

Illinois Main Street Council

Minutes of the September 18, 2003 Meeting

Call to Order: Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 15th meeting of the Council to order at 2:40 p.m. in his Springfield office.

Roll Call: Members present were: Carolyn Oxtoby and Mike Jackson for Director Crossland in Springfield, with Mayor Sue Klinkhamer and Brendan Moore for Director Lavin via video-conference in Chicago and Mary Blankenbaker via conference call.

Other attendees: Elizabeth Norden (LTG/IMS Staff), Wendy Bell (LTG/IMS Staff), Darius Bryjka (LTG/IMS Staff), Dan Persky (LTG/IMS Staff), and Pat Harrison (LTG Staff).

Those absent: Jim Baum, Marc Gordon

Call to Order and Opening Remarks:

Lt. Governor Quinn opened the Council meeting with words of welcome and introductions around the table and in Chicago. He asked for Wendy Bell to take roll, which she did. Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on the minutes of the May 22, 2003 meeting. Carolyn Oxtoby made the motion to accept the minutes as written, Mary Blankenbaker seconded the motion and approval was made by acclamation.

Review & Progress Report Report:

Elizabeth Norden reviewed Illinois Main Street activities since the last Advisory Council Meeting. She noted that the office is trying to address the community's needs with limited resources. The state has been split up into various regions, with a staff member assigned to be the first point of contact for each Main Street community. She reported that Lt. Governor Quinn has already visited several communities: Collinsville, Alton, Murphysboro, Vandalia and Jacksonville for the Summer Manager's Meeting. Stops in Danville, Paris and Marshall are scheduled.

Elizabeth announced that the annual State Conference is scheduled for October 8th and 9th in Elgin, and that Wendy had compiled a budget that was substantially less than what had been spent in previous years. This year will cost around \$15,000.

She introduced Darius Bryjka, a graduate of the University of Illinois School of Architecture, who is now under the tutorage of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. We are restoring technical assistance and drawings to the communities, probably being able to provide about one drawing per program per year. Darius will work in the IHPA office four days per week, and in our Springfield office one day a week.

Illinois Main Street files housed at the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity have now been transferred to the Lt. Governor's office. Wendy and Darius moved approximately 170 boxes to the Stratton office.

The Illinois Main Street website is now online with the Lt. Governor's website. We are working with DCEO to change the wording on their website from indicating that Illinois Main Street is no longer operating, to directing them to us.

Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn summarized by saying how successful the Manager's Meeting was in Jacksonville, and noting the contagious enthusiasm of the group. He's visited several towns, and his goal is to get to every community over the next year. The Lt. Governor's office is also working to raise awareness about the Eagle's habitat, especially Plum Island near Starved Rock. Several Main Street communities also are eagle nesting places, and we should identify them for potential promotions and tourism possibilities.

He asked if the Illinois Main Street website had its' own web address. Elizabeth reported that it did not at the present time. Wendy noted that the previous address used at DCEO, www.illinoismainstreet.org is available and can be transferred to the Lt. Governor's office if we should so desire. The cost would be about \$30/year. Lt. Governor strongly suggested that we transfer the web address, and asked Brendan Moore to help us accomplish the task.

The Lt. Governor asked Elizabeth for additional information on the regions, and if all the towns had been contacted. She noted there are nine staff members addressing this, and the towns had been contacted specifically for their upcoming events, so they could be included on a calendar on our website. The calendar is about a week away, as we are waiting to hear back from several towns.

Lt. Governor Quinn reported that we met with the Clean Energy Foundation to discuss how they could assist Main Street communities. They have grants available to any unit of government, or a not-for-profit for energy efficiency, renewable energy, or preserving natural areas and wildlife habitat. The Advisory Council is a unit of government, and most of the local programs are 501(C)3 not-for-profits. Dan Persky explained some of the ways the Foundation has assisted. Lt. Governor Quinn pointed out the grant can be used for stoplights and streetscape streetlights. Elizabeth reported the Clean Energy Foundation will also be at the State Conference to explain their services.

Design Services:

Mike Jackson reported that he will be presenting a session on how historic preservation ties into energy efficiency and is good for the environment. He also noted that Jim Mann, Director of the Clean Energy Foundation is the former director of the Midwest office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, so he is well-versed with how the two groups can tie in together.

Darius had been on board for about a month now. Looking forward to announcing the availability of Design Services. We believe his time will be allocated rather quickly. Wendy noted we plan to stagger availability to the towns so as not to overwhelm Darius with requests. Darius introduced himself and gave a brief summary of his background and his last month's work.

