

MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF TAYLOR, TEXAS

MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD

5:30 pm on November 17, 2021
Taylor City Hall Conference Room

Main Street™ is a grassroots effort of Economic Development through Historic Preservation

The Main Street Movement is based on the 4 Point Process™:

1. **ORGANIZATION** – Bringing together your stakeholders (property & business owners, residents, employees, schools, government, organizations, etc.) to work toward a goal of a revitalized DT.
2. **DESIGN** – Improving the curb appeal of downtown and creating a safe, welcoming, and inviting environment both in the overall district and in the individual stores.
3. **PROMOTION** – Telling your downtown's story. So much more than special events – it is marketing to your residents, workers, visitors, and shoppers.
4. **ECONOMIC VITALITY** – Supporting your existing business mix while actively recruiting new businesses to bolster your Downtown business stock.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ruth Rivera, Curie Humphreys (arrived at 5:50 pm), John McRae, Ashley Doss, Jeff Snyder, Erwin Stauffer, and Chairman Doug Moss

STAFF PRESENT: Jan Harris, Main Street Manager

GUESTS PRESENT: Hayley Blundell, Hayley's Grains; Harper Doss; and Richard Stone, PAAB Chair

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARE A QUORUM – Chairman Moss called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm and noted that a quorum was present.

CITIZENS COMMUNICATION – None

REGULAR AGENDA - Review, Discuss and Consider Action:

1. **Review and approve minutes from the MSAB regular meeting held on October 21, 2021 –**
MOTION: A motion was made to approve the October minutes as presented. E. STAUFFER / J. MCRAE / UNANIMOUS
2. **Receive the financial reports from October 2021 –**
MOTION: The board received the financial reports as information. J. MCRAE / A. DOSS / UNANIMOUS

REGULAR AGENDA - Review, Discuss and Consider Action:

1. **Main Street Manager's reports:**
 - a. **Manager's Activity Report** – Jan reviewed her monthly activity report with the board.
 - b. **Downtown Property Report** – A typographical error was noted in the Available Property Report which will be corrected. Of the 6 properties listed for sale on the report, 1 has been sold. There are 11 properties listed for lease in the downtown district. These range in size from 400/SF to 3937/SF along with a vacant lot with the owners offering to build to suit one or more tenants.

