

**RECORD OF
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/GRAYLING MAIN STREET
PROCEEDINGS REGULAR MEETING HELD ON THE
18th DAY OF APRIL 2018
1020 CITY BOULEVARD, GRAYLING, MICHIGAN**

I. Meeting called to order by Chairperson Rombach at 5:00 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Betty Bennett, Timothy Rombach, Thomas Steffen, Shawn Abraham, Doug Baum

Members Absent: Paul Crandall, Erich Podjaske, Tim Chilcote

Also, in Attendance: Deb Mead; Recording Secretary, Lisa Johnson; City Clerk/Treasurer, Main Street Manager; Rae Gosling, Erica Blair, and Bob Green from Mid-Michigan Honor Flight.

III. Public Comment – Bob Green introduced himself and talked about the Mid-Michigan Honor Flight. Gave a hand out that states what the program is about, and that there would be an event at Camp Grayling on September 25, 26 and 27th of 2018. He is contacting local areas for help with the event, and a possible point of contact.

***Paul Crandall arrived at 5:06**
***Erich Podjaske arrived at 5:19**

IV. Approval of Agenda

18-014

Moved by Crandall, seconded by Steffen to approve the Agenda as presented:
Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1, Vacancies: 1, motion carried.

V. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. DDA/GMS Meeting Minutes for March 15, 2018

18-015

Moved by Bennett, seconded by Crandall to approve Consent Agenda as presented:
Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1, Vacancies: 1, motion carried.

VI. Treasurer Report

A. Revenue/Expenditure Report for March 2018

Expenditures = \$3,295.31

Revenue = \$860.00 in donations

Main Street Manager Gosling stated that the full report was in the Meeting Packet.

VII. Main Street Manager Report

Main Street Manager Gosling stated that a report would be emailed to the Recording Secretary. Due to the length of the report, please see attached report.

VIII. City Manager Report

City Manager Baum reported the following projects are in the works within the City:

The Iron Belle project, which is the non-motorized trail 4 Mile Road to the City. The Trail Head project, which is next to the Skate Park behind City Hall; the City is waiting Legislature approval for funding in 2019.

Sanitary Force Main project will be started in the summer of 2018, this will be going out for bids this month.

Canoe Launch is in the works as well, if all goes well possible start at the end of the summer of 2018, if not it will be in the spring of 2019.

Northern Market: Feasibility Study is being done, the Pre-App for USDA Funding of the project was taken to City Council and approved.

Community Center: Looking decent

MDOT: Reviewing Safety Issues

Parcels for sale: Downtown parcels behind the Avalanche are for sale and will be put in the paper this week for sealed bids.

***Tim Chilcote arrived at 5:49**

IX. Unfinished Business - DDA

A. TIF

Chair Rombach stated that a phone conference was had with Cart Wortman to expand the DDA District to Kmart.

Clerk/Treasurer Johnson mentioned to get with City Assessor for guidance.

Member Podjaske brought up concern with getting City Council approval.

Members had discussion on TIF District.

X. New Business – DDA

A. Budget

Main Street Manager Gosling sent a proposed budget in the packet for the next Fiscal Year.

Member Baum had asked how they had come up with the Revenue amounts for the new Fiscal Year.

Main Street Manager Gosling said that she had adjusted them to balance the budget. Chair Rombach stated that if the Revenues are not raised for the events, the events will be cancelled.

Members had further discussion on balancing the budget.

Member Steffen recommended that the Main Street Manager work with the City Clerk/Treasurer to finalize the proposed budget.

***Betty Bennett was excused from the meeting at 6:28**

***Paul Crandall was excused from the meeting at 6:28**

***Erich Podjaske was excused from the meeting at 6:45**

18-016

Moved by Steffen, seconded by Baum to allow City Clerk/Treasurer Johnson and Mainstreet Manager Gosling to finalize the proposed budget and submit to City Council for approval.

Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 3, Vacancies: 1, motion carried.

B. Work Plans

Discussion was to Table this until next meeting, Main Street Manager Gosling stated that it needed to be turned into MMS by April 30th.

C. Office Space/Property Managers

Tabled

D. Conference Follow-Up

Tabled

E. Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Vitality; Adopt Blended Communities Discussion

Tabled

XI. Unfinished Business – Main Street

Tabled

XII. New Business – Main Street

A. Donation Letters Discussion

Tabled

XIII. MS Mainstreet Committee Reports

A. Paddle Battle

Meetings are Tuesday after Sub Committee.

