



DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD

June 15, 2010

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Community Room, Petoskey, Michigan, on Tuesday, June 15, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., and the following were

Present: Lawrence Rochon, Chairperson
James M. Reid, Jr., Vice Chairperson
David Carlson
David Marvin
Rodney Phillips
Jennifer Shorter
Michael Teska
H. Ted Pall, Jr., M.D., Mayor

Absent: Liz Gowans-Ahrens

Also in attendance was City Manager Dan Ralley and Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce President Carlin Smith.

Approve Consent Agenda Items

As the first item of routine business, upon motion made and seconded, draft minutes of the April 20, 2010, meeting of the Downtown Management Board were approved as submitted following a correction to the motion for a rail corridor acquisition contribution amount to instead be \$82,850. Then, upon motions made and seconded, acknowledgement of bills since April 20, 2010, that totaled \$48,570.41, and acceptance of the May and June, 2010, expense and income reports, were approved.

Hear Committee Reports;

Because the Downtown Director could not be in attendance at this meeting, a written report was provided of committee activities that included:

Downtown Marketing

- The Welcome Back Resorters piece was compiled and published and available for Memorial weekend.
- The shopping maps were printed and ready for Memorial weekend. 25,000 were printed and a trip was to distribute to local hotels. All stores and restaurants in the Downtown were delivered to as well. I know of only one error on the map this year. Bead Hollow is listed as Bead Harbor, which is the name that they had originally chosen and later decided to change. The bills for the advertising will go out soon.
- The Spring Open House Raffle was held. Ticket sales were disappointing and solicitation of donations was difficult. The committee will be considering the continuance of this fundraiser. Expenses almost equaled revenue this year.

- The winner of the Spring Treasure Downtown Contest was announced. It was Brenda Korthauer who is a very faithful downtown shopper.
- Ad buys are currently being made for the summer season.

Downtown Events

- Spring Open House was held and the Downtown Director also included a written summary of the event to the Board. Merchants were surveyed for their post event comments. The committee met to review the comments and the final report. Their recommendation is that Spring Open House continue to be a part of our schedule of events. They liked the focus on making it a preview of summer events. The major problem with Spring Open House seems to be inclement weather.
- A Ghost Walk was held after Spring Open House. 34 people attended and purchased \$5 tickets. Three volunteer docents provided the tour. The committee will be holding another Ghost Walk on the Saturday evening of Sidewalk Sales. The feeling is that many people are here that weekend from out of town who would be interested in taking it.
- Sidewalk Sales are Friday and Saturday, July 30 and 31.
- Gallery Walk will be Thursday, June 17. Nine galleries are participating. Bills for \$250 each have been sent. Six galleries are paid and three are not yet paid. David Marvin will represent the DMB, as well as the Perry, as emcee for the afterglow.
- A Downtown Events Summit was held on May 19. Around 30 merchants were present. Per the HyettPalma Blueprint recommendation, we examined each DMB event in depth. A report will be forthcoming from the committee.

Downtown Design

- Stafford's Gallery façade grant work has been completed and a check has been issued. Shorter's and McLean & Eakin's work is complete and ready for inspection.

Downtown Economic Enhancement

- Another new shop is open on Park Avenue. Jody Adgate opened *Big Girls in Tights*, a very creative antique and vintage clothing shop. She is subletting space from Tracy Lee Salon and Tracy Lee has repainted her façade and sign. I have heard many comments about all of the cute little shops along Park Avenue.
- North Country Cycle and Sports from Boyne City has purchased the Feast building and will be opening a bicycle shop there. The owners tell me that they were motivated by the availability of a building located right along the rail corridor and the fact that the trolley and non-motorized trail project seemed to be moving along.
- Country Clutter on Lake Street is closing up shop. The owners are retiring. They plan to divide their large space into two spaces and currently are working with two serious and desirable tenants.

Downtown Parking

- Permit parking in the Saville Lot is no longer available for the summer season.
- The City passed its ordinance revisions and we will be moving ahead with instituting a chronic offender parking violation.
- Parking Ambassadors Tom and Dennis attended the Customer Service seminar at Bay Harbor.

Downtown Beautification

- The marigolds have again been planted by St. Francis students. The project went very smoothly this year. Merchants have been reminded that they are responsible for watering the flowers near the fronts of their buildings.

Art in the Park

- The program and post card went to the printer this week. Booth spaces have been assigned to 130 artists. The event is to be held Saturday, July 17.

Cell-Phone Exchange

- We were due for an upgrade on one cell phone and we used it to purchase an iPhone. I have it connected to my Outlook and can now manage all of my email from everywhere. The number is 231.881.0604. It has been very helpful and easy to learn.

Board member Teska reported that he was concerned about recommendations for Sign Ordinance amendments that had been made by the Sign Committee to the Planning Commission, specifically, concerning going-out-of-business signs and sandwich-board sign recommendations, had differed from the recommendations of the Downtown Management Board; that he was concerned that professions of the Planning Commission members did not represent much retail experience; and that he would attend the June 17 Planning Commission meeting to voice his concerns. Mr. Teska reported that the Planning Commission's decision on these Ordinance amendments would be forwarded to the City Council for its approval; and that he would attend such meeting to again voice concerns about recommendations that had been made by the Downtown Management Board concerning these two items.

