

Hanover Revitalization Committee Minutes - January 2009

Hanover Chamber President Gary Laird opened the meeting with a brief summary of the project to assist new committee members and to refresh current members. The status can be reviewed at the new Chamber web site: www.hanoverchamber.com, where there is a tab specifically for Downtown Hanover information. At the Downtown Hanover web page you can select the November meeting minutes link: www.hanoverchamber.com/DowntownMinutesNov.pdf

Gary reported that the Chamber arranged with The Evening Sun newspaper to run an ongoing banner advertisement for the Chamber and the Revitalization project.

Exciting news from Gary was that the project has received two anonymous donations totaling \$10,250 to help with any expenses.

The above summary was provided to each of the three workgroups that met on Tuesday, January 27. The next scheduled meetings of all workgroups will be February 24.

Organization Task Group

The Downtown Hanover project is not yet affiliated directly with the "Main Street" program that is sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Julie Fitzpatrick explained that we would need to obtain permission to join and use the Main Street program but that we are on track by using the Four Point Approach or Program Areas (Organizational Development, Physical Improvements, Asset Development & Enhancement and Community Marketing, plus a fifth, Safe, Clean and Green) in our planning groups so far.

Daniel Frey is investigating the legal use of the term "Main Street" and it appears so far that we can identify ourselves as "Main Street Hanover" in our approach to revitalization since we also intend to join the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

Background is available at the web site: www.padowntown.org/programs/mainstreet

Using the Checklist for Starting a Nonprofit Corporation the organization will require a Board of Directors - Gary and Dan will fill a Nominating Committee to seek candidates.

The workgroup proceeded to discuss and develop a Mission Statement. The committee reviewed documents that provided examples of mission statements used by dozens of cities and towns that have been accepted by the Internal Revenue Service as 501c3 non-profit organizations in the Main Street program. There are certainly common themes in all of the mission statements that address the past, present and future direction of each project. The committee agreed that Gary and Henry Senatore will provide a few summary examples for final approval of a Mission Statement at the next meeting.

Actions:

1. Any problem with the use of "Main Street Hanover" in Pennsylvania - Dan
2. Nominating Committee - Dan and Gary
3. Mission Statement - Gary and Henry

Economic Restructuring Task Group

The committee reviewed the list of available properties and identified about seven (7) sites that fit the profile to serve as anchor building(s) in the downtown area. We will need to work with the Borough and will need additional workgroup members to visit sites and arrange meetings with building owners to develop potential plans.

Members were interested in the status of renovation of the 81-year old Hanover Theatre. The building Caretaker, David Leske, informed the group that the renovation backers need to feel confident about the downtown revitalization progress before investing further. David said that despite years of neglect, the building is structurally sound and has "great bones". So far he has cleared out loads of items and debris left by former owners and he has fixed the roof, electrical wiring, heat and remedied a water issue - water had flooded the sub-basement to a depth of 8 feet. Before investors provide the \$3-4 million dollars to restore the theatre to its grandeur they need to see the Main Street Hanover project take hold. They would like to see business that would compliment the theatre - restaurant, easy parking, good traffic flow and pedestrian-friendly.

Anita distributed the latest iteration of the Business Owners Survey and the committee identified just a few modifications for

the final form. Anita has arranged to meet with student volunteers from local high schools - Delone's Interact Club, Hanover's Interact and Key Clubs, and Southwestern's Key Club. The meetings are planned for February 23 and March 2 so that the surveys can be conducted during the weeks of March 9 and March 16. With about twenty (20) students per school we could use a sub-committee to provide guidance and adult supervision of the student volunteers. The Chamber will look into the possibility of migration of the paper survey to Internet online survey software (SurveyMonkey) and asking a sample of downtown businesses to complete the Survey electronically.

Actions:

1. Next steps for narrowing down the potential anchor buildings - Ryan
2. Sub-committee to interview owners & develop plans - Ryan and Gary
3. Finalize Business Survey - Anita
4. Online Survey - Gary
5. Solicit adult volunteers to guide students - Members of the Task Group
6. Meet with Clubs - 02/23 and 03/02 - Anita and Chamber
7. Survey - through 03/16 - Anita and Students with Sub-committee

Design Task Group

Drew Derreth chaired the committee. The Hanover Arts Guild has volunteered to conduct a photo project to capture the facades of buildings in the downtown area. Borough Manager Bruce Rebert will provide to the Guild the photo results of a similar project in 1968. It was agreed that having a photo journal of the past, present and future of Hanover, the transformation of buildings, parks, alleys and open space, will be a valuable asset as the Main Street project proceeds. Drew suggested that a sub-committee to work with the Arts Guild is needed.

Regarding Parking, the sub-committee developed a few themes that will be acted upon. A primary importance is a Parking Awareness program to educate people that there are already many public parking places available in the downtown area. It is probably easier to park downtown and be close to a destination than it is to park in the vast open lots on Eisenhower and walk further to the destination store. Bruce Rebert indicated that there are limited funds to replace some (perhaps nine) Parking signs with universally recognized signs. A sub-committee should identify the best places to put signs in the downtown area. We need to know where we need signs that would direct local and tourist visitors to find parking and we need Parking signs that easily identify the lots for drivers. We need to do some advertising, perhaps the Chamber banner ad or maps of downtown at local stores and Downtown Hanover web site, to point out the 1950's prices of parking meters in the downtown area. Enforcement of turnover at the meters would be needed. A map should identify (two-color) the available parking area in the downtown area. We can ask local businesses to place laminated parking maps in store windows. The map pamphlets can be placed in current and future kiosks (e.g., library information center).

A map was reviewed of the proposed route for walking and bike riding the Hanover Trolley Rail Trail. The county trail ends at Moul Field but our section of the route can bring travelers to the downtown area and the Library specifically. The committee provided suggestions regarding the use of Penn Street (for safer bike traffic) and Broadway (pedestrian traffic), such as parking only at night and making Penn one-way to make additional room for bikes. We have a document titled "Graphic Identity & Sign Guidelines Manual" from the Great Allegheny Passage trail program that could provide us with assistance. It includes a "Trail Towns Self-Assessment Checklist".

There are two projects that have been suggested for the Design Task Group that require additional members and/or sub-committees: coordination of the Mayor's Beautification Fund has been transferred to Hanover Revitalization jurisdiction and a Wirt Park Beatification Project has been submitted.

Action:

1. Arts Guild Sub-committee - Drew and Deb
2. Parking signs sub-committee - Drew
3. Chamber to produce pamphlet and laminated versions of parking map - Gary
4. Beautification Projects Sub-committee - To be announced