XIV. Community Meetings Update

CCEDP – Main Street Manager Gosling gave an update on the following:

Kirtland: Will be expanding the Campus, would like to develop housing on Campus.

Arauco: Plant should be opening in early Fall of 2018.

Tandem Axle: New business opened in the Industrial Park

Grand Traverse Diesel: Received approval from the CCEDP.

Next CCEDP meeting is May 16, 2018

Blight:

Planning Commission and City Council are reviewing and will give recommended changes to the Blight Committee.

Camp Grayling:

Chair Rombach is the liaison for PRT with Camp Grayling. There is a need for communication between Camp Grayling and the community when large groups of soldiers' plan activities in the area.

XV. Public Comment

None

XVI. Member Comments

Chair Rombach stated that he had attended a training with Huron Pines, it was a Board Basics Training for Non-Profit Boards.

XVII. Correspondence

None

XVIII. Adjournment

18-017

Moved by Baum, seconded by Steffen to adjourn the meeting:

Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 3, Vacancies: 1, motion carried.

Chairperson Rombach adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.

Debra Mead
Recording Secretary

BY THE NUMBERS:

Donations collected – \$860.00

Volunteer Hours – 103

Façade improvement recorded – 0

Building Rehabilitation/improvements interior – 0

Building Sold – 0

Businesses closed – 0

Businesses Opened- 0

Training attended – 1, Main Street Now 2018, National Main Street Conference

Events hosted – 1, Community Engagement Session with PRT

Accreditation Criteria -

- 1) Broad-based community support – Nothing notable to report for March. Having recently completed Refresh with MMS has provided a substantial amount of material for newspaper articles and will certainly generate some buzz, but nothing has really materialized. This is an area for improvement, and I think we are seeing change here, but only minimally. Working with the Chamber for River Festival changes has been a great
- 2) Developed mission and vision statements – Mission and Vision statements are documented.
- 3) Comprehensive work plan – The final phase of the Refresh has been completed, pending work plan reviews and approval at the April meeting annual work plan will be compiled in May/June. Work plan review at the Refresh session was productive and I believe will result in comprehensive programming that serves our operational needs and community needs.
- 4) Historic Preservation ethic – Nothing notable in several months. Design committee has not been meeting regularly, primarily due to a dispersed committee for the winter. As spring approaches, we can better activate engagement with the Historical Society and Museum. Some design services are beginning to be completed, with an emphasis on maintaining historically relevant designs of facades.
- 5) Active Board and Committees – The Refresh activities in March saw a good turnout from the Board, which was very encouraging. Committees are not meeting regularly, but the Refresh approach to project specific meetings will likely aid in how this criteria is viewed.
- 6) Adequate operating budget – There is an ongoing discussion regarding TIF districts and special assessments for the district, as well as district expansion. Progress is being made. This criterion is an element of the current VISTAs VAD (VISTA Assignment Description). Additional suggestions for revenue generation have gained momentum, including co-operative purchasing and property management opportunities. Participation in the Drive 4 UR Community fundraising event with Ford event is scheduled for, Friday, May 18. Chairperson Rombach is exploring an alternative location for his professional office that GMSt could use as well, and the revenue opportunities associated with the creation of a co-working space. I am looking into grant opportunities to assist in developing this concept further and funding the execution of the project. See Treasurer's Report for further budget details.
- 7) Paid professional program manager – I am still employed as the program director.
- 8) Ongoing training – Director, VISTA, and Vice Chairperson Steffen attended the National Main Street Conference, Main Street Now 2018, in Kansas City, MO March 26-28.
- 9) Report key statistics – Reported monthly statistics, 4/10/18.
- 10) Member of National Trust Main Street Network – membership renewed 4/10/17

Narrative -

See attached conference notes.

March was a very busy month.

In March we had one business lease a vacancy and begin setting up, but they have not yet opened. 5 Sisters, Antiques, Vintage, and Crafted products, will be opening "soon" where Parrot's Perch used to be. The Brickery, unexpectedly, put up a going out of business sign. The building has two other tenants and we are hopefully the owner is not looking to sell and displace the tenants, or that one of the tenants will take ownership. North Country Corner, is exploring an expansion to include a wider selection of shoes and men's wear. This would, unfortunately, displace a service business, but they are working to find a home in downtown.

