

***Illinois Main Street Council  
Minutes of the December 6, 2004 Meeting***

**Call to Order:** Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Conference room of his Chicago office.

**Roll Call:** Per roll call taken by Wendy Bell, members present were: Mary Blankenbaker, Mike Jackson for Director Coomer; Marc Gordon, Jim Baum, and Mayor Sue Klinkhamer via Conference Call, Carolyn Oxtoby was unable to attend the meeting.

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 September 28, 2004 meeting. Jim Baum made the motion to accept the minutes as written, Marc Gordon seconded the motion and approval was made by acclamation.

**Review & Progress Report Report:**

Lt. Governor Quinn noted that since the last meeting, Illinois Main Street had their annual Conference and thanked Wendy for her efforts. Wendy thanked Les for putting together the attendee's conference evaluation numbers, and reported the numbers indicate we generally continue to meet or exceed their expectations. They were specifically pleased on the overall organization, scheduling, location of the conference, and the parking arrangements. There were also high marks on the topics presented and the binders that were received which include information on all the sessions. The evaluations showed the attendees felt the value of conference was well worth the cost of the registration. Staff members have discussed whether tours held during registration are worth the cost, as few people actually participate. There may be other ways the money budgeted for tours could be utilized. The evaluations also indicated which towns may be interested in hosting the Conference in 2005, including Marshall, Bloomington, Genoa, Vandalia, Marion and Lincoln.

The Banquet was also given high marks on location and value with only the awards powerpoint noted as difficult to see.

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked about attendance numbers compared to Elgin. Wendy reported the numbers were similar except slightly down in the banquet, and that could be because the City of Elgin brought so many guests in 2003. Mary Blankenbaker noted that according to the information, 30 people said they had not come to the Conference before, so it was evident we are attracting new faces. Quinn asked about downstate representation and Bell noted that even though there were new managers in Golconda and Eldorado and they were the furthest from Dixon, they still came. She also noted that many communities sent more than one representative, indicating strong content. Mike Jackson talked about the good balance of introductory level and more mature topics spread through the four points. Wendy passed out one final summary, which showed the marks given each session.

Since the Conference, the staff has been very busy. Wendy noted that as of tomorrow, all of the towns will have received their Annual Program Reviews (with the exception of those who do not presently have managers). The Lieutenant Governor asked how these were received. Les responded the community's are very pleased with our visits and understand that we are not "grading them" but instead working to assess their strengths and weaknesses. He also noted the amount of time visits have taken – about 10 to 12 hours, as the towns just "want to talk". Wendy noted that this year we had the National Main Street Center did about half the Annual Program Reviews, and Les and she split out the remainder. The goal for 2005 is to wean out the NMSC and teach Ryan how to do APRs and handle some of the towns that are less complex.

We also did presentations for workshops on downtown incentives that were sponsored by Treasurer Topinka's office. The workshops were in Belvidere, DeKalb, Genoa and Sycamore. Additionally, Wendy introduced the Main Street program at Benton and representatives from DuQuoin also attended. Organizational visits in Mt. Vernon and Hardin County have been completed as well as the visits to the communities included in the West Central Illinois Opportunity Returns plan.

Ryan reported on his activities which included shadowing the Director during Main Street Plainfield's holiday event. Ryan is also working to rewrite the tours that highlight our Main Street towns. These tours would be on our website and have a link from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Tourism website. Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked Ryan to outline the tours, which include: Route 66, Dixie Highway, Eagles, River Towns, National Road (US 40), and Lincoln Highway. Wendy noted the additional goal for our website will be to have a page that highlights sites in each community, that could be downloaded as a Main Street travel guide.

The Main Street staff in the Lieutenant Governor's office and IHPA have been meeting twice monthly to keep each other informed on the many community contacts.

