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

**MINUTES
NOVEMBER 17, 2008**

Call to Order

Shane J. Keller, MSA Chairman and MSF President, called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

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; Michael Morrill (West Reading Borough Council), Treasurer; George I. Tindall (West Reading Borough Manager), Member; Kevin Conrad (West Reading Borough Council), Member. A quorum was present.

Foundation Board of Directors Members Absent

Lynda Kuhn (West Reading Resident), Member; Rebecca Simmons (Firefly on Penn), Member; Margaret Bligh (The Reading Hospital and 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; Caitlin Degler (Berkshire Bank), Treasurer; Kevin Conrad (West Reading Borough Council), Member. A quorum was present.

Authority Board of Directors Absent

All members present.

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

Don Haines (Elm Street Volunteer); Jay Kupiszewski (Elm Street Resident); Herbert Oswald (West Reading Resident); Susan Thompson (Elm Street Neighborhood Advisory Committee); Lori and David Weidenhammer (Elm Street Neighborhood Advisory Committee).

Public Comments

Ms. Weidenhammer would like to see the Neighborhood Advisory Committee have the power to appoint its own members. She also stated that in response to the Pennsylvania Downtown Center assessment letter, she would like them to be more specific in terms of their comments pertaining to program reorganization. Ms. Thompson reiterated Ms. Weidenhammer's statement.

In response to the statements, it was noted that due to the involvement with municipal government in the local program, Borough Council has the authority to make placements based upon recommendations.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Approve the October 2008 minutes. Ms. Hutcheson made the motion, seconded by Ms. Wells. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Degler presented the Board with the Authority's October 2008 Income and Expenses for both Association and the General Fund. Ms. Degler also provided an Income and Expense report for Elm Street. Based on projections, she indicated that with the current operating reserves, Elm Street has adequate revenue for operations until April 2009.

Mr. Morrill noted that due to his out of town work commitments, it has been difficult for him to attend a substantial number of meetings throughout the past year. His work setting has changed and he will now be able to be more active with his responsibilities as Treasurer. The Foundation members felt it appropriate that he continue in that capacity.

Mr. Morrill will work with Mr. Hollinger to complete the Foundation's financial reports.

Proposed 2009 Budget (Authority & Foundation)

Mr. Hollinger distributed copies of the Main Street and Elm Street combined budget proposals as well as the Main Street Organizational budget. He reported that for the last few years, the Borough of West Reading has supported a major portion of the Main Street organizational operations in the Borough budget, which he felt was not only greatly appreciated, but just as important, reflected the Borough's commitment to the success of Main Street. He noted that the request for 2009 parallels the support received in prior years except for two items. An increase of approximately \$35,000 to pay for the prior Executive Directors (Sam Loth) outstanding balance based on his employment agreement with the Borough; and secondly, partial payments of a prior credit card balance. The expenses appearing on the credit card balance were considered acceptable although the card is no longer active.

He then reviewed the major budget line items proposed, that included the following: (1) the revenue determined to be due Mr. Loth (former Main Street Executive Director), and additional Foundation support needed to pay off the prior CitiCard balance. (2) projected special event revenues and expenses were included in the overall budget. (3) the Elm Street Operational budget, planning line item, has changed from \$7,500 to \$25,000 based on the proposed Elm Street operational projects for 2009. (4) Elm Street's overall expenditure line for 2009 should read \$355,662. (5) minimal expenses required to transition to a direct deposit payroll system for both Main Street and Elm Street.

Discussion: (1) It was noted by Mr. Keller during the recent budget review by Borough Council, that the revenue owed Mr. Loth was a questionable item and it was removed from the budget request. (2) The \$16,000 expenditure for Operations should be placed in the Foundation side of the budget revenue as opposed to being located in the Authority side. (3) Ms. Hutcheson questioned the operational support line item being taken from special event related proceeds. Mr. Hollinger reported that one of the major purposes of Main Street is to support the economic growth of the business community and that a portion of the special event dollars should and could be applied to Main Street operations. He further noted that this would not curtail fund raising activity supported by the business community. (4) Mr. Rohrbach detailed expenditures for the Neighborhood Advisory Committee. (5) Ms. Hutcheson questioned the \$2,500 bank fee line item. Mr. Hollinger noted that was the amount he referred to previously as the outstanding credit card balance. (6) Mr. Keller questioned the Elm Street snack budget.