Refresh activities were well received and beneficial for the Board and the couple volunteers that were able to attend. This is also true for the Main Street Now Conference. Programming is certainly at a turning point and I believe will start to see more positive tangible results in the coming fiscal year. Budget planning for the coming year was completed with the executive committee. They were active in reviewing recommendations and have somehow developed a conservative and aggressive budget. Event revenue projections are conservative, but partnership/donor contribution are aggressive.

The March Refresh session saw the release of some programming that was not in-line with our goals, did not have sufficient support, and was not producing valuable/sustainable results. The biggest concern our program continues to have is sustainable funding options/planning. A Board member is exploring a partnership relationship between GMSt and their corporation for office space and a co-working space that could generate funding for the program. We are seeking funding for a feasibility study for a single site multi-use development in downtown that GMSt would own and manage as a revenue stream.

We do have one fundraiser coming up, to pay for an update to our website, that we aim to incorporate a mobile app into and possibly leverage as a revenue stream as well (through website/app advertising). Shawn and I are meeting April 20th, to flush out details and understand what the expectations are for the event. Erica made a connection with a website host, of sorts, prosperwalk. They offer affordable websites that sync with a mobile app, specifically designed for downtowns and main streets. The service is a higher cost than our current dues, but the ease of use and integrated tools are certainly worth it. Attached you will find information from the provider.

Meetings and training certainly dominated the month, in a positive fashion. Included you will find my Main Street Now overview. For further details on any of the sessions please email, I can provide some of the presentation materials (those that have been uploaded).

Recommendations for further integration and assistance with River Festival:

- 1) Chalk Welcome – Tim is already looking to incorporate this event into the Paddle Battle work plan and has chatted with Terry Dickinson regarding a large 3-D Welcome message.
- 2) Volunteer Coordination and Management - I think we can help by building out a consolidated schedule for ALL River Festival volunteer needs. This would include developing a dedicated staging/debriefing area for volunteers, where they check in, sign relevant waivers/releases, get shirts, get the safety briefing, get assignments, check out, have water and snacks... I think we could partner with a downtown business (I'm thinking Suchey right now) that does not have a retail aspect or is usually closed and use their space. I know it will take a LOT of logistics to transition, but ultimately will make EVERYTHING run so much smoother. Plus, it would free up volunteers from other places, having a dedicated volunteer coordinator instead of everyone on the same block having to have one on site.
- 3) Community Ambassadors - instead of an information booth, we have a couple bags/backpacks and tall signs we drop on people's shoulders and place them on corners. We can put the maps/booklets in the backpacks and if someone needs help the person can walk them over, without ever really "abandoning" their position. Also, less set-up and clean up time.

Other projects from National I would like to see action on:

- 1) Made on Main Street Grant – We have an open grant opportunity, with a fairly simple application that is due by April 30th. This is a partnership between NMSC and OneMain Financial. The award is \$25,000, one applicant will be selected from each of the 6 participating states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington). The awardees will be announced on May 15th. The parameters for projects are pretty wide, basically anything we can show will have an impact on our community, should be a new project (not building on existing projects), should show community interest and have volunteer opportunities, must be completed within 24 months of award date, and be amenable to a ridiculous amount of media coverage. They are looking for creative and innovative projects that can be done within the \$25k budget, they would like to use the marketing message of "look what \$25k can do for a community."

Suggestions for grant:

- Activate a co-working space that would also house GMSt offices
 - Chalets for seasonal pop-up shops in under-utilized space (I suggest along Norway to try to activate that street more)
 - Wayfinding signage
- 2) Veteran's Banners – partnership with Camp Grayling. Emporia, KS has a cool banner programs recognizing veterans. With such a strong military influence in our community I think implementing a project like that would be well received.

Main Street Now 2018 - National Main Street Conference

I attended the following sessions:

Rolling out the Welcome Mat: 5 Ways Main Street Can Make Everyone Feel at Home - and Why It Matters

Presented by, Melody Warnic, author of "This Is Where You Belong: Finding Home Wherever You Are"

Overview - We can do a better job of making people believe "We are glad you're here, we want you here." Presenter offered a several ways we, as a program and individuals, can be more welcoming to new comers, residents and businesses alike.

