

MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF TAYLOR, TEXAS

MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD

5:30 pm on June 14, 2022

Taylor City Hall Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: John McRae; Erwin Stauffer; Ruth Rivera; Chairman, Doug Moss; Ashley Doss; and Curie Humphreys

STAFF PRESENT: Jan Harris, Main Street Manager

PUBLIC PRESENT: Chuck Farr

- I. **CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARE A QUORUM:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Doug Moss who noted that a quorum was present.
- II. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:** There were no comments from the public.
- III. **CONSENT AGENDA:**
 - A. **Review and approve minutes from the MSAB regular meeting held on May 11, 2022 –**
MOTION: To approve the minutes for May 11, 2022 as presented. **R RIVERA / J McRAE / UNANIMOUS**
 - B. **Review and receive the financial reports from May 2022 –** Jan reviewed the financial reports with the board. There are untouched funds in Advertising and it was discussed that large stickers could be printed and placed on the sidewalks to encourage shoppers to explore off of Main Street.
ACTION ITEM: Doug appointed Ashley and John to work with Jan on this project and report back.
ACTION: Received as information.
- IV. **REGULAR AGENDA – New Business:**
 - A. **Discussion of the review process for sign grants –** After discussion, a rewrite of the sign grant was requested that would make it simpler for applicants to use.
ACTION ITEM: Jan to rewrite the grant – 1 page of salient points & 1 page of “small print” and bring that to the board in July.
 - B. **Signage Grant Application – Western Darlin – 112 N Main Street – Courtney Cox Pittman requests a grant to partially reimburse the costs of a painted sign on the storefront windows of her business –**
MOTION: To approve the grant in the amount of \$425. Chairman Doug Moss recused himself from the vote as he is the property owner. **E STAUFFER / J SNYDER / UNANIMOUS**
 - C. **Review of MSAB 2022-2023 priorities considering the recent presentation to Council:**
 1. **Additional MSAB staff**
 2. **Turning a Highway into a Street**
 3. **Addressing vacated and underutilized buildings -**
Discussion – Item 1 – Tom Yantis may be able to help in obtaining additional staff which could be shared with Parks & Recreation as they handle special events as well.

ACTION ITEM: Meet with Tom regarding the possibility of an additional employee for special events.

Item 2 – Main Street is a big, wide-open fast road overseen by TxDOT. The City does not have the bandwidth or the funds to maintain it in house. It was suggested that a strategic meeting with TxDOT be held including Tom Yantis, Doug Moss and Jan Harris.

ACTION ITEM: The board was asked to think about Cities that have a main street that is a state highway and report back to the board. Examples are Fredericksburg, Georgetown, and Elgin.

Item 3 – Discussion was held regarding the historic preservation of the district. A meeting with Larry Speck who is/was involved with the UT-Austin HP Program was proposed regarding a partnership with the program to undertake windscreen HABS project to update what we have from 1988.

ACTION ITEM: Jan to locate the old proposed Historic Preservation ordinance and the one she wrote on Demolition and Demolition by Neglect and share with the board. Also to investigate any sample HP Ordinances from the Tx Historical Commission.

D. Signage Issues –

1. Ongoing efforts with the standing Code Advisory Team and SimpleCity staff to rewrite various codes and ordinances including the City's Sign Ordinance;
2. Discussions Jan has had with SimpleCity staff regarding the sign permitting process;
3. The July Breakfast Bites topic will be signage. Date scheduled for July 6th.

Doug reported that he has met with business owners, Council members, and Colin Harrison to discuss the problems with the sign process.

The board discussed the need for Permitting staff in Development Services to involve Jan when any signage that comes before them that is in the Main Street district. This will help promote the grants and provide one-on-one assistance for business owners.

ACTION ITEM: invite a member of the SimpleCities team to attend THE Breakfast Bites.

ACTION ITEM: Ruth and Jeff will function as “referees” at the BB meeting if necessary.

E. Discuss the importance of Breakfast Bites, their topics and as a communication tool with the merchants/property owners –

Focus on what IS happening; encourage positive interaction; always hit the highlights and positive aspects of issues; encourage attendees to join committees and get involved.

Future topics to include:

- Events – how to get the DT on the same page – grow the Wine Swirl committee, etc.
 - Review of upcoming special events/projects.
 - Presentation
 - List of volunteer opportunities
 - Q & A

V. REGULAR AGENDA – Continuing Business:

A. Main Street Manager's reports – Jan Harris:

1. **Manager's activity report** – Jan reviewed the report with the board.
2. **Main Street business & property report** – A highlight of the report is that we have one new business open (Threads Urban Boutique) and two coming online (SooBrie and Flake Bakery & Larder). No businesses have closed.
3. **Upcoming special events report** – Special events continue to ramp up with more seeking special events permits every month.

- B. **After Action Report on the Blackland Prairie Days festival** – As of now, the festival raised \$17,925.00. This does not include the \$1,500 pledged from Texas Comfort Air as a sponsorship. The expenditures excluding City services total \$15,538.77. City services cost \$20,150.00 for a total cost of the event to date of \$45,891.77.

The vendors who responded to the survey were positive. Most learned about the festival online. They all felt that the crowds were down and that it was too hot. The food vendors did not like being on 5th Street away from the other vendors especially with the small Kids Zone to attract families. Few children used the bounce houses. Issues with the festival included

- competition with other nearby festivals whose residents would have come to Taylor if Granger and Elgin were not having events.
- The intense heat for early May.

Discussion with the board noted that

- Blackland Prairie Days has a story that is not being told. If we do that, it might increase attendance as people buy with emotional triggers.
- Erwin told the board that BPD was originally the TIF or Taylor Independence Festival.
- They did not want to give up on it as the locals do like the festival.
- Next year increase we should increase graphics and marketing to tell the story.

ACTION ITEM: Poll the DT businesses to determine the economic impact of BPD.

ACTION ITEM: See what can be found about the TIF – when it ended and why.

Members think it was still ongoing in 2000.

- C. **Receive staff update on the MembershipWare Digital Map Project** – Jan showed the board what Walton with MembershipWare had sent to her with listings of DT businesses from the excel database.

- D. **Discuss items for upcoming agendas –**

- Review updated Sign Grant packet
- Board members share the results of their research into cities with a main street which also is a highway.
- Discuss the historic preservation draft ordinance and the demolition and demolition by neglect draft ordinance and determine future action.
- Review the outcome of the July Breakfast Bites meeting
- Review the results of the impact of BPD on downtown businesses poll
- Review information on Taylor Independence Festival

V. ADJOURN

Next Meeting Date: July 20, 2022

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Harris, Main Street Manager