Mike also reported that we are beginning to hear inklings of interest in urban design services. This coincides with the renewal of the transportation enhancements grants on the federal level. These grants pay for 80% of the project, with a 20% local match. In the past we have had one architect that was dedicated to assist Main Street communities prepare plans to obtain these grants for items such as streetscapes, and this has added to their success. Discussion confirmed we should plan to add an architect that would be versed in this type of application.

State Conference Overview:

Lt. Governor Quinn asked Wendy to review plans for the upcoming State Conference. She reported the theme is "Celebrating Main Street", to acknowledge our ten year anniversary and show that the program is "alive and well". We have consolidated the event to two days to save on costs not only for the state program but also for the local programs. Costs have been further reduced over previous levels as we have printed the registration materials in house, and through the City of Elgin's sponsorship. Savings should be approximately \$25,000.

The City and the Downtown Neighborhood Association of Elgin have been exceptionally helpful. A diverse group of entertainment from the locale has volunteered for the Opening Reception and the Banquet. Downtown restaurants are willing to accept vouchers from our registrants for dining, so meals can be included in the registration fee. The Opening Reception will showcase Elgin's riverfront development, on Walton Island and the Banquet will be held at an excellent example of adaptive reuse.

Wendy highlighted the schedule of workshops and events; and noted the partnerships with representatives/speakers from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Illinois Arts Council, Clean Energy Foundation, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity – energy and tourism, and the State Treasurer's Office. Session topic ideas came from the Program Survey that we sent to the communities earlier this year.

Awards categories are similar to what we have had previously and entries numbered around 150. This number is down slightly over previous years but we also changed the requirements, so programs can only nominate three projects under each point for a total of twelve. Previously there was no limit. We will also acknowledge the top three finalists in each category, patterned after the Academy Awards. For the first time, volunteers and managers with more than five years of service will be recognized, and receive a Main Street pin patterned after a street sign. Mayor Klinkhamer asked about the judging procedure. Wendy explained that we would be using two judges for each category this year, that would form their own independent opinion, and then we will average the scores together. We've tapped a number of sources for judges, including DCEO, regional economic development professionals, IHPA, previous Main Street presidents and managers, and Advisory Council members.

Lt. Governor Quinn noted the need for publicity in various forms of media. And also that we should extend an invitation to the legislators in the area.

Mayor Klinkhamer asked if there were going to be scholarships available for the Conference as there had been in the past. Wendy said scholarships had been available for the National Town Meeting before, but to her knowledge we had not given them for the State Conference. Lt. Governor Quinn asked if this might be a good idea, as we don't want any Main Street town to not be represented. After some discussion about the actual costs that need to be covered, the Lt. Governor asked for the registration fee to be reduced to \$15 to cover meals, for those who could not afford the full fee.

Review of New Community Applications

Lt. Governor Quinn noted that we have two applications to act on, one from Momence and one from Bloomington. He asked Wendy to review them, which she did beginning with Bloomington. She noted that Bloomington had wanted to apply for quite some time. Initially Illinois Main Street was only for rural communities, and Bloomington didn't fit the population categories. Then after the categories were changed, the budget was cut. They have an existing organization that will run the program. Mayor Klinkhamer made the motion to accept Bloomington, seconded by Mary. Motion passed.

Wendy reported that Momence had one of the strongest applications she had seen, and though there is some dissension, particularly with the Mayor, she felt this was a personal issue and should not keep them from being accepted. Mike noted that Momence had been particularly supportive when Governor Ryan had axed the Main Street Budget. Lt. Governor Quinn pointed out that letters of support were received from Senator Halverson and Representative Novak. Mayor Klinkhamer said that one of the things she had learned was that initially, not all the parties involved, even Mayors, were going to be supportive of the program. Carolyn made the motion to accept Momence, seconded by Mary.

Elizabeth reported that Frankfort will be leaving the program because the City did not bring them into their structure as they had promised. Lt. Governor Quinn said we should aim for steady growth of the program.

Other Business

Mayor Klinkhamer asked about the status of the National Main Street Contract. Elizabeth said we had not signed one yet but hoped to do so by the next meeting. Wendy explained the Coordinator's Package and what the \$2,000 cost included. She explained additional items can be added. Lt. Governor Quinn charged Elizabeth and Wendy with talking to Simone McNeil to take care of the Coordinator's Package as soon as possible, and suggested we look at additional services at the next meeting. Mike reported that at IHPA they are beginning to shadow budget for the next year, and suggested that we do some planning at the next meeting. Lt. Governor Quinn agreed that it would be a good date to do some strategic planning.

Date for Next Quarterly Meeting

Date for the next meeting was for December 18 at 2:30 pm.

Adjournment

Lt. Governor Quinn called for a motion for adjournment. Made by Mary Blankenbaker, seconded by Carolyn Oxtoby. Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.