Chairperson Rochon reported that the Downtown Director had forwarded a letter to the Planning Commission voicing the Downtown Management Board's recommendations; that the letter would be considered as part of the review process; and that while he, too, was troubled that the Sign Committee recommendations had not included the Management Board's recommendations, he believed that the Downtown Management Board had made its view known through the proper channels.

Hear Chamber Staff Report

The Chamber President reported for the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce that the Petoskey Area Visitors Guide was now available and distributed samples of the Downtown Petoskey Treasure Map, 2010 Gallery Walk brochure, and Welcome Back Resorters Summer 2010 publication; that Concerts-in-the-Park, Farmers' Market, and Gallery Walk were all occurring this week, as well as the Petoskey Area Youth Soccer Tournament that brought several thousand visitors to the area and that the Chamber provided an information kiosk at the site to answer questions and provide concierge services for soccer families.

Hear City Staff Report

The City Manager reported that the City staff had been providing support and preparing for the many area events during the upcoming week; that the Department of Public Safety had provided cadets during the summer months to walk the downtown and waterfront area; that City staff had begun

preparations for updating the City's capital improvements plan that would include downtown area facilities and parks. The City Manager also commented favorably on recent façade improvements within the downtown. Mr. Teska reported that he had been very pleased with the Director of Public Safety's interaction with downtown merchants and citizens. The City Manager also reported concerning river valley work and street projects.

Mayor Pall reported about a recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Commission to the City Council for approval of a proposed lighthouse project at Sunset Park to be funded by the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association; that this 40-foot-tall project would replicate the pagoda-style lighthouse that originally was located on the Petoskey Pier; that he was concerned the proposed location of Sunset Park should be reconsidered because he believed there were parking and access concerns; and that he believed locating the lighthouse within Bayfront Park near the Waterfall Area would make for easier access to the landmark. Mayor Pall then asked Downtown Management Board members for their viewpoints.

Members discussed several locations, including the waterfall area, history museum, arboretum area, base of the U.S. Breakwall, and Magnus Park, and concluded that it should be located close to the water shore. Mayor Pall invited members to the City Council meeting to comment on this matter.

The Chairperson reported that he believed the June 5 Department of Public Safety open house had been phenomenal and that it had been a wonderful tool for communicating to children about the Department's operations. Two Board members reported to the City Manager that they commonly observed Department of Public Safety personnel not responding to greetings and asked that he suggest officers respond with a "hello" or a smile when greeted by someone in passing, also understanding the officer's need to assert an image of authority and respect.

Discuss Sidewalk Sales Participation Chairperson Rochon reported that Marty Scott, representing the Events Committee, wished to report concerning merchant participation in the annual Downtown Sidewalk Sales Days event.

Mr. Scott then reported that, beginning two years ago, participation in the Downtown Sidewalk Sales Days event was restricted to downtown merchants only, with the exception of food booths who were by invitation only; that this event provided downtown merchants a way to sell excess inventory and had become an important event to promote downtown businesses; that concerns had arose from downtown merchants concerning landlords who rented downtown building space to outside businesses for one day only so that these outside businesses could participate in the Downtown Sidewalk Sales Days; that an outside business had obtained a retail business license from the City for such a downtown location; that these outside businesses moved out immediately following the sidewalk sales; that the Events Committee wished to discourage downtown landlords from renting downtown building spaces for one day to outside businesses that did so only to participate in a downtown event; that, following an inquiry to the City Attorney, the City Attorney reported that he did not believe there was legal basis to deny an application for retail business license provided the business complied with ordinance provisions; and that the Events Committee now wished the

Downtown Management Board to ask the City to further review issuance of retail business licenses to such businesses whose only intent was to be in business at a downtown location for one day to participate in a downtown event. Mr. Scott then asked the Downtown Management Board for its advice and support in resolving this concern.

Chairperson Rochon reported that he believed the landlord's position, in one case, was not to let a business take advantage of a downtown event, but to entice the business to locate to the downtown area; and that he believed there also was an opinion that a downtown property owner who also paid taxes within the downtown area and supported the downtown should be able to rent his space for participation in a downtown event.

The City Manager reported that, while he was sympathetic to the Events Committee concern, retail business licenses were issued and enforced by the City fairly to all applicants, and that he believed it would be difficult to deny retail licenses based upon timing to the downtown, but suggested that a collective action of peer pressure could be effective in resolving this matter.

Mr. Scott reported that the display or sale of merchandise on public sidewalks was prohibited as part of City Code provisions, that this provision had been waived for downtown businesses during the Sidewalk Sales Days event; that this event had been restricted to downtown businesses only, with participation by outside vendors prohibited; and that, because he did not believe these temporary one-day businesses to be part of the downtown nor part of this event, they should not be able to display their wares on the public sidewalks.

Downtown Board members further discussed this matter that included difficulty of denying a retail business license that had met code provisions; recognized that competition often exists within the downtown from outside merchants giving the example of food vendors during downtown events that competed with downtown restaurants; that outside vendors could fill a need of occupying vacant storefront areas that would continue to attract shoppers in less occupied areas of the downtown; recognized that these one-day merchants had found a "loophole" to participate in the sidewalk sales event; that the Board agreed with Mr. Scott that these one-day businesses conflicted with the intent of the sidewalk sales event; and concluded that downtown landlords should be confronted to discourage such rentals and asked the City Manager to review this matter with the City Attorney for any ordinance provisions that might relieve such situations.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.