Motion: Accept the budget with revisions as discussed. Mr. Conrad made the motion, Ms. Degler seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Renewal of Business Improvement District (Authority)

Mr. Becker discussed his findings upon review of the BID documents which were received by the Board at the prior months meeting. The lowest bidder among the three submissions was Travis Lawn Care. Mr. Becker reported that all of the bid submissions had relatively minor information missing, but nothing that would jeopardize the awarding of the bid. He indicated that the successful bidder for the maintenance contract should not be recommended at this meeting, but that the bid amount was necessary for consideration by the Board in order for them to make a recommendation to Borough Council for consideration of a possible mileage increase. The mileage increase would apply to payment of both the maintenance contract and bond debt incurred as part of the Main Street street and pavement improvement program. It is anticipated that the maintenance contract bid would be recommended to Council for action at their January or February 2009 meeting pending approval of the BID Renewal. Mr. Becker also reported that based on the required timeline for Bid Renewal approval, it was necessary to alter the event calendar. By so doing, the maintenance contract start date now appears to be the beginning of April, instead of February as initially anticipated. This new date would have to be reviewed with and agreed to by Mr. Herbert should he be the successful bidder. Mr. Becker reported that he had contacted the references that Mr. Herbert had included with his bid and those with whom he had spoken gave Mr. Herbert very good work recommendations.

The annual maintenance contract bid amounts from all bidders was shared with the Board. Travis Lawn Care was the lowest – five years, \$98,600. The next closest bid was Picture Perfect at \$117,500 for five years. A question was raised regarding the other maintenance contract option discussed previously, that would involve a contract with Berks County Prison. There was nothing new to report on this option.

It was noted that currently, the mileage rate is at 1.6 mils. The board discussed the mileage increase. A number of related expenses were also discussed including contractual services for compiling the BID renewal vote count and associated legal fees over the term of the BID agreement. It was recommended that the mileage increase recommendation provide for a tearing over a five year time period.

Motion: Recommend a mileage increase over the next five years as follows: 2.0 mils – 2009; 2.0 mils 2010; 2.25 mils – 2011; 2.5 mils – 2012; 2.75 mils – 2013. The motion was made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passed 5-0. Mr. Keller will prepare a letter to council.

Executive Directors Report

Mr. Hollinger distributed his monthly report. He provided the following highlights. Penn Avenue mention in the Allentown Morning Call, achiever status, façade improvement grant status and established sponsorship solicitation levels. A question arose regarding the programs currently being designated as attaining achiever status, but due to not having an Executive Director on staff, the designation had been placed on "hold". Mr. Hollinger said he would continue his discussions with PDC and clarify that issue.

Mr. Hollinger was advised by staff at the Department of Community and Economic Development, that the entire \$30,000 for façade grant improvements be drawdown, recognizing that the entire amount has not been committed. Mr. Hollinger will proceed with that drawdown request.

Mr. Hollinger reviewed the program sponsorship guidelines which were developed in order to create a uniform approach when requesting both cash and in-kind sponsorships of \$2,500 and above annually. The guide has been shared with subcommittees and Ms. Hutcheson, Chairperson of the Promotion and Marketing Committee, who will oversee its implementation in cooperation with staff.

Elm Street Program and NAC Activities (Authority)

Mr. Rohrbach reported that the Pennsylvania Downtown Center organizational response letter was complete and a number of actions were required by the Authority, prior to forwarding the letter. Those actions were noted on the agenda. The letter must be forwarded to Pennsylvania Downtown Center, before requesting the remaining Elm Street grant revenues from the Department of Community and Economic Development. This revenue amounts to an excess of \$500,000 over the next three years.

