



Main Street Board

A regular meeting of the Main Street Board was held on Monday, February 6, 2017, beginning at 4:00 p.m. at Brenham City Hall, 200 W. Vulcan Street, Brenham, Texas.

Members present:

Margie Young, Susan Cantey, Traci Pyle, John Hermann, Connie Wilder and Jim Moser.

Members absent:

Tiffany Morisak, Walter Jackson, Jon Hill and Mark Schneider

City staff present:

Main Street Manager Jennifer Eckermann, Director of Community Services Wende Ragonis, and Community Services Assistant Alexandra Dill.

Others present:

Chamber/CVB Representatives Page Michel and Jenny Mills.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Margie Young called the meeting to order.

2. Citizen/Visitor Comments

3. Approval of Minutes from Monday, January 9, 2017 Meeting.

A motion was made by John Hermann and seconded by Susan Cantey to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2017 meeting.

Margie Young called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Chair Margie Young	Yes
Susan Cantey	Yes
Traci Pyle	Yes
John Hermann	Yes
Walter Jackson	Absent
Jon Hill	Absent
Mark Schneider	Absent
Connie Wilder	Yes
Tiffany Morisak	Absent
Jim Moser	Yes

4. Discuss and Consider Approval of Recommendation to City Council In Support of Naming Downtown Brenham a Pedestrian Retail Zone.

Jennifer Eckermann opened discussion on this item. She detailed that Texas Department of Transportation states the City of Brenham can take control of Business 290, however the City would then be responsible for maintaining the entirety of Business 290 which is not financially feasible. Jim Moser stated he contacted Texas Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Texas House Member Leighton Schubert regarding the renaming of Downtown Brenham as a “Pedestrian Retail Zone” thus allowing the City of Brenham to control three aspects of the Downtown area: traffic, signage and streetscape. Moser stated it may be too late in the current Senate session to get this item finalized, but it is in motion.

5. Update on Eve of Texas Independence Event Scheduled for Friday, March 3.

Jennifer Eckermann stated that the Eve of Texas Independence event will be made possible through partnering with others in the community (actors, musicians, etc.). This event was first discussed as Eckermann learned from Seneca McAdams that a group of Tennessee historians were to be in the area for Washington on the Brazos’ Texas Independence Day Celebration events. Community Services Assistant Alexandra Dill gave further details including that the event would be elegant but authentic to the 1830’s, Connie Wilder of the Funky Art Café would be catering and that the event hopes to become an annual event if successful. Jim Moser clarified the link between the Tennessee historians and Sam Houston stating that the goal of this event is to make Brenham the most memorable stop on their tour.

6. Discuss and Consider Approval of Staff Recommendation to Host Summer Swirl in Lieu of Texas Brew Step.

Jennifer Eckermann stated Brad Stufflebeam of Home Sweet Farm had expressed interest in taking over the Brew Step to hold in conjunction with the Texas Arts and Music Festival. Eckermann explained that the Brew Step had not grown in success in the past few years and that it may be wise to pass the Brew Step on to Stufflebeam and focus on perhaps hosting another Wine Swirl event in early Summer. Connie Wilder expressed a possible

parking issue if a new Swirl was held in conjunction with other Summer events. Eckermann agreed, stating this event would need to avoid the weekends of Hot Nights Cool Tunes and that early June would likely be best for nice weather.

A motion was made by Traci Pyle and seconded by John Hermann to approve plans to host a Summer Wine Swirl in lieu of the Brew Step.

Margie Young called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Chair Margie Young	Yes
Susan Cantey	Yes
Traci Pyle	Yes
John Hermann	Yes
Walter Jackson	Absent
Jon Hill	Absent
Mark Schneider	Absent
Connie Wilder	Yes
Tiffany Morisak	Absent
Jim Moser	Yes

7. Report on Upcoming Town Hall Meeting with Southside Property Owners on Zoning Change Recommendation.

Jennifer Eckermann stated the Town Hall meeting was scheduled for February 21, 2017 at 5:15 pm. Wende Ragonis stated most property owners within the Southside district would likely welcome the change and that many of the lots need variances in order to develop them.

8. Design Committee Report to Include Scheduling of a Retail Merchandising Workshop; Work on Lighting of Alamo Alley and Belle's Alley; Moving Forward with Design of Convertible Street on Douglas; Possible New Sign Ordinance; and Discussion on Lighting Downtown Buildings Throughout the Year.

