

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
December 7, 1994

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PRESENT: Shirley Ganem, Chairman; Pamela Berg, Tony Triolo, Andy Milligan, Bill Wiebe, Barbara Jackson, Bob Garland

Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order at 7:35 in the First NH Bank Conference Room. She turned the floor over to Bill Wiebe who reviewed the discussions from last week, and introduced today's program.

"Investing in your Image" - the design section of the 4-point plan

This video dealt with marketing Main Street as a distinctive place to shop. It pointed out that the quality of workmanship and material in their old downtown buildings is the key to promoting a better image.

The first town discussed was Jim Thorpe, PA., a town of 5,000, which had a very poor impression of itself. A project manager helped them realize that it was looking seedy and rundown. Public awareness of the quality of their older buildings was needed. An architectural guide to building styles was distributed, and another on approving appearance and maintenance. A low-cost financial program was offered. People saw that painting made a big difference at small cost. Nothing phony was needed.

The second example was Hillsboro, Texas. The value of using a qualified designer was clearly shown here. He did detective work on the old buildings and learned the original designs and colors of the brick used for many of the buildings. Old photographs also helped in showing the old facades. He helped develop options for the building owners, and schedules for spreading out the work and its cost.

Thomasville, GA used a project manager, a financial incentive program funded by the city, and a volunteer design assistance committee. A domino effect followed the first up-grade. Owners were encouraged by pride, and compliments from the public. Simple cosmetic improvements made a tremendous difference, often as simple as changing colors of paint, removing awnings and cornices, and improving signs. Facade improvement grants are available from the city. The design assistance committee has 10 members. People often come to them for advice, not money. They also work with new businesses which have come into town. The appearance of quality and good taste is the goal. One new owner added outdoor tables with umbrellas in his back parking lot. People now favor downtown Thomasville over adding malls outside.

While the video was being changed, the committee talked about the voluntary design review committee which the Wolfeboro Planning Board is considering. The term voluntary and avoiding the perception of coercion is all-important. All agreed that Wolfeboro's look is "eclectic," rather than having any special character. The town promotes itself by its appearance, and the way it treats its customers. Bill has booklets based on these tapes which are being shown.

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"Bringing in Business" was the next tape shown.

There are three steps to this process of recruiting new businesses for Downtowns which have been blighted by shopping malls:

1. Gathering information and analyzing the market

* Get demographics from newspapers, radio, census data

* Get sales information from merchants - increasing or decreasing retail sales?

* Inventory of businesses and how they have changed, types of businesses in malls too

* Town can do this research, may need help in analyzing data

2. Package information for prospective businesses

* Building inventory to know what property is available, rents, etc. Have data available on computer

* Need to sell downtown as a whole

* An organized merchants group with regular calendar of events is essential

* Financial assistance programs

* Ongoing revitalization program downtown

3. Establish recruitment committee or central clearing house

* Decide what kinds of business you want

* Look close to home for types of businesses you prefer - can recruit specific businesses

Bloomsburg, Pa. was an example. Their Chamber of Commerce established a private non-profit organization, Revitalization, Inc. Prospects approach them.

Statesville, S.C. also has an active recruitment committee. They look for businesses and try to persuade them to move into town. An old livery stable downtown was converted into space for a restaurant and several businesses. They recruited a fitness center, and then got several related specialty shops to move there also.

Recruitment is an on-going process.

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Bill Wiebe handed out "Successful Organization," an outline which he had copied from the program workbook. (Copies will be sent with these minutes to members who missed the meeting.) Wolfeboro has many organizations with similar goals. All present agreed that we need to work together to identify volunteers and recruit them. We need knowledge, commitment, and enthusiasm. The biggest need is a cross-section of people. We need to start with the Selectmen, and need a "head cheerleader." Maybe the Civic Profile group could be reassembled. We must enlist everyone's cooperation in a common effort and avoid "turf battles."

A vital downtown satisfies the residents first. New residents and tourists come to Wolfeboro with specific expectations, and we need to try to satisfy them all. The "Come Home to Wolfeboro" slogan was praised as an excellent rallying point for Christmas promotions.

