



**DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD**

November 4, 2014

**Special Meeting**

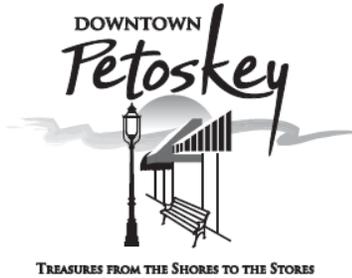
1. Call to Order – 7:00 P.M. - City Hall Community Room
2. Old Business:
  - (a) Consider and approve street closure recommendation by the Parking Committee as part of the 2015 “Back to the Bricks” promotional car tour
3. Adjournment

MISSION STATEMENT

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*A self-governing board dedicated to planning, promoting, and preserving the downtown business district - the hub of our community – for the greater good of the business, professional, social, cultural and service activities located within the defined downtown area.*

*Purposes of the Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors and Downtown Management Board are to: (1) Provide leadership for the implementation of improvements as outlined in the Downtown Master Plan as adopted by the City of Petoskey in 1987; (2) Promote public and private development and physical improvements in the downtown business district as initiated by individuals and organizations; (3) Serve as an advisory body to the City of Petoskey in matters pertaining to the downtown business district; and (4) coordinate appropriate downtown programs and services.*



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Downtown Management Board

**FROM:** Becky Goodman

**DATE:** October 30, 2014

**RE:** Back to the Bricks Promotional Car Tour Follow Up

At the regular October DMB meeting a recommendation from the Parking Committee in response to a request from the Petoskey Area Visitors Bureau (PAVB) to close the streets for the purpose of hosting the 2015 Back to the Bricks Promotional Car Tour was presented. Board members and audience members felt more information should be available before a decision was made on the issue. Staff was directed to request that the organizers allow more time for research and deliberation before a commitment was made and also directed to provide the Board with more detailed and specific information. Below is a summary of the information that I have collected since the October meeting.

When contacted about the need for more time to make a decision, the Back to the Bricks committee did agree to give Downtown Petoskey another ten days before they began investigating taking their event to other communities. Their committee chair confirmed that they hope and expect to have 250 cars, that they bring a trailer that sells promotional and souvenir materials and a DJ with a sound system with them, that they desire to be located all in one area at the center of the downtown, that local car clubs could be organized to join them, and that there is the possibility for Petoskey to be mentioned or filmed as one of their locations on downstate ABC local television affiliates. They provided me the following list of communities to contact for reference:

Port Huron  
Bay City  
Alpena  
Mackinaw City  
Traverse City  
Ludington  
Brooklyn

Mt. Pleasant  
Grayling  
Cadillac  
Grand Rapids  
Sturgis  
Rockford  
Hart

West Branch  
Oscoda  
Battle Creek  
Lansing  
Jackson Auburn, IN  
Elkhart, IN

Desiring the perspectives of downtown staff people, staff wrote to the downtown offices in all of the communities that are in Michigan and received a variety of responses. A synopsis of the responses follows:

- Unfortunately we did not have a great experience with Back to the Bricks. They did not allow us to have local car clubs display their vehicles, the event was not up to our typical standards, and they way over estimated the number of vehicles that would be coming through and into the Village. Additionally, the DDA spent a lot of money preparing for the event including hiring a band, promoting the event via newspaper ads and flyers, rallying tons of volunteers, etc.
- They bring some great cars and people with them. We used a parking lot one block off our main shopping street. We did not have any problem with the group and actually petitioned to have them come back and do an overnight portion of their trip here. Outside of the car club it did not bring "other" people to town. Local residents did come out to see the cars.
- I have not worked with them - but I did spend quite a bit of time discussing the possibility of a car show here with them. Our community has issues with road closures and also with giving up control of the brand of our events. We used to do a static car show here - on the streets of downtown - and it brought many 1,000's of people here, but we did it ourselves. Some businesses complained but in the end it was a great success. I know their event in Flint is very successful and brings lots of cars & visitors - but I have not actually attended, so I can't be of much help. People from here went and said it was really great. Sorry I can't help more.
- Our CVB was involved in this some years ago. I recall that we did not support closing the street either, so we had them displayed in a parking lot near where our farmers market takes place.
- This event did not result in any street closures as it was located in the private parking lot of a business on the highway. I was going out of town the day of the event but did stop by briefly - from what I could see it appeared to be a quality car show.
- Sorry but I can't give you any event info. We only close the road once a year for our own major festival, but yes we have a few people that don't like it closed because their customers can't get to them. There is always a problem with someone.
- While the Chamber assisted with this event, I believe that the CVB was involved directly. We did not close off a street for this event. It was held in the large parking lot of a local business owner who was the coordinator of this event. It was well attended for a Tuesday afternoon/evening show. Our town is not as "walkable" as I recall Petoskey being so your businesses may see a greater impact than ours did.
- When we have been part of the tour, it was on a Friday and one time it was on a Wednesday. Both were evening events and we closed the streets starting after the lunch rush downtown. We got great feedback both of those times and had 200 cars one year and 100 cars another year. It depends on if you are the first stop or the last stop on the tour. We've been both. Being first we had better numbers than being the last stop as the weather was bad and people just went home. It drew in a lot of spectators and was a good community event.
- Our downtown has some of the same concerns as yours regarding street closures so we didn't close off our streets for them. They used a parking lot located in downtown. They had approximately 100 cars but there was no way to track how many people the event attracted. I was there and would estimate that besides the attendees with the organization there were maybe an additional 30 people who came to see the cars. As far as bringing business to the downtown, again no hard facts but I gave about half of the attendees directions to different downtown restaurants.