Jennifer Eckermann stated that the Tax Credit Workshop was held on Thursday, February 2, 2017 and was very helpful to many property owners. A retail merchant workshop will be planned for later in the Spring. Margie Young agreed that Belle's Alley is quite dark and that Alamo Alley would look great with string Christmas-style lights. Young also noted that Tommy Upchurch is working on a design for the convertible street on Douglas Street. Jennifer Eckermann discussed the possibility of lighting the Downtown buildings year-round. Eckermann stated she had been in contact with the City of Denton, Texas which bills property owners approximately \$20 per month to light their buildings year-round. Connie Wilder agreed that lighting the buildings also provides some security for both property owners and Downtown patrons.

9. Economic Restructuring Committee Report to Include Report on Meeting with HG Fire Systems Concerning Fire Suppression Options for Downtown; Downtown Incentive Package and Funding Options; Update on Historic Tax Credit Workshop Held February 2; and, Review of Downtown Vacancy and Use Map.

Jim Moser stated he met with HG Fire Systems and that two blocks from the Downtown area to get a sampling of the installation cost. Alamo Street from Hermann Furniture to The Pomegranate and Main Street from Tre's Chic to Washington County Abstract were selected for the sampling. Moser stated that from the meeting, he learned that the city would complete any in-ground work and pay the cost of the risers. HG Fire Systems would install the sprinkler systems at a cost of approximately \$1.90 to \$3.50 per square foot. Moser stated the price varies based on the space and its use. HG Fire Systems' fees would not include monitoring however they do provide financing. A riser can support 52,000 square feet, regardless of the number of stories, so there is a possibility they could be shared. Moser suggested that a program for the annual inspections be created whereby the city could cover the cost of the backflow testing and that the fees could be fixed for 5 to 10 years. John Hermann expressed concern about the cost of backflow testing. Jim Moser stated that the Downtown Incentive Package continue to be worked on. The Tax Credit Workshop was very helpful to many property owners.

10. Organization Committee Report to Include Hosting of Merchant Mixers; Local History Update; Latest Cantey Column; Social Media Presence; Possible Ways to Improve the Visitor Experience; Plan to Gather Downtown Business Hours; Continuation of Oral History Project; Participation in Selection of Texas Downtown Association President's Award Nominations; and, Beginning of Quarterly Newsletter.

Susan Cantey stated she sent her most recent article to the newspaper to be published soon and announced that she has also filed the paperwork to run for City Council. Jennifer Eckermann stated that a Merchant Mixer is planned for Thursday, February 16, 2017. Dona Lynn Parker is taking a role in helping to unite the Downtown merchants and she will be requesting further assistance at the Merchant Mixer. Jennifer Eckermann stated that the Organization Committee will be utilizing an old edition of the "Progress Edition" of the Brenham Banner Press paper to help provide content on social media outlets. The "Progress Edition" highlights events that occurred in Brenham over the past 100 years.

11. Promotion Committee Report to Include Swirl Report and Committee Plans.

Traci Pyle announced that \$18,000 was raised during this year's Uptown Swirl. Jennifer Eckermann stated the goal is earn over \$10,000 and that it was a highly successful event. Alexandra Dill discussed the responses received from surveys sent to both merchants and participants after the Uptown Swirl.

12. Brenham Heritage Museum Report.

Jennifer Eckermann stated that the museum reopening has been delayed as they need a new air conditioning unit downstairs. Upchurch Architects was hired to assist in completion of the building. Wende Ragonis stated that she will attend the Museum's board meeting and attempt to expedite their reopening.

13. Washington County Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau Report, Including Recent Promotional Activities and Special Events.

President of the Brenham Chamber of Commerce, Page Michel, stated that the area's wildflowers are soon to arrive and that we anticipate an influx of visitors due to their arrival. Michel also stated that they have quite a few locals signed up to receive the Visitors Bureau newsletter. Jenny Mills, of the Chamber of Commerce, stated that they have over 3,000 emails they send the newsletter to and that the Visitor's Center would love to work with Main Street to use the email addresses acquired during the Wine Swirl to add to their existing email list. Mills also discussed new features to the website and the Visit Brenham app including a widget that can help plan an individual's visit based on their preferences, highlights of upcoming events and a "wildflower watch" feature to inform those of the arrival of the area's wildflowers.

14. Staff Report to Include Building, Business and Program Update.

Jennifer Eckermann gave an update on the Wayfinding signage bids which were due to open on February 14th with a goal to complete the project by September 30th. Eckermann also noted that Washington County and Brenham will be showcased in a CNN Travel feature. The video will become available online starting February 8, 2017.

15. Next Meeting – Monday, March 6, 2017.

16. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Susan Cantey and seconded by John Hermann to adjourn the February 6, 2017 Main Street Board meeting.

Margie Young
Chair

ATTEST:

Alexandra Dill

*Main Street Board
February 6, 2017*