Identified 3 types of people: Mobile, Stuck, and Rooted

- Mobile people are those able and willing to move on.
- Stuck people feel obligated to stay, or conditionally forced to stay (think financial strain or physical impediment)
- Rooted people are motivated to stay in a place because that have PLACE ATTACHMENT and don't want to leave

Place Attachment is essentially why people LOVE where they live. It is defined as "the feeling of being deeply at home in a place." There are 5 core factors and benefits to place attachment:

- 1) Social Capital - you have friends, and you don't want to lose them
- 2) Self-Esteem - you feel successful, useful, or valued in the community
- 3) Well-being - you are at peace, or happy in that place and can access resources to maintain that
- 4) Physical Health - people who have place attachment are healthier, and access to health care is also a contributing factor
- 5) Longer life - people with place attachment live longer

The presenter offered the following 10 statements to gauge individual place attachment:

- 1) I know my way around.
- 2) I know a lot of people in my town.
- 3) I like to tell people about where I live.
- 4) I'm really interested in knowing what's going on around my town.
- 5) I don't want to move anytime soon.
- 6) The friendships I have with people in this community mean a lot to me.
- 7) If something exciting were happening in my community, I'd want to be involved.
- 8) My town isn't perfect, but there are a lot of things that make me love it.
- 9) I care about the future success of this town.
- 10) It feels like home.

An affirmative answer to 7 or more of these statements indicates good place attachment.

It can take up to 5 years for place attachment to peak in a new community... and the best way to quicken that is be make people feel welcome.

Presenter offered some pointers from Swedish author and "Hostmanship" promoter, Jan Gunnarsson: "In a world where products and services are increasingly alike, the art of making people feel welcome is a decisive factor for success."

Presenter also made 5 recommendations for improving the welcome culture in our community:

- 1) **Plan a welcome ritual.** Citing a couple studies, there are three factors that consistently impact the GPD of a community: Openness/welcoming, aesthetic, and social offerings. Having a regularly scheduled welcoming ritual can directly address 2 of the 3, being welcoming and social offerings. The event can provide attendees with more information about the community and start to build on the factors for place attachment. Example presented was Saint Paul Hello (stphello.com)
- 2) **Be an ambassador.** Change the perception by hyping the assets and promoting the positive. This can be done at the welcome ritual and is essentially a resource guide for residents whether on paper or in person. Example presented was Belong in Burlington (<http://www.burlingtonnc.gov/1889/Belong-In-Burlington>)
- 3) **Build Connections.** This one stuck out to me with the incoming Arauco employees. One of the recommendations is to connect with a large local employer and become part of their onboarding process, live of just on paper, provide local resources and ways for folks to get involved in their new community. Another recommendation was a community dinner, Dinner on Main Street, where you encourage folks to sit with people they may not know.
- 4) **Open the Circle.** This section referred directly to diversity and being open to a variety of owners, businesses, and customers. 28% of main street businesses are owned by immigrants, but only 15% of the general population are immigrants. Promote a message similar to "We want EVERYONE here. You are welcomed, wished for, and wanted. Not just tolerated."
- 5) **Invite people to DIY Main Street.** My type A personality panicked a little with this one. Essentially, let people put "their" stamp of downtown, even if it's not the "right" way; and embrace temporary, which I FULLY support. Get creative with downtown... put giant googley eyes on stuff, leave love notes for the places you enjoy and want to make sure other people pay attention to, plant messages in the dirt, paint notes that only show up when wet, and maybe don't take down signs that aren't supposed to be up if they are helpful.

This was by far the best start to a conference I have ever experienced. It really set the tone for the rest of the training. Much of her presentation resonated with me and how I felt as a newcomer to this community, and sometimes still feel. I think we can take a lot from her message and translate it into Grayling, to help it become a more welcoming community that does a better job at embracing the population bump we are about to experience. For more about love where you live experiments visit her website: <http://melodywarnick.com/category/love-where-you-live-experiment/>

Impacts of Main Street

Presented by Donovan Rypkema of PlaceEconomics

Overview - This session was heavy of statistical data shot at rapid-fire speed. I am awaiting the presentation's release for detailed numbers. Essentially, these were measurements of program impact from six studies over the last 5 years, including one in Michigan. All studies showed an improvement in not only community economic health, but the state's economic health as well.