Mr. Rohrbach asked if there were any suggested changes to the assessment letter response which had been previously submitted to members of the Authority.

The revised Governance Manual had been distributed in the Board package.

Motion: Approve the revised Elm Street Governance Manual. Mr. Woodward made motion and Ms. Wells seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

The public meeting date was set for Monday, December 1, 2008 at 6:00PM, and would precede the regularly scheduled Joint Board of Director's Meeting. Mr. Rohrbach will check to see if the meeting can be held at Bethany Lutheran Church. Mr. Keller will

check the Fire Station schedule as a backup plan. Mr. Rohrbach will handle advertising the meeting.

Motion: Approve the Elm Street resolution with the changes as discussed. Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Conrad. Motion passed 5-0.

There was a discussion regarding a number of the recommendations pertaining to: (1) placement of residents on the NAC and (2) the façade grant approval.

Motion: Accept the PDC assessment response letter. Motion made by Ms. Degler and seconded by Ms. Wells. There was a comment under the organization committee reference to an individual in which the Authority has not taken any action. It was felt that the paragraph should be slightly altered to remove the reference. Reference was also made to a grammatical error in one of the paragraphs.

Amendment to Motion: Accept the PDC response letter and when it is reviewed and approved by the Authority Chairman, it may be forwarded to PDC. Motion amended by Ms. Degler and seconded by Ms. Wells. (Motion passed 5-0)

Mr. Rohrbach introduced two nominees as Neighborhood Advisory Committee members.

Motion: Accept Mr. Kupiszewski and Ms. Lorah's membership to the Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Conrad. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion: Mr. David Weidenhammer serves as Chairperson of the Neighborhood Advisory Council for 2009. Mr. Conrad made the motion and Ms. Wells seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Rohrbach briefly highlighted his report to the Board.

Promotion & Marketing Team Report (Foundation)

Mr. Hollinger reported on activity of the Art on the Avenue subcommittee. Included: (1) a refocus on "art" as a major theme for the event that will be held on June 20, 2009; (2) shared the names of members of the planning committee; (3) major focus to find and include juror artists in the show, including the use of the Zapplication process. The Zapplication is a nationwide service that advertises all of the major art related shows across the country with the purpose of attracting juror artists to participate. All applications for West Reading 2009 event will utilize this process. (4) Friends of Frogs

project; (5) process underway to receive sponsorship support: (6) coordination with Jazz Fest to promote Art on the Avenue during the Jazz Fest event and also to involve the West Reading businesses in hosting Jazz Fest performers.

Holiday glow update: This year, advertising for Holiday Glow will, hopefully, include billboards. Taste of West Reading activity was mentioned.

Old and New Business

Ms. Well asked if any information regarding parking meters was obtained. Information will be forwarded upon receipt.

Foundation

Motion: Pay the Farmers Market Manager what is duly owed her for 2008. Mr. Conrad made a motion, Dr. Dougherty seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Mr. Keller abstained from voting.

Dr. Dougherty commented on the fine job of market management during this past year.

Mr. Keller discussed the Armed Forces Day parade with the Board. A route change is being reviewed which would have the parade start in Wyomissing and end in the City of Reading. This would be a huge event that will strongly support the Penn Corridor efforts.

A question was raised regarding recent zoning related issues directed to a number of businesses on Penn Ave. It was suggested that a meeting for business persons, Main Street and Borough Codes staff could be scheduled in the very near future to discuss some of the concerns. It was further suggested that the Mayors Advisory Committee is a Committee to utilize when discussing code related issues. Information should be forwarded through Mr. Hollinger. It may be beneficial to also include the Business Association in these discussions.

Schedule a January meeting.

Mr. Dougherty would like to see Main Street do more to announce and promote new businesses locating on Penn Avenue.

Adjourn

Motion: Meeting Adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Ms. Degler. Motion passed 9-0.