- This past year, we did our own standalone event and closed the streets starting in the morning for 2 days. That didn't go over well and we didn't need as many of the streets as we had closed. We based our numbers on what another community had had the month before ours. Our board has decided not to do our own event but if we were ever asked to be part of the tour, we would do that.
- We welcomed the B2B Promo Tour to downtown last summer. We partnered with the CVB and they really handled everything. We helped to communicate to our merchants and tried to get them to stay open later and participate in a "passport" style card redemption.
- We had the event on a Monday night and this made for a busy Monday night which was welcome by our merchants. For the most part, we try not to close down our main road for events as we receive a lot of backlash for doing so. As you know, if you can get your businesses to engage during this event, the lack of parking spaces will not matter as there will be a built in crowd. I will add, because this group is promotional, they tend to go into the businesses and not just sit out at their cars and we did have the community come down in support. From a staffing standpoint, they bring everything (including vendors and a DJ). The cars are all over the map in style and years – I am not clear if there is a guideline for car entry.

Also, at the request of the Board, a survey was sent to contacts on the downtown business list asking for opinions regarding closing the streets to host this show. The survey was accompanied with the following cover email:

Hello Everyone – You may have heard that Downtown Petoskey has been approached by the Petoskey Area Visitors Bureau with the opportunity to hold a promotional tour cruise night for Back to the Bricks, an established car show organization out of the Flint area. This event would require streets to be closed. The date of the event would be Monday, June 15, 2015. At the October meeting of the DMB, the Parking Committee recommended approval of the street closure for this event. The Parking Committee understands that this is a sensitive issue. They know that there are merchants who like to close the streets and have events all the time and also that there are merchants who do not like the streets closed ever because they want the spaces open for parking places for their customers. There are also merchants who are not in favor of outside organizations using our streets as a venue to promote their own purposes, especially in ways that could dilute our brand or image. Given that the date of the event was a Monday in mid-June, that the organization of the event would not require a budget expenditure or a large amount of staff time, and that there have been members of the Downtown community who have expressed a strong desire to have a car show in Downtown, the Parking Committee believed that the opportunity was a good one.

When the matter was presented to the Board for approval at last Tuesday's meeting there were comments from members of the public and from some Board members regarding whether or not the event was suitable for Downtown. The vote was tabled and I was asked to inquire from the car show organizers if we could have more time to make a decision, to find out more information about the event from communities they have visited before, and to survey Downtown merchants to see if they would like to close the streets to host a car show. The car show organizers have agreed to wait until the middle of next week for us to make a decision on hosting them before they move on to seeking other communities as a venue. I have spent a fair amount of time contacting downtown directors in other communities who have hosted this group in the past. I have received various opinions from them, ranging from fairly positive experiences to mediocre experiences.

No community was able to give more than anecdotal information on the effect that the show had on business, but the consensus was that food related businesses felt the most impact. A few of the communities hosted them in a parking lot instead of on the streets, but the organizers tell me that they do not want that situation.

The car show organizers tell me that they expect 250 cars to be with them. The cars will be a wide variety, not one specific type, such as hot rods or classic. We have over 400 spaces on the streets and they request to be clustered together in one section, preferably the center of town. They would allow other car clubs to take up the remainder of the spaces, but priority would go to their members. This will create a logistics challenge because there will be some stores that want cars in front of them and some cars that do not want cars in front of them. The choice of where they are placed will not be up to us. The organizers bring a souvenir truck with them and a DJ. There is also the possibility of mentions for downtown or film footage of our streets on local downstate news stations as they are followed by the local ABC affiliate.

The link below is to a Survey Monkey that will ask your opinion regarding holding the car show in downtown. It is two simple questions. Please respond as soon as you are able as we are on a tight timeline to make this decision. The DMB will be holding a special meeting on Tuesday, November 4 to consider this one agenda item. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/79LV629> Please call me if you have questions or concerns.