A Practical Guide to Measuring Economic Impact of Arts and Placemaking

Presented by Josh Bloom of Community Land Use + Economic Group, and Surale Phillips of Decision Support Partners

Overview - This was a case study of a two installations, Musical Swings and CANVAS Outdoor Museum + CANVAS Local Showdown, to highlight lessons on data collection from each project. There was also a small integration of other ideas to implement locally. Content included lessons on harvesting data, always do a survey, as well as lessons on impact. Overarching message was the ephemeral quality of events and installations is a big part of the draw and capturing how those events impact an area is valuable to project the viability of return events and new projects. You have a small window to capture data, and it should not be wasted.

Lessons on Measuring:

- Don't skip the survey! Always ask for feedback, but you don't have to do it all the time. Be selective about when you assign this task.
- Have a person(s) ask the questions and record the answers. Don't make the visitor do it, they won't.
- You get more info when people are HAPPY. Do surveys when people are comfortable and having a good time. Ask the folks that are smiling, they are more likely to say yes.
- Avoid clipboards if possible. Have a mobile app or recording system, so people are not trying to avoid the surveyors.
- Always encourage complete participation for feedback forms. Except estimates and guesses, they are better than no response.
- Ask questions regarding the following:
 - Intentionality - did you come for this or just stumble upon it?
 - Spending - did you mean to spend money, or did you do it because you were slowing down for this thing? How much and on what (food, retailers, parking, overnight lodging, other)?
 - Location/draw area - how far did you travel to visit here?
 - Demographics
 - Social Interactions - did you talk to any strangers today?
 - Emotional response - three words to describe you experience in our place today?

Lessons on Impact:

- Installations/events can usually be paid for by the increase in local spending. Businesses can afford to support installations and events because they usually increase sales more than enough to off-set investment.
- Proximity matters - close to well-travelled, highly visible locations will make for the highest impact.
- Best locations are the marginally under-performing sites - adjacent to high traffic and populated areas, but not scary or dangerous locations.
- Programming helps. If you have a travelling installation visiting, host an event related to the installation to increase awareness.

Economic Revitalization of Rural Main Street through Placemaking and Walkable Design

Presented by:

Ian Thomas, America Walks

Michael Wagle, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Main Street Iowa

Rick Elumbaugh, City of Batesville Mayor

Bob Carius, Batesville Main Street Board member

Laura Torchio, Project for Public Spaces

Overview – This deep dive focused on a two core concepts: walkability and LQC (lighter, quicker, cheaper) or temporary installations. America Walks and Batesville Main Street in Arkansas partnered to evaluate the community and identify some LQC trial projects that would improve the walkability of the community, as a part of their economic development plan and strategy. Their partnership has proven to be immensely valuable. They have successfully completed several streetscape projects, activated new parks, taken their vacancy rate from 40% to ZERO, and they recently undertook a large-scale project to renovate an abandoned department store. We also did a case study involving the Better Block Foundation and Iowa EDA/MS Iowa. They used LQC tactics in one pilot community to show off ways to make the community more welcoming and comfortable to be in. Using input from previous community sessions, BBF and MS Iowa pulled MS directors from around the state for a Train the Trainer workshop to actualize the projects in Downtown Ottumwa. The experiment has led to the state bringing Better Block Foundation back to consult with 5 other communities.

Walkability – Mr. Thomas presented information regarding his program, America Walks, including statistics on how having a high walkability score and community that moves impacts the local economy. He stressed the importance of promoting movement, particularly walking, in communities and stressed the benefits of programming, policies, and design implementations for residents, aesthetic appeal, and the economy. We looked at 6 benefits of have a walkability framework:

- 1) Safety – walkable designs reduce fatal and serious injuries.
- 2) Mobility and Access – walkable communities provide increased mobility and access to services, education, employment, and social opportunities
- 3) Economic Vitality – walkable communities attract talented workforces, offer diverse retail markets and reduce public and private costs.
- 4) Quality of Life – walkable communities contribute to a higher quality of life through healthier lifestyles, expanded commuting options, and easier access to recreational and social opportunities.
- 5) Health and Environment – walkable communities improve health and well-being of residents by encouraging an active lifestyle
- 6) Equity – walkable communities support the diverse transportations needs of residents and visitors of all ages, abilities, incomes, and races.

