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**WEST READING MAIN STREET JOINT BOARDS  
AUTHORITY & FOUNDATION**

**MINUTES  
APRIL 7, 2008**

**Call to Order**

Shane J. Keller, MSA Chairman and MSF President, called the meeting to order at 6:05PM.

**Foundation Board of Directors Members Present**

Shane J. Keller (Mayor of West Reading), President; Deborah Hutcheson (Charles Hutcheson Fine Jewelry), Vice President; Dr. Mark G. Dougherty (Penn Avenue Dental), Secretary; George I. Tindall (West Reading Borough Manager), Member; Kevin M. Conrad (West Reading Borough Council), Member and Rebecca Simmons (Firefly on Penn), Member. A quorum was present.

**Foundation Board of Directors Members Absent**

Michael Morrill (West Reading Borough Council), Treasurer and Lynda Kuhn (West Reading Resident), Member. One vacant board seat.

**Authority Board of Directors Present**

Shane J. Keller (Mayor of West Reading), Chairman; John C. Woodward (Third and Spruce Café), Vice Chairman; Caitlin Degler (Berkshire Bank), Treasurer - *arrived 6:55PM* and Kevin M. Conrad (West Reading Borough Council), Member. A quorum was present.

**Authority Board of Directors Absent**

Carol Wells (Sweet Surprises), Secretary.

**Staff Present**

Nevin Hollinger, Main Street Executive Director; Dean L. Rohrbach, Elm Street Manager; Melanie B. Weidner, Administrative Assistant and Dan Becker (Kozloff Stoudt), Solicitor.

**Guests Present**

Lori Weidenhammer, Neighborhood Advisory Committee, Chair; Dave Weidenhammer, Neighborhood Advisory Committee, Member and Don Haines, NAC Design Committee, Chair.

**Executive Director Introduction**

Shane J. Keller introduced Nevin Hollinger, the new Executive Director of West Reading Main Street. Mr. Hollinger greeted members and noted he is looking forward to working with the Boards, businesses and residents in building upon a very good Main Street program foundation already established. He shared a few activities in which he has participated to date, including attendance at the annual meeting of the Main Street National Trust held in Philadelphia.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Approval of March 3, 2008 Joint Board of Directors Minutes**

**Motion:** Approve the March 3, 2008 Joint MSA and MSF meeting minutes made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Dr. Dougherty. Motion passed: 7-0.

**Approval of the March 19, 2008 Authority Meeting Minutes**

Formal action was taken at this meeting to hire the Executive Director.

**Motion:** Approve the March 19, 2000 Authority meeting minutes. Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passed: 3-0

**Treasurer's Reports**

Copies of the March Authority and Foundation Balance Sheets were included in member's packets, but the Treasurer was not in attendance. The Treasurer's Reports were tabled until the May, 2008 meeting.

A question was posed by Ms. Hutcheson regarding administrative costs being charged to the special events account and a realistic accounting of the funds generated and expended. Ms. Weidner will tabulate the information, including prior meeting discussion and accounting transactions and will email it to members.

### **West Reading Main Street Foundation Board Member Recruitment**

Dr. Dougherty reported that Mr. Scott Wolfe, Chief Executive Officer, The Reading Hospital and Medical Center suggested the name of Ms. Marge Bligh, Vice President at the hospital, be proposed for membership on the Foundation Board. A question was raised regarding a Board Member's required involvement with a Main Street business. It was reported that members need not be directly involved with such businesses.

**Motion:** Ms. Marge Bligh, staff member from The Reading Hospital and Medical Center be proposed to Borough Council for membership on the Foundation Board of West Reading Main Street. The motion was made by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Dr. Dougherty. Motion passed 6-0.

### **Economic Development Team Report (Authority)**

The Economic Development Team changed their meeting date to April 22, 2008.

