

Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Board

July 2008 Summary Report

PROMOTION COMMITTEE - Co-Chairs: Sara Gaarde, Lori Winder, Jennifer Miller

- The 4th of July Extravaganza was well attended, despite the closure of Highway 1 south of Mount Vernon. We had large crowds in town, and the retailers did well that day. The success was due to the work of retailers and the promotion advertising that "got the word out." Special thanks to Lori Winder, Jennifer Miller, Sherri Brayton, Ange Baxa, Polly Blythe, Bob Wolfe, Alice Schumacher, Kim Wolfe, Rich Eskelson, and Sara Gaarde. A record number of businesses were open on the Fourth.
- The "Save \$10" campaign continued during July. The campaign is now focusing on showing residents what they can buy in town for the \$10 in gas money they save by staying in town to shop. Window signs have been provided to the businesses, and there is ongoing coverage in The Sun about this. Thanks to Sara Gaarde, Sonia Redmond, Bill Micheel, and Jake Krob.
- A "business opportunity" window sign is now in the Walden Real Estate building, and other landlords have been contacted about the signs. A new business on Mount Vernon Main Street is the Czech Feather and Down shop. Check out the quality pillows and services at this business. The shop relocated to Mount Vernon from Czech Village in Cedar Rapids due to the flood.
- Music On Main has been delayed this summer due to the weather, but another free concert was set for Saturday evening, August 2.
- Anna Buhmeyer from the state Main Street office came to Mount Vernon on July 30 to consult with two shops about their display windows and interior layout. Sara Gaarde from Accessories On Main and Sherri Brayton from Right Frame of Mind took advantage of this opportunity through the Main Street program. Be sure to check out the new window "look" at these two shops.
- Plans for the Chili Cook-off this fall are underway. In the retail sector, fall promotional planning will begin soon.
- Anyone who is interested in working with the Promotion Committee is invited to contact Lori Winder at the Mount Vernon Bank, Sara Gaarde at Accessories On Main, or Jennifer Miller at the Sleep Inn. More volunteers are heartily invited!

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - Co-Chairs: Dick Budde, Stephanie Hasselmann

Short-term Goals 0-3 months:

- Update LOIS Database with appropriate information from both communities: The banks mentioned that they get this kind of data for the issuing of bonds, and they would pass it on to Bill Micheel. Bill has the majority of it done.
- Develop accurate MV-L business contacts list: Becky Hess is calling around to test entry accuracy.
- Circulate Business and Customer Questionnaires and review results: Karla Steffens-Moran showed us the Shopper's Survey she developed, and will have Business Owner surveys at our next meeting.

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Mid-term Goals 4-6 months:

- MV-L Community Info Packets for recruiting businesses and residents: Ongoing discussions on how to approach this and what information should be included.
- Create new and existing business incentive packages: The committee discussed this at the July meeting to see if we wanted to help the Promotion Committee with their awnings and signs project - no decision made yet.
- Restart the AM/PM Exchange Program and Community Breakfasts: We are targeting these to start in late fall for both Mount Vernon and Lisbon businesses.

Long-term Goals:

- Develop a Rapid Response Program/Team that quickly responds to requests for new business locations, community data, etc.: Ongoing development and discussions.
- Develop a "Green Plan": John Bardsley and Bill Micheel attended the Green Communities Workshop at Mount Vernon City Hall on July 21 and now have a wealth of information on the subject to share with others.
- Develop a relationship with new housing development near Palisades Park: We still don't know who the developer or realtor is – they could be included in the MV school district/tax base. Further investigation continues.
- Benefits of e-Commerce for existing and new businesses: We discussed this could be a presentation at one of the first AM/PM Exchanges.

DESIGN COMMITTEE – Co-Chairs: Ed Sauter, Karla Steffens-Moran

- Scorz Building: Cleanup still proceeding on schedule for December open date. Looks like the Windows will look even better than pre-fire as the estimate came back from Pella at about \$25,000 -- the amount transferred to them as requested by Design/CDB.
- Back Alley Clean Up North Alley: City has cleaned up overgrowth. Plantings growing. Pam Mott still waiting to do steps, but must wait for Scorz work.
- Trails Project: Subcommittee members met with city administrator, engineer, school district superintendent and cross county coach. Bill Micheel, Loren Hoffman and Karla M. Steffens-Moran are working to complete materials for the August 4th REAP grant presentation. All is on schedule as of this point for phase one work to begin the end of this summer. City and School agreed to meet to address the 28 E Agreement with regard to the area that will be formally accepted at their August 4th council meeting (and subsequently August 11th School Board meeting). Timeline is still somewhat dependent on city crews.
- Design Review Guidelines: Weekly meetings have occurred to finalize review of drafted guidelines. Presentation to be made to Planning and Zoning informally before they are presented formally to council for its consideration of ordinance changes.

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- Mural Project: Design Committee members were unanimous in their choice of original artwork over any graphic of the same design, based on both look and durability. Both Stanley Crocker and Robert Wright have significant experience with the graphic material and insisted that it would not weather well and that Fran would be quite unhappy with it in a relatively short period of time. It was also suggested that from a financial commitment, it made little sense to invest funds into something that would be easily compromised. Other members felt that given this, original art painted by Mark was the only way to go (although all agreed that Fran could do whatever he chose with his own funds given that it is his building).
- Awnings/Signage Grant Program: Flyers have been duplicated by Bill Micheel and distributed by Karla to all businesses/building owners uptown. Those who wish to apply for business incentive grants for either awnings and/or projecting signs (both of which would need to meet approval of Historic Preservation) must do so by August 15th. The application form is available on line. The hope is to have new awnings and/or signs by the end of this fall.
- Miscellaneous Items Discussed (in early planning stages):
 - City Wide Clean Up Effort/Adopt a Block/Park PLAN
 - Garbage Receptacles in Back Alleys Consolidation Plan
 - Tree Replacement Uptown--dying and/or dead trees
 - City Lightscape Plan to Illuminate Buildings versus Trees
 - Design Charette/Photo Inventory Plans Oct. 1-2
 - Preparing for Work Plan Session September 3

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE – Co-Chairs: Brenda Langenberg, Dee Ann Rexroat

- No report for July

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Rich Herrmann, Dee Ann Rexroat, Stephanie Hasselmann, Jennifer Miller, Ed Sauter

- Mailed a second round of invoices for Main Street pledges that were still outstanding. We appreciate the support we have received so far from businesses, institutions and individuals in supporting Main Street.
- Posted information about Heritage Days, RAGBRAI and Sauerkraut Days on the visitmvl web site. We urge any and all event organizers to send information regarding their planning and schedules to info@visitmvl.com.
- Each committee developed a list of goals for 2008 that will be used in future work plan development with Main Street representatives.
- Reviewed and revised the Vision Statement for the Mount Vernon Main Street Program. This will be the blue print for all projects and initiatives going forth, and was created from the Visioning Workshops held earlier in the year.