As of the writing of this memo we have received 49 responses. 74% of the respondents said Yes, they are in favor of closing downtown streets for the purpose of hosting the Back to the Bricks promotional car cruise tour on Monday, June 15, 2015. 26% of the respondents are not in favor of holding the car show. 29 people included comments that follow:

- These events do not have to be held in the Downtown area. It takes up parking, it hinders true shoppers. The Bayfront would be a better location. People could attend the event...shop while they are here. Not everyone cares about these events. Entertainment should not be in the middle of Downtown. It hurts local merchants that have no relationship to the event.
- A great opportunity for a huge start for a large part of our downtown. The time of year is perfect. I strongly agree. Please let them bring hundreds or thousands of people downtown that otherwise wouldn't be here. Parking is not an issue until July and August anyway
- Properly advertised, this event would bring much needed traffic to the downtown shopping area.
- No
- Appears to be good time to try out a car show at no expense to downtown at quiet day and time of the year!
- I believe that an event of this type brings an unwelcome carnival atmosphere to our lovely town. The organizers will make their own demands on the city - dictating location, music, etc. with no restrictions on the type and style of cars that will be involved - all of which does not reflect well on our community. As mentioned in your letter, this event blocks access to regular business activity at the very outset of the season by virtually eliminating parking for customers. I believe it also will interfere with those persons who have chosen to live and work in the downtown area.... this hinders both merchant staff people and downtown residents from accessing their vehicles. Also of importance is the fact that for many merchants, this is a BUSY time of the year for deliveries to their stores...many will have no control over truck schedules.

Thus, this can delay important shipments from reaching them in a timely manner. Five hours is a long time to re-route and deny traffic. I believe that every event that carries our support needs to enhance and live up to the excellent image of our uniquely special small town. We have all worked very hard to achieve this goal...and this particular event does not reach that high standard. Diane Bell, Ciao Bella! Home

- The Visitors Bureau has done a great deal to advertise Petoskey and get visitors to come here. This is a no-brainer with respect to saying yes. A yes is a thank you to the Visitors Bureau for all the work they do to bring visitors here.
- Give the car show advocates their day.
- I think we should give it a try and go from there!
- Sounds like a fun event!
- I think more people in the downtown area is a good thing.
- Attracting more people to our downtown is positive, they will have to eat and some will shop, it's inevitable and the hotels will definitely benefit.
- If this does not happen for reasons that may be it is the Back to Bricks the community does not support but maybe one of our own with the venue being more specific of a "Classic Car Show" would we be able to reconsider one if designed more to specifically fit our branding/image and we have control over it?
- It sounds like too many cars to fit in the area comfortably
- Having lived in Petoskey for over 30 years, every time the streets are closed I avoid visiting downtown as congestion is overwhelming and parking is a nightmare. Pardon this sounding elitist, but having researched previous Back to the Bricks events, I feel that the clientele who visit Back to the Bricks is not the clientele that would really spend money in our brick and mortar stores. Again, forgive the stereotype, but they appear to be customers who would prefer a bargain over a shop local campaign. What sort of incentive would attendees be provided to inspire shopping downtown?
- I do not see a wide appeal for this.... Vintage and antique are a larger draw, i.e., BH Concourse d'Elegance and Mackinaw City
- Consider parking for people wishing to view these cars. Perhaps shuttle people downtown from waterfront parking or college parking.
- I see no benefit to any downtown business other than bars and eateries. Especially since there will be little parking available during the event. If we ever get a multi-level parking structure downtown, an event like this might make a little more sense.
- It's a good idea. Will bring a lot of people into town for the first time.
- Although beneficial for some communities, I believe that it would not benefit any stores downtown to have roads closed and prevent our customers from shopping with us. Many people avoid the downtown area in the summer due to increased traffic volumes and this would only add more fuel to their fire.
- Great idea.
- No car show please! Not consistent with our brand.
- About time, will not dilute our image. yes, yes, yes, yes
- Still early enough in the season and sounds like it may be good exposure to our town.
- I think it's important to have a variety of experiences to help widen the audience of visitors to our downtown. I think a Monday in mid-June is probably a safe approach for those who may have concerns.
- This is not of benefit to our Downtown and will take up parking spaces for potential shoppers. The car show attendees do not look like shoppers.

- If this event is to be held during the daytime, I, as a resident of Petoskey Street, must strongly oppose any further effort to route traffic through our street, thus effectively closing our business off from pedestrian traffic for an additional summer day. Auto traffic is extremely heavy for us during street closure periods, since all traffic around town goes through our street. This one more event would negatively affect business for us during the expected busy summer day, which are few to begin with.
- This is a Monday during a shoulder time of the year. Whether or not there is a large impact on cash registers is not a major issue. The impact on closing the streets on that day, at that time of year, shouldn't be a big deal.

The City has approved the use of their resources for the event and the PAVB is now asking the DMB's permission to have the streets closed for the display of the cars. The date of the event is Monday, June 15, 2015. The cars plan to arrive at 3:00 and stay until 8:00 P.M. Meters would need to be bagged at 11:00 A.M. and the barricades would likely go up by 2:00 P.M. The original request was to close the streets the same way that they are closed for Sidewalk Sales and Open House. It is now clear that a complete street closure may not be necessary. We have just over 400 parking spaces on the streets and we do not know for certain how many spaces the group will require. As they request to be located in the center of town, the most logical arrangement would be to put them on Howard Street and then branch them out on Lake, Mitchell, and possibly Bay as space is required. Staff is aware that this will be problematic.

Please call me if you have questions or concerns.