

Illinois Main Street Council
Minutes of the December 29, 2005 Meeting

(Subject to approval at the next scheduled meeting)

Call to Order: Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the 24th meeting of the Council to order at 11:15 AM in Chicago

Roll Call: Per roll call taken by Wendy Bell, members present in addition to Lieutenant Governor Quinn were: Director Coomer, Sue Klinkhamer, and Carolyn Oxtoby. Director Lavin, Mary Blankenbaker, Jim Baum, and Marc Gordon were absent.

Other attendees: Wendy Bell, IMS Coordinator; Mike Jackson, Chief Architect, IHPA

Call to Order and Opening Remarks:

Lt. Governor Quinn asked for a motion on the minutes of the June 1, 2005 meeting. Sue Klinkhamer made the motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Carolyn Oxtoby, approval was made by acclamation.

Review & Progress Report Report:

Lieutenant Governor Quinn thanked Wendy Bell for her fine service over the past three years she has worked under him as Main Street Coordinator.

Bell reported on the Annual conference, which had excellent attendance at 285 people including staff and speakers. Sessions at the conference were consolidated to 3 concurrent sessions with session attendance of 40-60 people per session. Evaluations sent in by attendees indicated that the event was overall very good and of great value, in part because of the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

Suggestions from the Conference evaluations indicated a desire for some sort of Board President retreat, so one has been scheduled for a Saturday in March to meet this need. The Lieutenant Governor suggested that the retreat be held at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield, and also expressed that it is great that volunteer Board Presidents are engaged enough to want a retreat to exchange ideas.

More nominations came in this year for the Conference Awards that were of high quality, as well as a high representation by some of the smaller communities. The Lieutenant Governor encouraged even better applications for the future. Les and Navonna are currently working on consolidating the awards applications onto CDs to send to the winners and all communities so everyone can see what a successful application looks like. A council member asked that CDs be distributed to them as well.

Bell also gave an update on Les Cavada and his condition after his stroke, stating that he is doing very well and going to therapy, with expectations to return in about 4 weeks. A clotbuster shot administered to him at a hospital in Princeton saved his life but is not available at every hospital, something that the Lieutenant Governor asked Bell to bring to Carolyn Brown Hodge to pursue as a Rural Affairs issue. In terms of the current staff, Jennifer Even and Navonna Bunn are fellows that have been working on Main Street for about 6 months.

An Organization Committee training with Lombard was held via teleconference with a coordinating computer power point. This was the first attempt at such a training.

The 2nd Annual Main Street Day at the Capitol worked very well at helping local programs and legislators develop relationships, so the upcoming 3rd annual Main Street Day will be on February 9. The Lieutenant Governor suggested a breakfast for the preservation caucus to accompany the Main Street Day, and Bell agrees and would like to instead invite all of the legislators to a breakfast that day.

Because of the passage of the bill declaring the first Saturday in June as Main Street Day in Illinois, the Lieutenant Governor suggested holding another Chicago Main Street Day after Memorial Day to make people aware of the designated Main Street Day.

Eleven communities submitted Intent to Apply forms after very successful application workshops at which more than twenty communities attended. Basic Training was also held in two locations rather than one this year.

Also this year Farmers Market grants were given out, and four are still pending. The grants have been very popular in the smaller communities for local farmers to showcase their produce. There were also two Wi-Fi grants of \$20,000 each given to Mt. Vernon and Quincy, both are progressing nicely. Quincy's will include downtown and into the middle of the river so boaters can pick it up, and Mt. Vernon is still working with utilities on where to place the technology. The Lieutenant Governor wants to do more Wi-Fi grants this year, with all of the communities applying for the grants. He also gave a brief update about the possibility of a wireless Springfield with the museum as the epicenter.

The first Main Street Cyber Sale was a learning experience, and something the towns would like to do again. Timing was a big issue, and towns have expressed they would like to one in the spring, but there is some concern about such a long lag time. The Lieutenant Governor said Spring '07 is fine if the towns plan experiences such as Danville's successful Mayor for a Day in advance.

Recent reinvestment figures show that there has been over \$53 million in private reinvestment, \$11 million in public reinvestment, 452 structures have been improved, 151 new businesses have opened, and 373 new jobs have been created in Main Street communities.

The results of the Salary Survey shows that there hasn't been much of an increase in Directors' salaries, which is disappointing in comparison to a Chamber executive who makes much more for a very similar job. The Support Survey is almost complete, with a majority of the towns doing very well, except Collinsville which has had its funding slashed due to the city giving \$19 million to a Wal-Mart Super Center. The Lieutenant Governor questioned the efficiency of Wal-Marts and would like to see if they are at least being energy efficient in Main Street communities.