Members were asked to bring their specific recommendations for organization to discuss at the next meeting.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON DECEMBER 14 (to avoid Christmas conflicts.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik H. Arctander

Secretary

SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION

After completion of this section, you will:

- Define the most effective organizational structures for Main Street programs.*
- Identify key stakeholders (and funding sources) for downtown.*
- Understand the roles of volunteers, professional staff and consultants.*
- See how Main Street groups use strategic planning for successful implementation.*

Who's Minding the Store?

Organization is the key to a successful downtown revitalization program. A strong, viable organization provides the stability necessary to build and maintain a long-term effort. Developing a management program that is well, structured, well funded and committed to the future is the only way to make revitalization last.

In its most basic form, a successful Main Street program should have the following characteristics:

- Widespread community support
- Broad-based community representation
- A distinct constituency
- A clear, shared mission and objectives
- Committed, dependable funding
- Working committees
- Full-time management
- A comprehensive, accountable workplan
- Strong public-private partnership

Building the Organization

While a Main Street program can be housed in any one of a number of agencies and organizations, the ideal vehicle is a strong, independent private, nonprofit organization whose express purpose is downtown revitalization — with no other conflicting agenda. By becoming an independent orga-

nization, the Main Street program is almost always better able to bring together diverse interests in an objective environment and to maintain a clear focus on downtown issues. Why is creating a new nonprofit organization to implement the Main Street program the best option? Because the new organization can:

- Establish a clear focus unhindered by past history.
- Develop a consistent program, unhampered by the constraints of local politics.
- Unite a wide range of community interests in a neutral environment.
- Serve as a visible symbol of renewal, new activity and a new future for the downtown.

A new organization is often able to accomplish many things that an existing one cannot. A new organization can set up a board with a broad-based constituency, clearly define an independent mission, create new goals and infuse a fresh spirit of change into the community. And, a new group can forge all of the principles of a successful downtown organization into a working unit.

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What is The Ideal Structure?

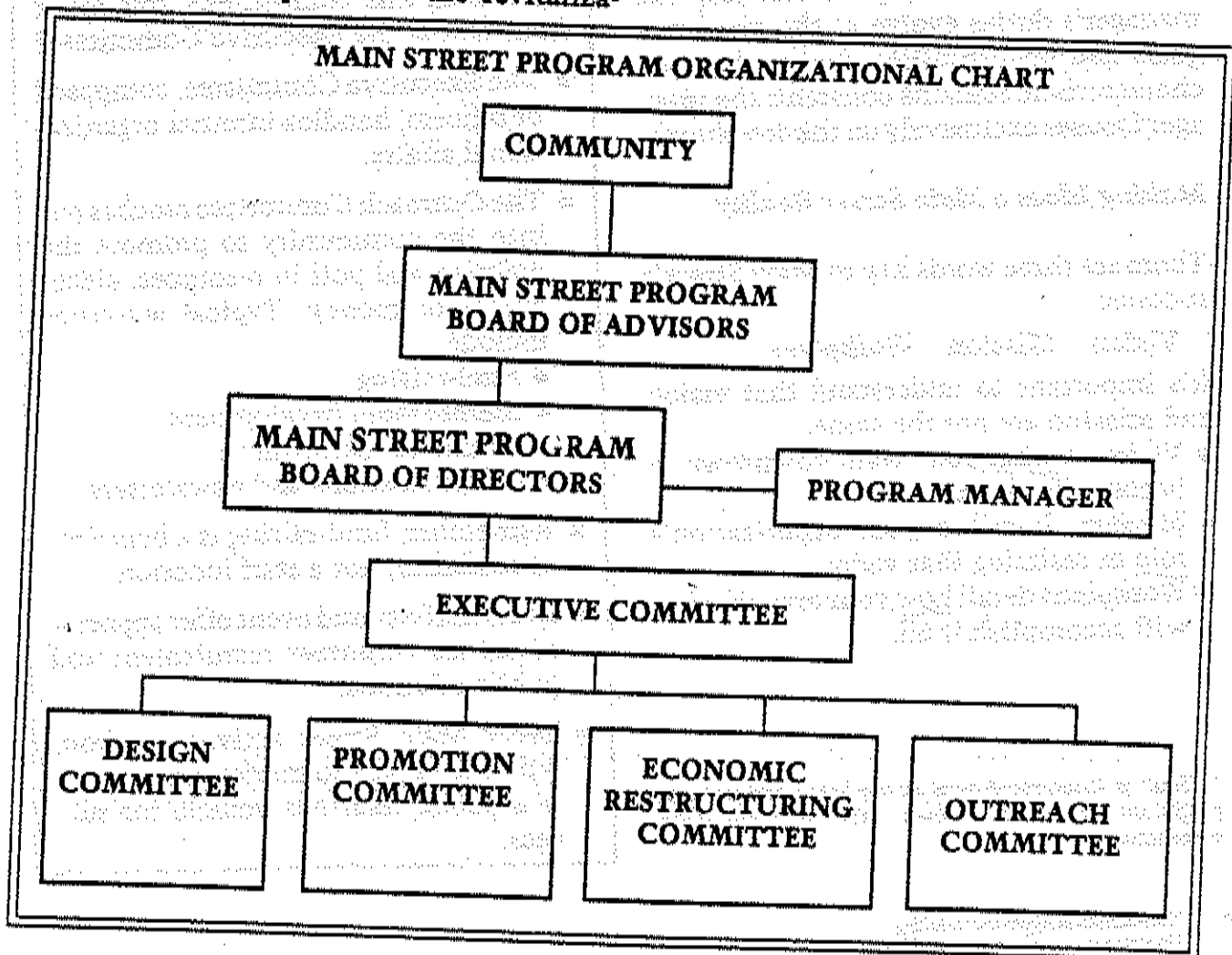
In some communities, the Main Street program is governed by a large board of directors, with a smaller executive committee providing day-to-day guidance. In others, a board of advisors and directors divide responsibilities for overseeing the program. Sometimes a program will share a board with another organization. Much will depend on local priorities, on the roles existing groups play, on human and financial resources.