LQC – We did a case study of Batesville, AR using LQC projects and framework to implement designs for a more walkable community after Mr. Thomas' group did an evaluation and made some recommendations for the community. They committed to created a Revitalization plan the focused

on being walkability and prioritized projects into three categories: low hanging fruit, mid-range projects, and long-range initiatives.

- Low hanging fruit included community engagement, conduct an evaluation of the proposed layout, establish a foundation to guide the work, remove some disliked traffic signals, and launch a loan program for building improvements. Some of these seem like a stretch to be low-hanging fruit, but the sentiment is felt. What they did was implement some temporary bump-outs and medians with cones and planters as part of the evaluation process. They were met with resistance at first, but eventually residents started to see the benefits and the community quickly paid for the first block to be modified. They then implemented the same temporary tactics on other blocks while they worked to arrange the financial resources needed to complete the rest of the streetscape.
- Mid-range projects – adopt various ordinances, re-envision residential portions of downtown, and expand community events. Of the mid-range projects the community was able to activate a new pocket park in an alley way, increase residential space with the development of 20 loft apartments, and increase activities through events including a farmer's market and renovating an old theater. They also started on a long-range project, with the introduction of a boating business on the Poke Bayou. Their vacancy rate is presently 0%!
- Long-range projects – Establish TIF, design transition points/gateways to downtown, and activate additional trails and parks in and around downtown area. At this point, they are working toward some of the long-range benchmarks with good momentum and recently began a massive, 3.2-million-dollar renovation of an old department store, transitioning it into the Main Street offices in a portion of the upper floor, and the local library will occupy the rest.

Iowa Main Street, Better Block Foundation and programming – This was my favorite part of these 2-hours. Iowa EDA/MS Iowa shared an incredible combination and both of these concepts discussed, walkability and LQC projects, by partnering with the Better Block Foundation, to highlight the possibilities of a vacant space in their downtown. During a MS quarterly training, they stopped talking, planning, and envisioning, and started doing. Better Block Foundation helped to turn the ideas the community had been offering into real, temporary, projects they could do in 1 day and get a feel for. This included a play-ground, temporary bike lanes, food trucks, a concert space, wheat-paste art installations on vacant building windows, outdoor seating/pocket parks, and pop-up shops. Like any amazing project, it got rained on and was gone in about a day, but that one day was enough for the community to renew its energy in what could be and start looking for ways to make some of the elements permanent. One of the successes of the event is that one of the pop-up shops now has a permanent location in their downtown. Better Block Foundation is headed by to Iowa to consult on 5 more communities. For more info on Better Block Foundation and a video about the Iowa project, visit their website: <http://betterblock.org/blog/2017/12/14/training-the-trainer-in-ottumwa-iowa/> Or Google Ottumwa Iowa Better Block. I was on Leigh from MMS, who happened to be in the session with me, to do this for MMS communities and may have volunteered Grayling to be first.

Opening Plenary

Featuring: Gil Penalosa, Founder and Chair of 8 80 Cities

Overview – Housekeeping announcements and “state of the program” address, welcome messages from locals, key note speaker, and Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) winners.

Nothing particularly exciting in the housekeeping, state of the program address, or welcome messages other than we continue to see positive results from the Main Street approach and spend money in Kansas City. My favorite fact that they present during this section of the program is the reinvestment ratio, in 2017 it was *\$26.43: \$1, for every dollar we (Main Street programs and communities) spend to support downtown development, \$26.43 of new investment is activated in the form of building rehab, new/re-construction, new businesses, and new jobs being created.

*Directly from the NMSC webpage, “The Reinvestment Ratio measures the amount of new investment that occurs, on average, for every dollar a participating community spends to support the operation of its Main Street program, based on median annual program costs reported to the National Main Street Center by its coordinating programs. This number is not cumulative and represents investment and organization budgets from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017.”

The key note speaker was a very excitable fellow with a great message – “if you create a great city for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, you will create a successful city for all people.” He spoke to the need to have safe, accessible, fun, and amenity filled communities with children and the elderly in mind. He asked a few questions to incite thought regarding our own communities, including, but certainly not limited to:

- 1) Can your 8-year-old child and/or your 80-year-old Grannie cross the street alone in your downtown? Would they make it all the way across “Main Street,” without being honked at?
- 2) Can your non-driving child or Grannie access parks, entertainment, or other healthy or social activities in your city?
- 3) Is there access to education and services for your child and Grannie?
- 4) Are you making it possible for the 8-year-olds and the 80-year-olds to engage with the community?