### **Business Association Steering Team (Authority)**

Ms. Hutcheson provided a report which included the following:

- ◆ Ms. Wells is working on establishing a Customer Appreciation Day sponsored by the Main Street businesses.
- ◆ A Business Mixer will be held on April 16, 2008 at GNA Italian Ristorante from 5:00PM-7:00PM. It will provide businesses the opportunity to meet Mr. Hollinger.
- ◆ The Pig Roast will be held on June 29, 2008 from 4:00PM-8:00PM at Cacoosing Meadows Park.

### **Elm Street and Neighborhood Advisory Committee Activities (Authority)**

Mr. Rohrbach continues to focus on preparation of various grant proposals and planning for implementation of projects already in the pipeline. An Elm Street organized borough-wide clean up event on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:00AM to 2:00PM, will coincide with the Great PA Clean Up. At 12:30 PM on April 19<sup>th</sup>, a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held to celebrate completion of improvements on South 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Staging area for the April 19<sup>th</sup> cleanup event will be on a lot in the 100 block of 2<sup>nd</sup>. Free hot dogs, sodas, t-shirts and caps will be available for volunteers. Streets, vacant lots, the Bertolet fishing dock and Wyomissing Creek will be targeted for cleanup.

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) is exploring a large vacant lot on South 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue for a Community Garden project and pocket park where residents will have the opportunity to grow their own vegetables, herbs and flowers. Benefits will include greater economic self-sufficiency, health and nutritional value, resident cooperation, community spirit and an attractive green space in an urban area.

It is anticipated the Tool Lending Library will be up and running by May 1, 2008. The Tool Library will be located on the Borough Garage and will be accessed by creating a gate in the existing fence. This will require action by Borough Council.

The Draft Guidelines for the new Property Rehabilitation program were distributed and discussed. Elm Street plans to create a revolving loan fund using a \$200,000 grant from Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Residential Reinvestment Program and soliciting the 10% match (\$20,000) from banks.

A request has been submitted to DCED to use the \$73,298.38 remaining from the infrastructure improvements on South 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, under the existing Residential Reinvestment Contract No. C 000020767, to initiate an in-house Façade Improvement Grant Program. This is necessary, since effective August 2007 the Berks County Community Development Office discontinued the façade program they were operating in the target area. To date, \$3,000 has been contributed by Sovereign Bank toward the \$7,329 match required by DCED.

Mr. Rohrbach introduced three new policies to place Elm St in compliance with Sarbanes-Oxley issues. The policies included: (1) Whistleblower Policy, referred to as the Ethics Policy; (2) Document Retention Policy; (3) Conflict of Interest Policy. Copies were placed in members packets.

Mr. Becker had reviewed both the Ethics and the Document Retention policies and incorporated changes into the documents. Mr. Becker provided an overview of the policies as applicable to both Elm Street and Main Street.

Following discussion that included Mr. Becker's recommendations, the following action was taken.

The Ethics Policy was tabled pending further review of a number of items contained within the policy, including role of an Audit Committee and designation of a Compliance Officer.

**Motion:** Adopt the Conflict of Interest Policy as proposed. Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passed (3-0).

**Motion:** Adopt the Document Retention Policy. Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passed (3-0).

The Document Retention laws and procedures would be maintained in the Main Street office for future reference and implementation as applicable to issues such as disposal of records.

Mr. Rohrbach provided an overview of the Residential Reinvestment program funded through DCED and developed for implementation and use by Elm Street area residents. He distributed

copies of the guidelines to members of the Board. Upon completion of the application, it will be brought back to the Board for Resolution consideration.

Mr. Rohrbach provided an update on additional Elm Street proposal pending.

**Design and Rehabilitation Team Report (Foundation)**

**Streetscape Enhancement Projects:** Mr. Tindall reported that SEP Phase IV and Phase V will be sent out for bid next month.

**Promotion and Marketing Team Report (Foundation)**

**Farmers Market 2008 Grant Update:** Mr. Hollinger reported that within the past week, a representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture had contacted the Main Street office and informed him that \$7,000 in a matching funds grant was available. A grant proposal was redrafted that requested advertising and promotion support for the 2008 Farmers Market.