What Does the Board Do?

The board's major responsibilities are to educate, build consensus, stimulate the downtown economy through action, focus activity on the downtown and maximize volunteer participation in the revitaliza-

tion process. Here are two basic responsibilities that should remain constant:

- The board has ultimate responsibility and accountability for the program. Although it may delegate daily management to the manager and committees, it cannot delegate the responsibility.
- The board must always represent the larger view of why downtown revitalization is crucial for the entire community. It serves as an advocate of revitalization in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the principles, community acceptance and involvement in the process, private-sector commitment, and ongoing private-sector initiative.



What Is the Staff's Role?

The program manager is the central coordinator of this volunteer-driven organization, overseeing daily operations, providing the hands-on involvement critical to a successful program. The manager also provides a communication link between committees, ensuring that activities in all four points of the Main Street approach are synchronized. Like a shopping center manager, the Main Street manager initiates and coordinates a wide range of projects, from supervising promotional activities to assembling market information. Most important, though, is the manager's role as the full-time advocate for the downtown and as an authority on information, resources and programs related to the revitalization effort.

Like the board's responsibilities, the manager's duties evolve as the program's goals and opportunities change, but one characteristic remains constant: the manager focuses exclusively on the downtown.

Making Ideas a Main Street Reality

There are three words key to Main Street's success:

Vision Mission Workplans

It's important to understand that vision and mission are not the same.

- **Vision** is what you* want downtown to become (in the future).
- **Mission** describes your organization's role in realizing that vision.
- **Workplans** detail how your organization will accomplish it all.

*"You" is interpreted here as the broad spectrum of people and interests downtown — the consensus of the stakeholders.

"To preserve and enhance the historic town square as the heart of Collierville that communicates a sense of community pride, heritage, and small town wholesomeness...and provides for a successful business and residential environment"

— Mission Statement: Collierville, Tenn.

The importance of a clear and common vision should be obvious. Many people, however, undervalue the power of a good mission statement. Remember:

- It is not the statement, but the power of consensus that gives it meaning
- It galvanizes forces, both people's motivations and investors' funding.

OUTREACH Committee Tips

How does this committee's role differ from that of the Executive Committee?

- The Executive Committee, composed of officers, handles internal organizational affairs.
- The Outreach Committee *reaches out* into the community to promote the program and pull in resources, either people or money. Typical activities include:
 - fund-raising
 - membership development
 - volunteer recruitment
 - public relations and newsletters
- Remember, fund-raising is a *board* responsibility, not a staff function.
- Every activity and event offer opportunities for volunteer recruitment and public relations.
- Every Main Street activity — from building rehabs to market analysis — is a public relations vehicle for success.