

**MainStreet Commission Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2014**

Members Present

Michael Clark, Chairman
Rick Butkus
Jim Fuentes
Marissa Caruso
Beth Fahey
Dr. Amanda Young

Staff Present

Donna Framke, Marketing Director
Ivan Baker, Economic Development Director
Michael Kowski, Planner II
Judy Bruning, Admin. Asst. to the Mayor
Nancy Byrne, Secretary

Chairman Clark called the May 21, 2014 MainStreet Commission meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. There was a motion made by Marissa Caruso, seconded by Jim Fuentes, to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting. Vote by voice call: Chairman Clark declared the motion carried.

There was a motion made by Marissa Caruso, seconded by Amanda Young, to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2014 MSC meeting. Vote by voice call: Chairman Clark declared the motion carried.

Chairman Report – Chairman Clark asked the commissioners to advise whether or not they want to be reappointed to the Commission so that he can inform Trustee Seaman.

Mike reported that since Findzall's contract was not renewed, staff is taking on a lot internally and we are looking for buy-in and a commitment from all the commissioners. He stated that this commission must believe in what we are doing as we move forward. Our only focus is downtown Tinley and it will take extra effort from the commissioners. The committee needs to step up to work out the Facebook aspect, which needs to be monitored.

Business Attraction – Mike noted that Ivan Baker will address business attraction tonight. He indicated that each and every commissioner needs to help this along. Donna stated that we are trying to make this the best product we can. The commissioners can help by attending the events, showing up, being involved, pulling in other businesses and by contacting neighboring businesses. Mike stated that whoever is interested in being a commissioner again should send him an email and that we will be asking more from each person in the future.

Donna distributed a schedule of monthly meeting and newsletter dates. She thinks that the downtown marketing is coming together very nicely with the members of the Marketing Department. One newsletter per month will go out for the near future. Donna indicated that Dr. Thies is willing to speak about customer service at the June 11th Downtown Tinley meeting. Donna noted that they attended the website training with Email Logic.

Mike indicated that he was disappointed with the turn-out at the Business After Hours event at Creative Cakes. We need a buy-in from this commission to attend MainStreet events. Only one commissioner attended the Bench Artist/Sponsor reception. Beth stated that May is a busy time for everyone and that April may work better next year for the Business After Hours. Ivan stated that many different organizations are combining their events because everyone is so busy and suggested linking with the Chamber for an event.

Donna noted that the commissioners had questions on what we are going to do about our business attraction efforts now that we no longer have Findzall. She introduced Ivan Baker to speak on this subject.

Ivan reported that the Economic Development Department's goal is to create wealth for this community. We want to make sure we have a strong and healthy business climate. It is regionally and nationally strong. We received the award for the first and only Accredited Economic Development Department in Illinois. The accreditation group had dinner in downtown Tinley and they thought the area was dynamic. The Mayor and Village Board want new investment, new job creation and new tax revenue all over town. We have a fun and safe downtown. We have a lot to build on. We need the MainStreet Commission to keep a positive outlook. When you are marketing anything your product has to be good. Cook County taxes are a hurdle, unfortunately. The trustees have taken an aggressive stance in the last 18 months to make changes.

Ivan stated that we have 180 businesses in downtown Tinley. The core has a 6.3 percent vacancy rate. The entire length of Oak Park Avenue has a 5 percent vacancy rate. Our vacancy rate is very low compared to other communities. We want to encourage businesses that have certain criteria to be successful. If a business is not able to do \$500,000 in gross sales, it is very difficult to keep open. They cannot pay the lease, their employees, the taxes and insurance.

Ivan outlined several vacant properties and the issues surrounding their vacancies. Jim stated that some businesses have left because they cannot comply with the code. Ivan noted that 70 businesses have opened in Tinley Park in the past year, all meeting the code.

Ivan noted that Planning, Economic Development and Marketing are working closely together to get good companies in our community, but we have some product problems due to bank-owned properties, financing problems and code compliance issues. We must get more modern product built that meets the demand of good businesses that are well capitalized. Older buildings present challenges to renovate.

The MainStreet Commission wants to develop strategies to move forward on economic development. Ivan stated that if a particular parcel is a problem then let's figure out what to do. Mike said that we have a lot of vacant lots from buildings that have been torn down. Ivan stated that if there are enough in a row a developer may look at that area and want to build there.

Mike Kowski then gave a presentation on the Complete Streets project as it applies to downtown Tinley. Beth noted that we need a bike safety program to educate the public and the elderly. Marissa offered to host the event. Mike stated that new businesses must provide bike racks.

Benches on the Avenue Update – Nancy reported that the benches have gone out and thanked Rick for taking the photos for the brochure and the Cub Scouts and Garden Club for planting the flowers. She also thanked Evons for donating and installing the bench plaques. The reception at El Coco Mio was well attended and a big success. She noted that the brochure is at the printer, and recapped plans for the Meet the Artists night on June 14th.

Events Update – Donna distributed a sign-up sheet for the upcoming Music in the Plaza concerts and asked the commissioners to sign up to act as emcee at a concert. She also reported on the other upcoming summer events.

There was a motion made by Marissa Caruso, seconded by Jim Fuentes, to adjourn the meeting. Vote by voice call: Chairman Clark declared the motion carried and adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reminder</i> <i>Next MSC Meeting</i> <i>Wednesday, August 20, 2014</i> <i>6:15 p.m.</i> <i>Fulton Conference Room</i></p>
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Upcoming Events:

- Benches on the Avenue – through Oct. 1 (Meet the Artists Night – June 14th)
- Cruise Nights – Tuesday's from June 3-Aug. 26
- Farmers Market – Saturday's from June 7-Oct. 11
- Music in the Plaza – June 14 & 28, July 12 & 26, Aug. 9 & 23, Sept. 6
- Caribbean Block Party – July 20
- Boo Bash – Oct. 26
- Holiday Market – Dec. 5-7