**Main Street Advisory Board Minutes | Thursday, April 25, 2024**

**1:00 PM to 5:00 PM**

Location: Goshen Economic Development Office, Torrington

Attendees: *Matt Ashby, Bruce Heimbuck, Carly-Ann Carruthers, David Tate, Jenn Ford, Kayla Kler*

Chair Bruce Heimbuck called the meeting to order at 1:11 pm.

The minutes from the February 27 board meeting were reviewed.

**Action:** Consideration of approval of minutes. Matt made a motion to approve the Feb. 25 minutes, and Jenn seconded, with no further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Main Street Program Manager, Kayla Kler, provided an update to board members on term expirations, and reminded them to fill out the online application for re-appointment.

The 7th position on the Main Street Advisory Board remains vacant, but there has been contact from a potential applicant in Sheridan; Kayla talked about connecting with the potential candidate to discuss the role and answer questions. Local Main Street programs have also expressed interest in a more formal role of a local liaison to represent their interests and needs at advisory board meetings, and return information from the board back to the local level. Kayla discussed the potential opportunities and concerns of this informal role, and volunteered to investigate any reimbursement and administrative processes for an additional member to serve as a local liaison.

Kayla then reviewed the information and agenda for the 2024 Best Practices Workshop, taking place in Alabama May 3 and 4. Several board members asked questions about who the registration list consisted of, and if there were any particular conversations or connections to make to participants. Kayla then reviewed the logistics of the workshop and asked for specific logistical assistance from attending board members, Bruce, Derek, and Matt.

Kayla then introduced the work so far on re-outlining the Affiliate tier of the Wyoming Main Street program. The board discussed what was necessary to ask of Affiliate level programs and suggested an addition to require a mission/vision statement from each program. Carly-Ann and Jenn volunteered to continue working on the Affiliate outline with Kayla and regional directors.

Kayla moved on to reviewing the current outline for program visits, to be conducted in 2024, as part of the requirements from Main Street America. All 13 Main Street programs will have an assessment visit done by the end of 2024. Board members each volunteered to take specific communities throughout the year, with more specific dates and duties to be determined by Kayla and followed-up through email.

The board then discussed Wyoming Main Street turning 20 years old, discussing key players from the past to talk to. The list included: Jim Davis, Dave Freudenthal, Mary Randolph, Linda Klinck, Desiree Brothe, Matt Ashby, Jane Law, Tucker Fagan, Julie Kozlowski, Tom Johnson.

There was also a suggestion to connect with businesses that have been located in downtown for a long period of time, or relocated there, and several were mentioned: Varsity Ink in Evanston, Chalk and Cheese in Laramie, Buck’s in Rawlins, Buy-Right Drug in Rock Springs, with the possibility of others.

Kayla asked each board member to share their perspective on Wyoming Main Street.

Bruce focused on building community; “if you can keep people in town for a concert, you get the chance for people to see what’s going on in the community from a larger perspective. Building community manifests itself in many ways - people start to connect more with each other and lend a hand.”

Matt talked about grassroots economic development; “Main Street made people realize that economic development happens in a variety of ways, and it’s not always the micro-projects that move the mark. It’s a lot of small wins. Main Street used to be a part of the agricultural/rural development department and now it has evolved into the program today. The Best Practices workshop really is about bringing ideas back with that element of passion.”

Jenn mentioned how much of a leadership role that Wyoming Main Street played during COVID-19, particularly with the Shop Smart, Shop Safe campaign; “The passion of Main Streeters to help their communities survive; that is something I had never seen in economic development. There’s something about Main Street energy where people just roll up their sleeves and get things done. To see what's happening in board meetings trickle out into the community. If we follow the Main Street tenants, that’s what creates good board members and good community members. Some of these things take a really long time - it might just take 40 years to complete a 3rd Street plan. Main Street infrastructure gives us structure and focus.”

David spoke from the perspective in Rock Springs: “In Rock Springs, we’ve seen growth exponentially downtown. It didn’t matter what side of the tracks you are on or how many empty buildings, and now people are begging for space. Putting money into places like the First Security Bank building, shows how Main Street can contribute to their community. The vast majority can say they see a difference. Everyone really works well together. Main Street Rock Springs doesn’t do anything different than Main Street Sheridan, and they play off each other. They reach out to each other without going through us, they call other local directors and ask ‘How did you do this?’ And set it up for other communities to succeed just as they did.”

 Carly-Ann shared, “We have downtowns as economic drivers. We have this framework that people can adhere to, there’s a program to follow, a leadership structure. You’re able to say that the people down the road are using this model and this is effective ,and having something to stick to. Main Street means longevity and hopefulness and benchmarks for what is essential to the program.”

The board also discussed the context of numbers in this storytelling, whether it is population growth, business change, or other metrics over time. Kayla also mentioned that Three Elephants PR will be working on a media kit for businesses and communities to utilize for this campaign. The board also discussed the kick-off, specifying that it could begin with a spotlight on the large projects in Main Street communities over the years, and their economic impact.

The last discussion point of the meeting was a review of the remaining 2024 meeting dates, with June 6 being held in Sheridan and September 10 in Laramie.

Matt made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and David seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 pm.

*Minutes submitted by Kayla Kler*