

Minutes
Organization & Finance Committee
October 21, 2009, 7:00 p.m. (City Hall)

I. Call to Order

II. Attendance

Jim, Joel, Julie, Patrick

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Jim, second by Joel, to approved the September meeting minutes. All in favor.

IV. Director's Report

Patrick reported that we have a year-end check-in meeting with the Michigan Main Street officials on Friday, November 6. They'll meet with the O&F Committee from 4:15 to 4:45. The Main Street Board will hold its annual retreat on November 1.

V. Work Plan Review & Update

a. Objective 1 - Conduct public relations for Main Street.

Project 1 – Press releases

Patrick has one ready for Maple Street, which will be ready by early next week. Because we did the enhancement project, it actually cost the city less money than a bare-bones street improvement would have cost. Jim noted that it's also important to note that this project went through an extensive planning and public-comment process over the past five years to accomplish this project.

Julie noted that we are well ahead of our goals in terms of the number of articles published, but we are not meeting our goals with respect to content. The committee discussed the need to educate the public, which is one main purpose of this project. The committee discussed strategies to refocus on the specific articles that were identified during the work planning process and determined that we should assign one person to keep a list of those articles and keep us on track. Patrick will keep a spreadsheet of the articles. Julie will send the list to Patrick.

Project 2 – Website

Patrick was asked the status of the conversion to the content-management system. He states that it's ready whenever we're ready. The problem is that neither the city nor Main Street has a credit card. Patrick will look into purchasing a prepaid Visa gift card or the equivalent. Julie discussed the need to have objective standarts of success for the website: what should it include; what are our goals in having a website; etc. Jim suggested that we look at One-on-One as a starting point for measurements—what are they selling? Can we use these components while we're creating our own goals? Ideas included listing properties, measuring the number of volunteers recruited via the website, etc. We may want to consider selling advertising in some way, but we need to avoid annoying people. Patrick noted that photos are key.

Projects 3 – Facebook, etc.

The committee will ask Lisa for her recommendations on taking this online presence to the next level—how can we have a much bigger impact without being obnoxious. Julie will follow up with Lisa.

Projects 4&5 – On the Street; Main Street Gab

Julie reported that she has received minimal return on the surveys that were distributed. She is reluctant to publish the next list without all of the relevant businesses represented because this will be seen as Main Street playing favorites. The committees discussed ways to ensure that every business is represented and determined that we need to ask them one-on-one. Joel will contact Ted of Ted's Barbershop. Julie plans to present a final advertising plan (rates, policies, etc.) to the O&F Committee in November, so it can be distributed to the businesses and begin in January or February.

Julie reported that she was unable to finish the October Gab before Oktoberfest but is finishing it this weekend. She discussed an ongoing dilemma in which we need to communicate information to businesses far ahead of time but are unable to do so because our own planning isn't sufficiently ahead. For example, the October Gab should include a calendar of events for 2010 and details about possible advertising, funding, sponsorships, etc. for every 2010 Main Street event and project. Most businesses are completing their 2010 budgeting process right now, especially larger businesses. We are missing enormous opportunities because our events are not planned far enough ahead to be included in the businesses' budgets—then we're forced to rely on extra funds that businesses might be able to scrape together.

The committee discussed doing the backward planning during our November meeting, so some of this can be included in the January Gab.

Project 6 –Manager articles

Patrick reported that he will submit the Maple Street article next week. He will talk to Tom Thelen about a regular column. Julie asked Patrick to request permission to reprint the Michigan Main Street Center's blog posts and other articles (with attribution), so we can get more articles printed. Patrick will bring the list to the next meeting, so we can tweak if necessary.

Project 7 – Accreditation celebration

No discussion; complete.

b. Objective 2 – Develop a funding plan

Project 1 –Funding plan

Julie reported that this is her number 2 priority (with recruitment #1) and that she will have a preliminary plan by November, based on the outline that she and Malcolm began before he left. She discussed her concerns over current threats to the city's budget and predicted that the DDA will likely be a target for funding for many more city projects. The committee discussed that we need to continue to work toward the goal of making Main Street as self-sufficient program.

Project 2 – Oktoberfest

Patrick distributed the final numbers, but we didn't meet our goals. Instead of making money, we lost \$3,664.30. Expenses came in under budget. Those items that did come in over budget couldn't be helped. Some expenses can be cut completely. But income fell almost \$9,000 short of projections.

The committee discussed the following ideas for next year:

- Holding the event only on Friday

- *Changing the structure of the food vendor component*
- *Having far more concrete plans in place much earlier*
- *Starting now*
- *Doing a better job of assigning committee chairs to take care of their portion*

Julie asked for an updated plan for 2010 Oktoberfest to be distributed at the November meeting. (Patrick stated that we should consider Bill Badgero as volunteer of the year.) Joel reported that \$25 was too much for the race registration (although we had 64 runners). A high school runner complained that he can't wear his medal on his varsity jacket because it says "beer." Some people also asked to have the start and finish at the tent (or at least the finish). Next year's event will be held on October 16, 2010—we'll keep it the third week. Jim noted that there was nothing at Kent and Grand River for people looking for Oktoberfest. Julie suggested asking Eric Frederick to coordinate a microbrew tasting next year.

c. Objective 3 – Volunteer recruitment and training

Project 1: Annual event

This will be held in July, rather than April. The committee selected July 15 as the date for this event, in conjunction with "Thursdays on the Grand."

Project 2: Recruitment manual & plan

Jim and Julie will continue working on the manual. Julie asked the committee for ideas on immediate action. We need volunteers, especially for this committee and the Promotions Committee. The committee suggested the following:

- *"Friend raising" or "each one reach one"*
- *Student public service hours*
- *Brochure and other information / education*
- *Review our current list of attendees and target some for specific tasks; then ask*
- *Are our meetings at bad times? Review this*
- *Mailings (multiple contacts w/educational material)*
- *Reward current volunteers for bringing new people*
- *Take and publish a photo of all volunteers—group photo*
- *A more concentrated effort at getting current volunteers to recruit others*

Project 3: Quarterly forums

Julie discussed the problems the committee has had in scheduling these trainings and asked the committee for alternatives:

- *Can we create a "better" event that will be more widely attended?*
- *Can we schedule better, so it will be more widely attended?*
- *Should we look at other delivery methods (e.g., a series of video trainings)?*

- *Should we incorporate training into regular committee meetings and board meetings (e.g., a ½-hour presentation at four meetings per year for each committee)?*
- *Should we approach board training differently than other volunteer training?*
- *How do we invite people? Are we effective?*

Patrick suggested a possible breakfast event. Patrick will follow up with other communities, and we'll discuss next month.

VI. Member Comments

a. Volunteer hours

Joel – 42; Jim - 4; Lisa – 2; Julie – 4; Oktoberfest volunteers - 116

b. Other comments - None

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 18, 2009, 7:00 p.m., City Hall

VIII. Adjourned: *Motion by Jim, second by Joel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. All in favor.*