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

**MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008**

Call to Order

Shane J. Keller, MSA Chairman and MSF President, called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Foundation Board of Director 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; Lynda Kuhn (West Reading Resident), Member; Kevin Conrad (West Reading Borough Council), Member; Rebecca Simmons (Firefly on Penn), Member. A quorum was present.

Foundation Board of Directors Members Absent

Michael Morrill (West Reading Borough Council), Treasurer; Margaret Bligh (The Reading Hospital & Medical Center), Member.

Authority Board of Directors Present

Shane J. Keller (Mayor of West Reading), Chairman; John C. Woodward (Third and Spruce Café), Vice Chairman; Carol Wells (Sweet Surprises), Secretary; Kevin Conrad (West Reading Borough Council), Member. A quorum was present.

Authority Board of Directors Absent

Caitlin Degler (Berkshire Bank), Treasurer.

Staff Present

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

Guests Present

David & Lori Weidenhammer (NAC – Elm Street); Rita Ditsky (Seghetti's Italian Market); Nancey Seghetti (The Mosaic Studio); Kurt Bertges (Kensington Tobacconist).

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes & Treasurers Report

Mr. Keller suggested that due to time considerations, the meeting minute and Treasures report approvals be tabled and the meeting proceeds with presentation of the BID proposal.

Renewal Business Improvement District (Authority)

Mr. Becker reported that following the August meeting of the Authority, the bids that had been submitted were reviewed. Following the review, it was necessary to recommend that all of the bids be rejected based upon them not meeting the specification criteria.

He further reported that based upon review of the bid proposal and contract documents some clarification was necessary.

He shared with the Authority, a proposed copy of the revised specification document and highlighted the major points that had been clarified. Those included:

- Insuring that maintenance included cleaning under the railroad overpass
- Maintenance of the planting strip on the north and south sides of Penn Avenue.
- Including an annual maintenance cost bid as well as a cumulative five year bid.
- Requirement for contractor to have a West Reading business license.
- Include a list of other motorized equipment that will be used in the contract.
- Addition of qualifications and prior work experience.
- Contract work is to be completed for the entire Avenue for each of the three days.

- Clarifying make-up days due to inclement weather.
- Disposal of waste collected during the cleaning of Penn Avenue.
- Reference to the weight of the vehicle used in the collection of waste not to exceed 17,000lbs GVW.

Additional discussion followed pertaining to:

- Including contact telephone numbers under the references paragraph.
- The program making the determination regarding the type of uniform to be worn by workers.
- Designating the work time from 7:00AM-11:00AM.
- Review of two proposed timelines that may be followed throughout the review, voting and action necessary for the BID renewal. (Attached – Alternative I & Alternative II). It was felt there was a greater preference for Alternative I due to the fact that it provided greater time flexibility by extending into January 2009.

An additional work option was presented that would be a cooperative venture with Berks County Prison. Under this plan, prisoners that were identified in a “work release” status would be contracted to perform the maintenance work on Penn Avenue. This would occur in much the same manner as the prior contract between the prison and the Reading Downtown Improvement District. Under this plan, the most significant expense would be directed towards the necessary supervision as opposed to payment for labor. It was noted that the negative side of this approach, could possibly be having supervised prisoners working in the business district. Discussion continued both favorable and unfavorable regarding this proposal.

It was suggested that consideration proceed with two proposals: (a) Specifications be clarified where necessary and bids be requested from interested contractors prior to the next meeting of the Joint Board. (b) A cooperative plan with Berks County Prison is pursued as another Penn Avenue maintenance option. Additional information regarding expenses for this plan will be compiled. A recommendation regarding the most appropriate plan will be made after receipt of the bids.

Motion: Make changes in the contract document that has been discussed. Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Woodward. (Motion passed 4-0)

Motion: Authorize the advertisement of the finalized contract document. Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Conrad. (Motion passed 4-0)

August 4, 2008 Joint Board meeting minute approval. It was noted there was some question regarding the Treasurers Report referenced in that meeting. Mr. Conrad indicated that he was going to review the financial information, but since Mr. Morrill attended that meeting, Mr. Morrill said he would provide the information. It was suggested the meeting tape be reviewed to determine who would provide the financial information. Approval of the minutes would be tabled until that is clarified.

It was also reported that a correction is necessary in the minutes. Lynn Brown should be changed to Lynn Burns.

Approval of August 18, 2008 Minutes

Motion: The minutes of the August 18, 2008 Authority meeting be approved.

Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Woodward. (Motion pas 4-0)

Mr. Keller reported that both Treasurer's were absent from the meeting and therefore a report could not be provided.

A concern was raised about the lack of a current Foundation Financial Report. Mr. Conrad said he would work with other Board members to review the Foundation finances within the next few weeks.

Executive Directors Report

Mr. Hollinger reported that he changed the format of the report this month. Each of the information areas relates to the four key points which provides the basis for the Main Street program – Organization; Design & Rehabilitation; Promotion & Marketing; Economic Restructuring. Mr. Hollinger's report is attached to the minutes. He provided the following highlights:

- The projected budget for Operating Year 2009 is in its draft stages. He will be working with the Promotion & Marketing Committee in developing draft budgets in the special events programs scheduled throughout the year. Those draft budgets containing both revenues and expenditures will be incorporated into the final budget document.
- Façade Grant Improvements requests from 2005 – 2007 are being reviewed. If there are any application related problems, they are being resolved. The first group of reimbursements will be made upon receipt of the drawdown revenues.
- The need to look at and pursue the best advertising and marking approaches for Main Street. What is the most meaningful way to invest our dollars in

order to experience the greatest return benefits of increased business awareness and increased shoppers in the community

- A meeting was held with Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt to discuss convening the Economic Restructuring Committee and the identification of topics that would be beneficial to discuss.