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked Wendy to outline our plans for 2005. She noted that one goal was to make certain that not only our current Main Street communities know the program is alive and well, but also reach out to towns that are not currently part of the program. One way we'll spread the word is through contacting Target Towns – specific communities that we feel would have the qualities of a good Main Street town and are geographically diverse. These towns have been culled from the list of interested communities and staff assessments; and 25 have been proposed from a list of 56. Lieutenant Governor Quinn went through the list and discussed the best possibilities. A personalized letter will be sent from the Lieutenant Governor with additional information followed by a personal call from the staff. Then each town would be visited and a public presentation about Main Street would be held. Mary Blankenbaker expressed her pleasure that Galena would be interested and included and Lieutenant Governor Quinn noted it would be good to have them on board.

In addition Wendy will make a presentation at the Governor's Rural Affairs Council Meeting about the Introductory Program next week.

Other activities in 2005: Wendy reported that Momence and Bloomington are completing their designation requirements and the ceremony will probably be in February. She will also complete her Certification training in Washington, DC in February. Through a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, we'll be bringing Margie Johnson to do retail consultations for Utica and then tagging on a presentation for the Manager's Meeting. We'll be spending time in the newer communities with their initial training – going to Lombard tonight. Wendy noted that this year the schedule makes it possible for towns to complete their designation requirements earlier in the year, thereby alleviating some of the staff workload later in the year. Plan to do a display on Illinois Main Street in the Stratton building and Main Street Day at the Capitol will be April 14<sup>th</sup>. Lieutenant Governor Quinn noted how well last year's Day at the Capitol went. The National Main Street Conference will begin Mother's Day weekend. All of the marketing efforts lead to the Application Workshops to be held in May. Basic Training will be held in June. We have a unique idea for the summer Manager's meeting – we'd gather in Marion and then board a bus that would be a traveling educational session and then stop in the southern towns of Golconda, Eldorado and Hardin County. Another goal would be a shopping type site of businesses in Main Street communities that would be accessible from our website.

The Lieutenant Governor noted the excellent display at the 2004 State Fair and the need to plan for this again in 2005. Mike Jackson suggested we also go to the Illinois Municipal League Conference. Lieutenant Governor Quinn suggested we reach out to the Tollway Authority and provide tourist information about our Main Streets at the Oasis.

**Design Services:**

Darius has completed 7 design projects and 1 project revision in the last quarter. Along the way he's encountered his first controversy, which centers around the paint color of a lingerie boutique in Alton. He also prepared the power point presentation for the conference and has begun to archive all Main Street's past projects in a PDF format, which are soon to be available online. Anna Margaret has been preparing case studies for the upper story development workshop to be held in Rock Island. Mike highlighted the events to take place at the workshop and unveiled a poster to promote it. Darius and Anna Margaret also attended a one day technical workshop on painting weathered wood.

In addition, all of the architects have played a role in the assessment of the towns named in the West Central Illinois Opportunity Returns program. This included a historic preservation tax credits workshop in Nauvoo. Lieutenant Governor Quinn spoke of his visit with Utah's Lieutenant Governor, and their expression of interest in Nauvoo. Wendy talked briefly of their visit to Nauvoo, noting the new willingness of the Church to allow private developers to cross their river land and build a reproduction of a boat that traveled the river during the height of the Mormons in Nauvoo. It has also recently been announced that a developer will build a hotel in Nauvoo.

**Other Business**

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked about the impact of the Farmers Market Grants. Wendy noted the positive indications by the communities, with increases in numbers of attendees and sales. 21 towns received a total of \$16,500 for their farmer's markets.

Ryan reported on the meeting held in St. Charles concerning rain gardens. The Lieutenant Governor expressed that we should make St. Charles a "city of rain gardens" and that some grants may be available for this purpose.

Lieutenant Governor Quinn asked about where we might have the Conference next year, noting those that had expressed an interest. Wendy said the staff had discussed others, including St. Charles. Mayor Klinkhamer said they would love to host the Conference. Wendy explained the need to make certain the state "was covered" as far as locations for the various activities.

Mike told the Council that a student project at the University of Illinois included assistance to Main Street businesses to examine the energy efficiency of their buildings. The Building Research Council is working with DCEO on a program for larger properties but the student assignment includes 7 buildings in downtown Monticello.

**Date for Next Quarterly Meeting**

Date for the next meeting was set for March 8 at 1:30 p.m.

**Adjournment**

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