- c. **Downtown Business Report** – There were no outgoing businesses reported for October; 5 businesses are in the process of opening in the downtown and another property is relocating into the district.
 - d. **Board Member Attendance Report** – Jan reviewed the attendance report with the board.
 - e. **Report from MS Manager Training in Seguin** – Jan provided an overview of the annual TX MS Managers’ Retreat and touched on the topics presented. The highlight of the Retreat was the 3-phase presentation by Matt Wagner, Ph.D. from the NMSC entitled, “Growth Strategies for Your Businesses: Creating a Comprehensive Support Ecosystem.” Other information included the annual training calendar, updated Quarterly Activity Form, the Design Request Form, and the Texas Treasure Business Award honoring local businesses operating 50 years or more.
2. **Update on Music on Main Concert Series:** Chairman Moss agreed to move Item 9 under the Regular Agenda up so that Richard Stone could discuss the Music on Main project with the Board. Chairman Stone reported that the Music on Main series was the brainchild of PAAB member Janetta McCoy and that it offered monthly shows starting in July on 3rd Thursdays and one 2nd Saturday concert on November 13th. The attendees have increased in number with each concert. The November 13th concert featuring Joe Posada was underwritten by PAAB funds and sponsorships. This was the most expensive concert to date with Mr. Posada charging \$4500 for the musicians, lights, and backline. The other concerts cost around \$1,000-\$1,500 each. The Main Street Board contributed \$2,600 to the Music on Main concerts and the PAAB contributed \$3,615. The balance of expenses was covered by sponsorships.
- Chairman Stone was unsure how the MSAB and PAAB could better work together to grow the concerts and support the local small businesses in downtown Taylor on 3rd Thursday. He did say that downtown businesses should be encouraged to support the Music on Main concerts and whatever they might offer in conjunction with them (dinner to go boxes, etc.) and by leveraging the events via their own social media platforms.
- ACTION ITEM: Explore the development of a logo for DT Businesses that can be used in publicity for MoM.**
- He also noted that the 2022 season was being planned and that it was forecast to cost \$25,000. The PAAB is provided a project budget of \$10,000 by the City so additional funds would have to be raised to offset the deficit. Also, he noted there were other ongoing projects that the PAAB were doing which also competed for those City funds. He asked the Main Street Board to assist in the financial support of the Music on Main Concerts. Janetta was holding meetings where she sought community input regarding the types of music to be played as they were aware of the need to have these concerts represent all segments of Taylor’s population. One idea was to branch into R&B & jazz for 2022.
- ACTION ITEM: Doug noted that he had a jazz musician he could recommend for the concert who was a Grammy Award winner.**
- It was discussed that a member of the MSAB could function as contact liaison with the Music on Main Concerts.
- ACTION ITEM: Curie Humphreys volunteered to be the liaison.**
- ACTION: The MSAB received Chairman Stone’s comments as information and no action was taken by the Board.**
3. **Rental Assistance Grant requests:** While the MSAB had voted unanimously to sunset the Rental Assistance grant program at the October 21, 2021 meeting, these two grants were already in play. Ms. Holder’s grant application had been tabled since December 2020 and Ms. Blundell had been in communication with the MS Manager prior to October but had submitted her packet on 10/27/21. No additional grants will be considered from this point forward.
- a. **Hayley Blundell – Hayley’s Grains – 120 W. 2nd St.; Ste G** – Hayley’s Grains is a corner market offering sustainable household goods, organic & healthy pantry items, and fresh foods located in the Titworth Building. It began as a booth at the Taylor Farmers’ Market and opened as a storefront in August 2021. Her location is co-owned by Judy Blundell and Mark Nibbelink. Ms. Blundell presented a comprehensive and detailed Business Plan, a Marketing Plan, and reports containing detailed financial records and profit/loss projections. Her rent is

\$668.75/month. The maximum allowable grant she could receive is \$334.38 for 6 months followed by payments reduced by 11.5%/month until the final payment of \$160.57.

Jan reported that the line item has \$14,600 as of October 1st with \$3,958.54 in RA grant payments encumbered for the balance of Dee's Florist & Gifts. This leaves an available balance of \$10,641.46. Should the Board award Ms. Blundell the maximum grant available to her, this would deplete the current FY budget by \$3,000.98 and result in a need to encumber \$342.07 in the FY 22-23 budget. After subtracting the estimated amount of Ms. Blundell's grant, the RA grant line item would have a remainder of \$7,640.48 for FY 21-22.

MOTION: To award Hayley's Grains owned by Hayley Blundell a 12-month Rental Assistance grant beginning in December for a total amount of \$3,343.05. J. SNYDER / C. HUMPHREYS / UNANIMOUS

- b. **Allison Holder – Cherry Tree Home & Gifts – 104 E. 2nd St.** – This RA grant application was first reviewed by the MSAB at their December 16, 2020 meeting where it was tabled pending the receipt of a revenue budget and evidence of adequate financial reserves. Ms. Holder has submitted a brief memo noting that Mr. Dean Threadgill, owner of Taylor Office Products, who was "prepared to support the business as required or needed." Staff had repeatedly requested more detailed financial information, but none has been forthcoming.

Ms. Holder's monthly rent when she initially applied was \$2,000 but it increased to \$2,225 as of October 1, 2021. No updated paperwork was provided. The maximum allowable grant she could receive is \$750/month for 6 months which then are decreased by 11.5% each month until the final RA payment of \$360.15.

Jan reported that there was \$7,640.48 remaining in the RA grant budget. The total amount of funds which would be paid to property owner Ed Hile during this FY would be \$6,731.11 leaving a balance of \$909.37.

The following Board members recused themselves from the vote on this grant: Curie Humphreys, Ashley Doss, and Erv. Stauffer.

MOTION: To approve the grant request but reduce the maximum allowable award to be \$400 rather than \$750. R. RIVERA / D. MOSS / 2 VOTES IN FAVOR (RIVERA & MOSS), 2 VOTES OPPOSED (SNYDER & MCRAE) / 3 ABSTAINING (STAUFFER, HUMPHREYS, & DOSS).

