mayor Klinkhamer added that it was wonderful to have so many communities represented at the Town Meeting but that her conversations indicated the need to reassure the towns that Illinois Main Street is still functioning. That there is the feeling by some communities, especially those with longer tenure, that they are losing something. Some state programs have gone under, and it's demoralizing. And before we go out and start adding a number of new communities, we need to address what we're doing for the current towns. The Lt. Governor noted it was a point well taken, and that it has been a rocky year. Starting with the new '04 budget "we have to have the resources necessary to keep the program alive and well". Mayor Klinkhamer offered her services if there was anything she could help with in her area. Quinn expressed his thanks for her offer. Klinkhamer noted that the program is made up of volunteers and Quinn noted there was no substituted for volunteer efforts.

Bell then reported on the Program Survey results. Thirty-nine communities have responded so far. In the interest of time she suggested that all read through the tentative results, but pointed out a few trends including: good philosophical commitment from the local government, financial commitment is more tentative. She relayed her response to a recent situation in Staunton and how the issue was reconciled. In the needs area, many towns are concerned about fundraising, design services, and using tourism to promote their downtown. The programs indicated what services are most essential: staff, committee training, conferences. A potential idea that responses were asked for were the change of monthly reports to quarterly. Many thought this would be a good idea as it would mean less work but the larger towns feel they have too much going on to report once/quarter. The real issue is the need to simplify the reports so that there's not duplication of work. We're looking at some states who have coordinated an online report that works well, and hope to duplicate it. The towns would like to have project samples, a website that links to the towns and a mentoring program for the new managers. Bell said this would be a good way to utilize experienced managers in the field and it would help develop the groups as a community. The towns also felt that all communities should meet the same set of current designation requirements to continue to be part of the program and receive the same services. This would be a change from the previous trend in Illinois to segregate based on population or age. Most states who have previously done this have also found it did not work and are moving away from that type of program. Bell said she believed Illinois should also. Oxtoby asked about the older communities mentoring the younger ones, and Bell said that could happen in the same way as senior managers mentor younger ones. They also indicated by a margin of 2 to 1 that we should accept applications for new communities. Council Member Baum noted that many communities have noted the need for Economic Restructuring assistance. He noted that though Design services need to be a first priority, he feels that economic assistance should be the second priority. Perhaps we can ask for some help from DCEO. The Lt. Governor agreed. He also instructed Wendy that all Council Members should have a final copy of the Survey results.

Identification of Current & Upcoming Issues

Program Service Structure – Bell reported on the possibility of using a Tiered System, as many other states are currently using or moving towards. This would address the needs of the towns who have indicated an interest in the program, by giving them a path to follow if they should want to become a designated Main Street. It would institute an Affiliate Option, where by completing a simple application, the "wannabees" get on the mailing list, get the newsletter, know who to call with questions and learn about the Main Street program. Lt. Governor Quinn said this was a good idea to bring the aspiring communities on board, which we'd like to have many by this time next year, but also take care of the current communities. He said he was hesitant to lay out a highly defined structure until we got through the budget process, but asked for other ideas from the Council Members.

Council Member Blankenbaker expressed her concern over the need to find assistance for Bell; that she has/is doing it all and that by the next meeting she may be burnt out and we're trying to find someone to replace her. Quinn said he agreed with Blankenbaker, and he thinks we can find the staff resources but architectural takes specific skills. He indicated that we "show the flag as far as we can in the training sessions" and that the schedule presented is a reasonable one; and that if we have more staff members we'll do more.

Gayle Kaiser felt the mentoring approach previously suggested would be a good one, and offered Galesburg's assistance. Blankenbaker asked about the graduate structure previously started. Bell explained that the problem with the Partnership program as it came to be called, had problems because though a town may have been part of the program for a length of time, they may have suffered a setback – a new manager, problem with Board or local government – that showed that age doesn't always indicate the level of maturity. She said certainly there are some towns that can assist others but you have to make that an individual determination, not just across the board. Jackson agreed and added that it is best done informally rather than a rule structure. Quinn reiterated he'd like to have adequate staff to assist Bell.

Oxtoby expressed her concerns of how we relate our services to Economic Development and showing a more formal relationship from the services we provide to the dollars it puts back in the community. Specifically, we need to show how are design drawings relate to the labor used and the local economies. Brown-Hodge suggested we invite the key labor leaders to the event at the Labor Temple. Jackson explained the benefit to labor over new construction. Renovation and rehabilitation uses more labor than materials and has a huge impact on localities.

Bell informed the Council of a call she had received from the Governor's Office concerning a new Beautification Initiative led by the First Lady, that they'd like to tie into the Main Street program. She will be attending an upcoming meeting.

Kaiser asked if a location for the State Conference had been confirmed yet. Bell said they were getting ready to send out an e-mail asking if they'd like to submit a proposal. Kaiser asked that Galesburg be put on the list.

Date for Next Quarterly Meeting

Lt. Governor Quinn announced the date for the next meeting – September 18, 2003.

Adjournment

Lt. Governor Quinn called for a motion for adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.