Motion: Approve Mr. Hollinger's Executive Directors report. Motion was made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Ms. Kuhn. (Motion passed 9-0)

Design & Rehabilitation Team Report (Foundation)

Mr. Tindall reported that the Borough was awaiting authorization from Penn Dot to proceed with Phases IV & V of the Streetscape program.

Promotion & Marketing Team Report (Foundation)

- It was reported that the first installment amounting to \$3,500 had been received in support of the marketing and advertising efforts of the Farmers Market.
- It was reported that Juli Cleaver from Bella Jules, was overseeing the planning and implementation of the events, entertainment, food and beverage activities for the September 20, 2008 Fall Festival. A favorable number of entertainers and food vendors have committed to participating and once again a Beer Garden will be set up in the 500 block parking lot on Penn Avenue. All Star Distributing has been very supportive of the event and has provided signage materials for the tent. A shuttle bus will be operating between the Riverfest activities in the City and the Fall Festival. The evening will conclude with fireworks that will be set off over the Penn Street bridge.
- The rental material pick-up arrangements were confirmed.
- It was reported that the planning for Taste of West Reading is currently far behind schedule in light of the fact the event is scheduled for November 1. There was considerable discussion about what had been accomplished to date this year as compared to where the event planning was in 2007 at this time. It was felt that this has been a premier event in the past that has not only highlighted West Reading businesses and has actively involved the restaurants in showcasing their fine foods, but it has raised a considerable amount of money for the Foundation. If such a successful event can not be developed between now and November 1, options should be considered. Following continued discussion, it was suggested by Kurt Bertges who has

agreed to chair the Taste of West Reading planning group, that the event should be postponed until February or March, which will provide additional time with the planning and implementation details.

Motion: Move A Taste of West Reading to a yet to be determined date, preferable in February or March 2009 depending upon the availability of the VF facility. Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Dr. Dougherty. (Passed 9-0)

- It was noted that when the date is confirmed, the Board will ratify the date at a future meeting.
- Penn Corridor and First Thursday- Ms. Hutcheson reported that there has been considerable activity regarding the Penn Corridor and an announcement during November will be made pertaining to future direction setting. The past First Thursday was very successful with a lot of activity taking place on Penn Avenue. One more month remains with a live band performing. She further reported that she would like to present Daniel Bower with a token of appreciation for the hours he spent over the past few months organizing and overseeing the live band performances on First Thursday.
- Art on the Avenue- Nancey Seghetti provided a report on the planning activity that she and Rita Ditsky have begun organizing the 2009 Art on the Avenue program. She indicated that they would like to proceed with contacting possible sponsors who may contribute to the event and some of the new specially planned events. Discussion followed pertaining to approaching organizations and individuals for Main Street related contributions in a well planned manner.
- Ms. Seghetti discussed a number of the contacts she has already made both within and beyond the Berks County community to solicit their involvement, support and participation in Arts on the Avenue. The list included a number of theater groups, entertainers, community groups, and marketing representatives.
- The Board thanked both Nancy and Rita for the advanced planning and work they were putting into the event and asked that they continue their efforts by working through the Promotion and Marketing Team.

Elm Street Program and NAC Activities (Authority)

Mr. Rohrbach provided the Board with an update of the Elm Street activity, including a report on the recently conducted third year review by Pennsylvania Downtown Center. Mr. Rohrbach reported that as of August 31, 2008, Elm Street had \$45,919 in operating funds. \$4,127 was spent in August. Based on an average monthly expense of \$5,400, it

is estimated that the program was \$1,273 under budget for the month of August and there are adequate operating funds to carry program operations until the end of February 2009.

Mr. Rohrbach is working on applications for the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) funding for 2009 and 2010. This will include a request for \$100,000 (\$50,000/year) in operating funds and \$500,000 (\$250,000)/year) in capital funds. In addition there will be a \$25,000 planning grant.

In the past month, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) has approved twenty-three (23) applications for the Façade Improvement Grant program and committed \$67,345 of the \$73,298 left over from the South 2nd Avenue infrastructure project.

Thanks to Elm Street's "Cigarettes Are Litter Too Campaign" the 8/23 Block Party, the program has received a lot of positive coverage from WRFY TV 69 News, the Westside Weekly newspaper, WEEU and the Reading Eagle during the past few weeks.

Mr. Rorhbach requested consideration by the Authority on the granting of his salary increase in light of the fact he is currently three months beyond his anniversary date.

Executive Session (Authority)

Following his report, the Authority entered into Executive session.

The Authority returned and the Board reconvened.

Motion: Increase the salary of Dean L. Rohrbach to \$31,500 / year effective his June anniversary date. Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Conrad. (Motion passed 4-0)

Adjourn

Motion: There being no additional business to conduct, the meeting is adjourned. Motion made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Dr. Dougherty. (Motion passed 9-0)
Time 8:18PM.