Essentially, how does your city serve folks who have no or limited income, folks who likely don't drive, and folks who have high needs (developmental care, supervision, medical services, etc.).

I have an 8-year-old child, and my Grannie literally turns 80 this December, so I looked at how each of them function in Grayling. We aren't doing too shabby, but I think we have some room for improvement, and we already know that. Biggest take-away from Mr. Penalosa was that whatever he is doing to achieve his insane level of enthusiasm should be shared with the world. His passion, excitement, and belief for what he does was emanating so profusely that even in the loge of the theater I could feel his warmth. For more on 8 80 Cities I recommend checking out their website: <https://www.880cities.org/>

Finally, from opening plenary, GAMSA winners. This year's winners are: Rock Springs, WY, Oregon City, Oregon, and Howell, Michigan! Michigan had two communities in the finalist pool of 10, Howell and Saline. I could not be happier for Howell to finally win, after two years of being finalist, they certainly deserve it. You can learn more about GAMSA winning community here: <https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetamerica/mainstreetawards/gamsa>

Standing Out on the Crowd: Leveraging Unique Community Assets to Create Awesome Events and Real Community Impact

Presented By: Casey Woods and Jess Buchholz, Emporia Main Street, Emporia, KS

This was my second favorite session, and also the reason Rombach is getting me new name tag that says I'm from Ohio, I snorted, sitting in the second row, more on that later.

Overview - This session was essentially a 75-minute case study on the 4 types of events and programming Emporia Main Street does. Geographically Based, Business Based, Culturally Based, and Historically Based. They encouraged attendees to evaluate the assets in their communities by highlighting how they looked for opportunities at home. They also offered some creative ways to leverage said assets and some guidance on delegation. I took an incredible amount from this session, including an easy inexpensive project that we are already implementing!

- Geographically Based programming - use the natural assets in/near your community to develop programming. In Emporia "they" host the Dirty Kanza, a bike race on unique terrain in the region, flint hills. The MS program does not host the event but has created programming around and in partnership with the race coordinators (similar to our ARCM, Chamber, River Fest relationship). They provide logistical support for several areas: infrastructure, health and safety, vendor planning, support systems (water, seating, covered areas), communication between agencies, and housing. This is where I snorted, they incorporate approximately 10k visitors/participants/vendors into their community of 20k. When they shared this, they made a joke about finding parking for all those people, I choked on my laugh, and when asked if I was okay I shared that we host the number of folks in our community if 1,800, so I could appreciate the struggle. They offered up several suggestions on how to stretch the event as far as possible to have a wide and meaningful impact. Many of the suggestions I have shared with the Chamber, as they are more the coordinating leader for River Fest, and frankly they are good at it, so we should let them keep it. But, there were a few places I saw we could engage and offer more support to them, as well as to our businesses, residents, and visitors.
 - Build Out
 - Consolidated sponsorship materials - this one will be tough but I think could be built to benefit everyone
 - Volunteer recruitment and groups (which we are sort of doing this year) - consolidated volunteer schedule for ALL River Fest needs that all participating organizations promote and help to fill
 - Media
 - Cross promotion of events and schedule
 - Collecting and sharing after event testimonials
 - Community tie in - this is where I think we can do the most
 - Chalk Welcome - invite artist and residents down to chalk welcome messages and messages of encouragement on the street and sidewalks for the paddlers
 - Paddler recognition as art on vacant windows (profiles with pictures)
 - Activate community ambassadors - get them special shirts or identifying signs and have them be MOBILE. We have discussed having an informational booth but having those folks be mobile and easily spotted might be better.