This year's calendar has been set around the National Conference in New Orleans, as well as the Tri-State conference in Wisconsin in September, and will include Basic Training in March, as well as designation ceremonies and a Presidential Retreat. In April will be the Historic Preservation Building Code Conference as well as the Spring Workshop, New Director Training, and Application Workshops. Bell would like to bring focus back to Historic Preservation in May. June will include Intents to Apply as well as the National Conference and the Statewide Preservation Conference with LPCI in Bloomington. July will consist of assessment visits and videoconference trainings. Focus will then shift to the State Fair and the Conference with the tentative dates of November 14 & 15. The Lieutenant Governor expressed good work on a vigorous agenda.

A new website was unveiled this year with Max, and will soon include reinvestment figures in real time, as well as the capability for communities to update their own information. Also, we are working on taking old reinvestment figures and putting them into current files so they can be figured in. The Lieutenant Governor suggested using the website for promoting summer travel since the Main Street website has the second most traffic.

Design Services:

Mike Jackson talked about working with Director Coomer at the IHPA to resolve the head count and get them back up to full staff, currently there are five total staffers, two full time IMS staff with the other

architectural staff pitching in to help, as well as an intern this past summer that worked on Build Your Own Main Street.

The Year in Review from the Architectural Services is quantitative and qualitative, having completed 62 design projects in 25 communities and 63 site inspections. They worked with LPCI in Momence to assess 20 buildings in one day and talk with owners about repairs, which was a group effort spearheaded by LPCI and local director, Janine Loftus. LPCI also organized a Historic Preservation legislative caucus, so far 60-70 legislators have joined. The Lieutenant Governor would like the caucus to be aware of Main Street. Jackson also said outreach & education are important for this year, making available all the project designs on the website, crediting Darius. A few other websites, such as www.builyourownmainstreet.org and www.upstairsdowntown.org link up to the IHPA website. The Lieutenant Governor would like to see more done with the Upstairs Downtown idea, and suggests Jackson call Blair Cayman to talk about web approaches.

Jackson also talked about the success of the Got Mesker? campaign spearheaded by Darius. Because Illinois has more Meskers' than any other state, it has gotten a lot of local media attention for something that started as an inventory and picked up lots of interest. The Lieutenant Governor would like a list of all of the known Mesker buildings in the state.

Several towns have submitted streetscape designs to complete for funding for Capital Improvements- Aledo, Cambridge, Orion, Pittsfield, Paxton, and Paris are getting planning money from IHPA to compete for IDOT engineering money.

Jackson will be doing a session on Main Street buildings in Chicago on April 5th and 6th for the National Building Code Conference. The Lieutenant Governor asked about energy efficiency; Jackson said his session would not cover that specific code but will include “green” policies.

Anna Margaret Borntreger worked on an infill building in downtown Rock Island to reconstruct a façade for a building that didn't exist. It is rare to work on a new building like this, but the local housing authority has become active at rehabbing under a new director.

The Lieutenant Governor asked Jackson about Louisiana Main Street, and if design services would be helpful for recovery efforts in rebuilding Main Street towns hit by the hurricane. Jackson said there are a lot of organizations on the preservation side working on this including the National Trust, and the conference next year will have a changed program to reflect this.

Jackson also expressed that a wish list for the Legislature would include money to fund the Heritage grants program, which is bricks and mortar money for historic property owners, a large component being the Historic County Courthouse program. The Lieutenant Governor mentioned Carlinville as a good example along a scenic byway and suggests a Courthouse Tour much like Route 66 or the Illinois River byways. Bell added that other public buildings could be on there to keep buildings in downtown, and refers to the unfunded Downtown Development Fund at DCEO that could help with this if it had funds.

Discussion and Approvals/Disapprovals of Associate Level Applicants

Several towns applied for introductory status including Cuba, Fulton, Lacon, Mendota, Rossville, and Steger. Rossville has a goal of being designated in 3 years, and Steger would like to create its downtown because it doesn't have a really specific downtown. Jackson says Steger has no historic buildings, it has a K-Mart at an intersection, but there is no other organization that fills the gap to promote downtown revitalization with no buildings. The Lieutenant Governor inquires about Havana, who haven't done any of the paperwork, and suggests calling Tom Tichner who works with river development in Peoria. Motion to approve by Carolyn Oxtoby and seconded by Sue Klinkhamer, passed by Council.

Discussion and Drop of Inactive Programs:

Bell refers to certain communities as Deadwood and Driftwood. Deadwood: Murphysboro which Bell would like to move to an Introductory Program, and Tuscola which is not participatory and no longer really interested in the program; and Driftwood: Eldorado, Galesburg which has not had a director since 2004 and is going through organizational changes, Golconda which suffers lack of participation and money, and O'Fallon which has not had a director since 2002 and runs purely on volunteers and maybe an intern. Forest Park is on the mend with a new director who was the former board president. The Lieutenant Governor would like to discuss the towns again in March so as not to take action immediately because he does not want to lose any communities.

Date for Next Quarterly Meeting

Date for the next meeting was set for March 23rd, 2006 in Springfield at 2:00 PM.

Adjournment

Lieutenant Governor Quinn called for a motion for adjournment, seconded by Carolyn Oxtoby, and Sue Klinkhamer.