

**MainStreet Commission Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2011**

Members Present

Michael Clark, Chairman
Richard Vuillaume
Rick Butkus
Jack Cochonour
Kim Scalise

Staff Present

Donna Framke, Marketing Director
Judy Bruning, Admin. Asst. to the Mayor

Also Present

Bob Haustein, Chamber of Commerce

Chairman Michael Clark called the November 2, 2011 MainStreet Commission meeting to order at 6:23 p.m. There was a motion made by Rich Vuillaume, seconded by Kim Scalise, to approve the agenda as proposed. Vote by voice call: Chairman Clark declared the motion carried.

There was a motion made by Kim Scalise, seconded by Jack Cochonour to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2011 MSC meeting as written. Vote by voice call: Chairman Clark declared the motion carried.

Kim Scalise noted that she has been in contact with Andrew High School regarding the creation of the branding logo for the new downtown website. They are very excited about this project and are eager to begin. The commission will need to direct them as to where to focus their talents and suggested that a representative from the Commission attend one of their classes and tell them exactly what we would like them to do. This is a program they would like to undertake as soon as possible but we need to formulate some ideas before we get together with them.

Findzall Community Marketing Proposal - Since everyone had an opportunity to read through the Findzall report, this meeting was called to talk about various questions that were raised when the Chairman, Jack Cochonour, Donna Framke and Judy Bruning met with Trustee Seaman and the village manager. After that meeting Nancy Byrne was directed to contact several communities to get definitive information as to how their program ran, budgets, staff, funding sources, etc. The group reviewed Nancy's report -- Research of Downtown Organizations. Chairman Clark mentioned that at the meeting with Trustee Seaman and the village manager they basically discussed three funding options to explore (SSA, increase the sales tax by a small percentage or a water bill fee.).

Rich Vuillaume asked how many businesses are actually along Oak Park Avenue. Donna Framke noted that the information she received shows the total number of commercial or industrial from 168th Street to 181st Street equals 118 and there are 53 businesses from 171st to 176th. This does not include the recently closed Casto's Restaurant.

Chairman Clark noted that after meeting with Trustee Seaman and the village manager it was said that they, the Village, want to see the businesses have some type of buy-in – the suggested

“retail sales tax” was discussed and that was when they requested Nancy Byrne to do the above-noted research. It was noted that it will take between \$75,000 and \$100,000 in the first year to get the infrastructure created (website/branding) and then it would take between 4 to 6 months to train someone to be proficient enough to go out and train the businesses on how to market themselves using this program. It was noted that since service businesses (beauty shops, attorneys, etc.) do not pay sale taxes we may have to impose a flat fee for those types of businesses. Rich Vuillaume noted that he felt that a majority of the businesses would want to pay a flat fee vs. a percentage and Mike Clark noted that if you charge a flat fee to all the businesses you are basically going back to a membership situation and is that what we want? Mike Clark noted that his main focus for the meeting tonight was to ask each of the Commissioners, as businessmen along Oak Park Avenue, what they would be comfortable with. Rick Butkus noted that the bottom line is people are going to ask “what is in it for me”. If they don’t see a benefit to them they wouldn’t buy into the program. When looking at the breakdown that Nancy Byrne did we are looking at a vast difference in the communities versus Tinley Park - not only from the standpoint of types of businesses but also the number of businesses in the core area. Jack Cochonour noted that in reality we are not comparing apples to apples when analyzing the communities on the list. Palatine is suffering big time but it would be more comparable to Tinley Park than the communities researched. He also noted that in this day and age so many businesses do mass communication on their own – example, Bettenhausen, that they wouldn’t feel they need us, so they wouldn’t see an advantage to being in the program. However, businesses like that that would put their name on our website would give us validity since they are so successful in their marketing.

Rich Vuillaume said that he didn’t think we could sell this to the merchants and Rick Butkus said right now you couldn’t sell it to him. He noted that the mom and pop businesses are all suffering and you would really have to prove to them that it would be to their advantage to be part of the program. Part of the discussion noted that if the village would fund this program for 12 to 18 months to get the program off the ground and to ensure it works, that then we could quantify the results and show that the businesses have responded positively. We could then look at other funding means, i.e., billing the businesses – at that point the businesses can decide whether or not they want to be part of the program or they can opt out if they don’t feel they have benefited from it. It was felt that it would take about six months to ramp up in setting up the structure and then an entire year for the project to function before any results can really be gleaned from this effort.

Donna Framke noted that we would need to have a face on the avenue who would own this task. This would mean someone would need a place to work from, a computer set-up, etc. Bob Haustein offered the use of the Chamber office, but Mike Clark indicated that this would have to be a completely independent site. It was noted that this is similar to rolling out a new product. Mike Clark noted that he would like to sit down with Cathy Maloney to talk things out – not a presentation by her but a let’s sit down and discuss options, etc. It was noted that with the vacancies on Oak Park Avenue, it makes this program a hard sell, but you have to start somewhere. The major problem is that the big vacancies, i.e. Cardinal Fitness, the video store and now Casto’s are glaring vacancies. Vacancies in smaller shops are not as noticeable. Mike Clark said that you have to educate the current businesses on how to market themselves and once you start showing some success, other business will want to come on board. It was noted that

Whole Foods (Border's Store) and Pete's Grocery Store (Dominick's) are coming into Orland Park. Orland is getting these businesses because of certain incentives they are offering. Tinley Park is not in a position to do these things.

It was noted that there seems to be three basic steps:

- Village funding of program for 18 months
- After six months, determine how much it will cost to continue the program
- Determine the procedure for funding the program after the Village's funding ceases

We need to get creative to determine our funding mechanism but we need the village's buy-in to help get this off the ground and we need the infrastructure developed first. It was suggested that we ask Trustee Seaman and the village manager to attend the November 16th meeting to obtain their support.

Benches on the Avenue Theme Discussion – Donna Framke noted that since we had originally chosen the “Food, Candy and Ice Cream” theme, the Mayor's Wellness Committee had asked that we do something along the lines of healthy living. The Commission asked Nancy Byrne to talk to some of our major artists to see if they had any thoughts on what theme they would like. The artists offered several suggestions, but the favorite seemed to be a “music” theme. The group agreed with a family friendly musical theme.

There was a motion made by Rick Butkus, seconded by Rich Vuillaume, to adjourn the meeting. Vote by voice call: Chairman Clark declared the motion carried and adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Reminder
Next MSC Meeting
Wednesday, November 16, 2011
6:15 p.m.
Vogt Conference Room

Upcoming Events:

- Mayor's Tree Lighting Ceremony – Fri., Dec. 2nd – 6 p.m., Zabrocki Plaza
- Holiday Market – Fri., Dec. 2nd – 6-9 pm; Sat., Dec. 3rd – 12-6 pm; Sun., Dec. 4th – 12-5 pm (Downtown Train Station)
- Tinley's Toyland Parade – Sat., Dec. 3rd – 11:30 a.m. – 175th to Zabrocki Plaza
- Ice Carving Demonstration – Sat., Dec. 3rd – 2 p.m. Downtown
- Carriage & Carnival Rides - Sat. Dec. 3rd – 12-6 pm & Sun. Dec. 4th – 12-5 pm, Downtown Train Station
- Holiday Movies – Sat. Dec. 3rd – 12-6 pm & Sun. Dec. 4th – 12- 5 pm – Old Zion Church
- Photos with Santa – Sat., Dec. 3rd – 12-6 pm & Sun., Dec. 4th – 12-5 pm – Downtown Train Station
- Parade of Lights – Sun., Dec. 4th – 5 pm