**Motion:** The Resolution (attached) for the Department of Agriculture grant amounting to \$7,000 to support the promotion of the 2008 Farmers Market be approved for submission. Motion made by Kevin Conrad and seconded by Debra Hucheson. Motion passed: 6-0

**Penn Corridor:** Ms. Hucheson reported that she and a number of Borough officials had participated in the Penn Corridor press event held on March 29, 2008. She further reported participation in the First Thursday activity conducted on April 3, 2008 which included a shuttle service that provided transportation between activities concurrently being held in Reading, West Reading and Wyomissing. She observed that Main Street business participation was good.

May 1, 2008 will be the next First Thursday and a number of additional activities will be conducted on Main Street including live music and the mobile Keystone Blood vehicle sponsored by Berkshire Bank.

**Cherry Blossom Festival:** Ms. Hucheson highlighted a number of activities that includes the following. A banner has been placed across Main Street to promote participation in Cherry Blossom Festival activities. April 19, 2008 has been designated as Kabuki Day. A large number of activities are being planned for that day, including the sale of cherry trees to be planted, participation of the Reading Community players in performances along the Avenue, artists from the Google Works, sushi rolling classes, appearance by a Chinese dragon, clothesline art from Sacred Heart School students, displays of pink lanterns in front of stores and a number of individual promotions by Main Street businesses.

**Art on the Avenue:** Will be held on Saturday, June 21 along Penn Avenue. A request will be made to Borough Council for approval to close the 500, 600 and 700 blocks on the Avenue.

Activity planning is still underway, but will include entertainment on a stage located on Penn Avenue, a beer garden and special promotions by the businesses.

**Reading Phillies Night:** West Reading's Reading Phillies Night is scheduled for August 4, 2008. It is anticipated that tickets will be mailed to residents. The August board of director's meeting will need to reschedule to due to conflict with this event.

### **Joint Board Work Session**

No additional work has been done. Mr. Keller and Mr. Hollinger will work together in planning the program that will include continuing assistance from Geoff Brace.

### **Old Business**

**Parking:** Kevin Conrad stated that it is necessary to get discussion and planning underway in regards to parking on Penn Avenue. Ken Pick will continue working with the subcommittee, borough officials and staff in order to acquire grant support.

A meeting will be scheduled for May 21, 2008, 6:15PM to continue designing the plan focused on easing the parking burden on Penn Avenue.

A question was posed pertaining to the date the new zoning regulations will be addressed. It was reported that the present plan includes increasing the designated area of the Central Business District which would include all of Penn Avenue. When the plan is finalized, it will be presented to Main Street for review, then forwarded to Borough Council for action.

Mr. Conrad reported that he was approached by a Penn Avenue business person who proposed that parking be limited to 2 hours on Saturdays in order to provide the opportunity for additional parking spaces to become available. There was considerable discussion, but it was the consensus of the Joint Board that parking availability on Saturday is adequate. Mr. Conrad indicated he would inform the Traffic Committee of the recommendation.

### **New Business**

Ms. Degler asked about the upcoming Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) meeting in Gettysburg was open to Board Member attendance. This has been a meeting primarily for Main Street and Elm Street staff. A brief description regarding the meeting format was shared.

Ms. Degler commented on the revenues generated by conducting Main Street events. She indicated that it was very important that efforts be directed on maximizing the revenue received from these events. An additional comment was made about attracting additional artists to the Arts on the Avenue event which could be accomplished by increasing the participation of juried artists and altering the vender fee options. One suggestion was to charge \$75 for Berks County artists and \$100 for those beyond the local area. Staff will look at entry fees from other art festivals in the region and will report back to the Board.

Ms. Degler gave an overview of the Authority's financials. More information will be reported at May's board of director's meeting.

**Adjourn**

**Motion:** to adjourn was made at 7:45PM by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Dr. Dougherty.  
Motion Passed: 8-0.

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**Next Meeting: Monday, May 5, 2008 at 6:00PM  
West Reading Borough Hall - 500 Chestnut Street**