- How-To Workshops for businesses
 - Encourage businesses to have canoe themed store front displays
 - Host pop-ups or special product showcases in stores
 - Branding and marketing before, during, and after the race
- Measuring impacts by polling/surveying businesses afterwards
- Volunteer resources
 - Prep/debriefing area for volunteers
 - Supplies and incentives for volunteering (water, snacks, sunblock, hammocks for naps)
- Business Based programming – I think this section and approach can really serve us well. One of the areas we struggle in is engaging and activating local businesses. The following suggestions could help to curve that and build stronger relationships with not only our downtown businesses but those in the surrounding area as well.
 - How It's Made Tours – Ticketed event that takes participants on a guided tour of local businesses for a behind the scenes look at how things are done there. The model incorporates 2-4 businesses in close proximity to each other (walking tour) and take about 2 hours. Could be revenue generating (low ticket cost to encourage actually showing up once registered). Could partner with the Chamber.
 - Encourage merchant groups based on business type to coordinate their own events – we have actually discussed this, and it is starting to happen organically (AAV is hosting an arts specific event this spring)
 - Introduction events (NOT REATIL EVENTS) – Trick-Or-Treat Street is the best example, essentially host events that ALL businesses regardless of category can participate in to introduce the community to what exists in the downtown area (stocking the pond versus cash register rings).
 - Destination Promotion – stickers, banners, shirts, maps... all the stuff that reminds people of the place when they get home helps to encourage them to come back.
- Culturally Based programming – This section focuses on looking for the elements of our community that are most prominent in the people. Some of the suggestions offered could be easily incorporated into existing programming, or easily activated:
 - Mix and Match – this is like a business expo and welcoming ritual rolled into one, a more structured business after-hours that the public and new residents are strongly encouraged to attend.
 - "Great American Market" – basically a flea market downtown.
 - Pride Based Merchandise – this is a double duty work plan, falls under both business based and culturally based.
- Historically Based – Use the communities unique history to develop programming. This one has the BEST Main Street R&D (rip-off and duplicate) potential. Historical based programming is best suited for reaching specific goals (dedicated fundraising for specific projects) and community advocacy and pride building – it is the sugar on the vegetables (the fun stuff to make the necessary stuff easier to swallow).

- Veteran's Banners. Emporia is the "birthplace" of Veteran's Day, they used that unique historical fact to build a Veteran's Banners program in their downtown. We can, and should, do that same thing with our Camp Grayling history, and relationship. They hang banners, sponsored by local residents and businesses that display a veteran of their choosing (usually a family members or dedicated employee) from October 1 - November 11(ish), Veteran's Day. They have created a book with all the current and previous banner veterans that is for sale. We have 21 poles with banner brackets downtown, and I cannot imagine having any difficulty finding 21 veterans to fill them with. They also shared an event they call Freedom Fest, but due to time they were unable to expand more on it.
- Vacancy promotion based on historical use - Emporia uses two models to show off vacancies (and some properties in use) that are historically based: 1) Speakeasies, and 2) Historic, Architectural, and Haunted tours. I don't know that prohibition was a big enough influence in Grayling to justify a speakeasy on those terms, but it does sound like a fun way to show off move-in ready spaces, it is basically a pop-up bar with a costume party. We had brothels, and I do NOT recommend developing programming around that history. Dedicated historical walking tours could be a fun way to meet the historic preservation criteria.
- Other take-aways from this session -
 - Partnerships - when you sit around a table as "partners" dishing out directives but not actually doing any work.
 - Rule of 4 - for every hour someone gives to visit your community they need 4 hours of activities/entertainment
 - Use lanyards instead of Trolley passes for Christmas Walk
 - Be better at volunteer management and recognition
 - Make a 3-d photo filter (a frame that people can hold up around themselves) - I like the one Kate and Stacy made for Rediscover Downtown Grayling with Paddles
 - Develop and maintain strong partnerships and collaborative energy for the best results.

Scaling Up Creative Placemaking: From Small Interventions to Large Installations

Presented By: Renaissance Covington Director and Volunteers

Katie Meyer, Renaissance Covington

Jim Guthrie, Hub + Weber Architects

Cate Becker, BLDG Refuge

Kevin Wright, Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation

Overview - This is a story about how Parking Day and a parklet movement called Curb'd Parklet Project, activated Covington and led to permanent installations and new development. The biggest take-away from this session, which was not actually that interesting or useful for our particular community, was that we should consider participation in Parking Day, the 3rd Friday of September, where we turn parking spaces in to people spaces (parklets). Cars do not make vibrant communities, people do. The briefly mentioned The Neighborhood Playbook, a resource we might want to consider obtaining. It's a \$20 book that looks at how developers and community members see projects. The purpose, I think, is to help ease some of the frustration between those groups.

Director's Round Table

Facilitated by: Norma Ramirez de Miess

We have to take a blood oath when we walk in to keep our mouths shut about these discussions... sorry. But it was good and time well spent.