MOTION: Staff to go back to the applicant and inform her that the vote was tied because insufficient information has been provided regarding her financial records and profit/loss records & projections. She is to be informed that her grant will be reviewed a 3rd time on December 15th where a decision will be made, and the Rental Assistance grant program will be ended. D. MOSS / R. RIVERA / 4 IN FAVOR (MOSS, SNYDER, MCRAE, & RIVERA) & 3 ABSTAINING (STAUFFER, HUMPHREYS, & DOSS).

4. **Consideration of funding support for 2nd Saturdays** - Ian Davis asked the Board at the October meeting to consider providing money to help offset the cost of Facebook advertising for 2nd Saturdays. Jan reported that there was \$3,225.00 available in advertising for the FY.

MOTION: To empower staff to explore ways to promote 2nd Saturday for all businesses equally via social media. J. SNYDER / E. STAUFFER / UNANIMOUS.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to talk to Ian before the Dec. meeting to see if the current Taylor 2nd Saturday FB page could promote all businesses equally and not be such a large platform for TCB.

5. **Consideration of Digital Map Project** – Ashley Doss presented information about Membershipware which offers software designed to promote businesses via a website with maps & directories included in the basic membership. The Basic Level is \$40/month and Premium is \$99/month. The consensus of the board was that something along these lines would be a better use of our advertising funds as businesses would be promoted equally. Jan encouraged a meeting with the PIO team to see if (1) there was a way to incorporate Membershipware into the existing City website and (2) so enquire whether Main Street could be allocated a bit of bandwidth on the website to promote businesses/properties within the MS program district.

MOTION: To have staff & the committee meet with the PIO to determine how the project may be moved forward and to report back at December meeting. A. DOSS / C. HUMPHREYS / UNANIMOUS.

6. Review of Cara Lowrimore's Report from the MSAB Work Plan Meeting –

MOTION: To accept the report as presented and to return for in depth discussion and implementation of a work plan. D. MOSS / E. STAUFFER / UNANIMOUS

7. Discuss and approve changes to the Main Street Sign Grant Program –

ACTION ITEM: Board members were asked to read the guidelines and application and return comments to Staff.

ACTION: The item was tabled until the December meeting.

8. Committee report on Signage Design Guidelines Project – The Board was presented with the 4th revision of the document with further edits/changes made by Staff.

ACTION ITEM: Board members were asked to read the grant form and return comments back to Staff.

9. Committee report on the OPEN FLAG PROJECT – Jan presented a spreadsheet showing the eligible businesses and the status of received business & property owner agreements. Initially, the burden was to be placed on the business owner to obtain the property owner's signature. Doug felt that this might not be best.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to compile a spreadsheet showing property owners by business address for the board. It was decided that installing flags on a test block might be the best way to jumpstart the receipt of agreement forms. The businesses/property owners on 2nd Street were divided up for board members to work on.

ACTION ITEM: Jan to set a date with Rick Jones to install the brackets on 2nd Street.

10. Update on Main Street Car Show – Jan provided preliminary numbers showing that there was a deficit in funds for the Car Show this year. The inclusion of City costs to the event drove the expenses up as did an increase in overall prices and a better sound system. Coupled with that, fewer sponsorships at lower amounts also hurt. Because of COVID, planning for the event didn't start until July/August which hurt sponsorships. Discussion that sales tax revenue generated by local businesses on that day should be incorporated into the income for the event as well as intangibles such as 10,000 people visiting downtown Taylor and discovering what we have to offer.

ACTION: The report was received as information by the Board.

11. Discuss items for the upcoming agenda:

- Consideration of RA grant application for Cherry Tree Home & Gifts
- Discussion of future work session to develop 2022 work plan
- Report on progress with the Digital Map Project
- Discussion/approval of revised Sign Grant packet
- Signage Design Guidelines report
- Open Flag Project report
- A meeting of the TIF Board will be held just prior to the MSAB meeting.

12. Adjourn –

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting until December 15th at 5:30 pm. J. SNYDER / E. STAUFFER / UNANIMOUS.

Respectfully submitted,



Jan Harris – Main Street Manager