

Attica Downtown Coalition

work session - MINUTES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jennifer Baldwin, Jim Cooley, Nicole Martin, Mayor Lepsch, Laura Johnson, Tom Cockman, Bob Burek, Dave Ciurzynski, Ann Cockman, Jim Walker, Kate Edwards, Barb Helak, Jodie Phillips, Julie Slepinski, Roger Lamoureux

UPDATES & IN-REVIEW:

- **Draft Revitalization Strategic Plan.** Nicole shared that she had just met with Jen & Jim for preliminary comments and the team will continue to develop the document for sharing.
- **Drop Box.** Nicole shared that the ADC now has a “Drop Box” account for file sharing. This web service is a very user friendly, simple tool to help us keep up to date. You may receive an email invitation to this by request, or whenever you’re being asked to reference a specific file that’s been uploaded.

BREAK OUT SESSIONS:

PROMOTIONS:

- Gateway Signage
 - **Sponsorship Opportunities & Funds Map.** Dave shared a copy of the tiered sponsorship program another board he volunteers with has developed:
 - The symbiotic relationship between business entities and the ADC is a great opportunity to bring people to the community while offering small business support.
 - There are opportunities for long-term sponsorships with increased advertising allowances to businesses.
 - Possible sponsor advantages might include a ‘free’ tent at the Founders’ Day, or advertisements in the “First Saturdays” program coming out of the 12 Months of Downtown initiative.
 - We discussed the list of events and opportunities for which we’d be seeking funding.
 - ***Jim C. will connect with Mayor Lepsch*** to confirm that the light posts in downtown are on-track, as the 12 Months of Downtown Banner program is going to be one of our asks.

- 12 Months of Downtown Calendar
 - **Sub-Committee.** Moving forward, the ***Calendar & Brochure Sub-Committee will consist of Tom, Dave and Jim C.***
 - ***Nicole will upload*** the 12 Months of Downtown & Brainstorming lists of events to date to Drop Box and invite the Sub-Committee to review.
 - ***Tom will compile*** a comprehensive list of the community events gathered on facebook, the web and through connecting with organizations.
 - The Maple Fest (beginning March 17) may be our target distribution date, as Tom found that event planners don't have dates and details nailed down yet.
 - **Proposal.** The Sub-Committee received a proposal from the WyCo Chamber to develop and distribute a marketing initiative for Attica. The sub-committee felt that it needed some development but had useful points, and we used it to have the following discussions:
 - The difference between an Attica Marketing Brochure and an Attica 12 Months of Downtown Events Calendar, and reviewed examples from area communities.
 - **The Events Calendar** could be an 11x17 mono-color document that gets updated annually, distributed in the spring throughout the community and all year long at area events.
 - **The Marketing Brochure** could be an 8x11 multi-color, tri-fold document that lasts for a number of years, and is located in businesses, rest-stops, etc as well as at events.
 - For both, we need to select a distribution date and target the deadlines and deliverables before that.
 - For the Events Calendar, tasks include:
 - Connect with the Attica Penny Saver and / or the Warsaw Penny Saver to take the model used in other communities, where the PS Graphic Design department offers the layout as a donation to the community, in exchange for the brochures being printed there.
 - Compile a comprehensive list, with details, dates and contact information of Attica Area Events (including the Summer in the Park Gazebo Concert Series, etc.)
 - For the Brochure, tasks include:
 - Photograph the downtown in spring, when it's looking great.
 - Compile a list of Attica Area Attractions – campgrounds, parks, etc.
 - Simplify the comprehensive events list from above (see examples)
 - **“First Saturdays”.** We brainstormed additional events and partnering opportunities, including:
 - **Maple Week.** Develop “fringe festival” events, including:
 - Opening underutilized or vacant storefronts to companies such as Merle for temporary “pop-up” shops during events.
 - **Rodeo.** The big Attica Lawn Fete is the same weekend, and we may be able to have similar tag-on events.
 - ***Tom will contact the Rodeo*** to confirm that we incorporate their events and begin planning partnership / fringe / tag-on programs for the main weekend in August.
 - **Green Up & Clean Up.** Additional volunteers may come from:
 - area residents requiring Community Service, Students and the Garden Committee

- **Artists in Attica Galleries.** Partner with area Artists, Business & Building Owners, and even the Arts Council for Wyoming County (ACWC).
 - Take an inventory of vacant or under-utilized storefronts on Main, Market and Exchange.
 - Have building owners work with volunteers to spruce up these storefronts – most importantly, washing the windows inside and out, but also touch-up paint, replace bulbs, etc.
 - Bring in Attica Artists and satellite gallery pieces from the ACWC to fill up the storefronts.
 - Include these stops on the:
- **Downtown Walking Tour.** We brainstormed about an event, to include a historic district focus, and hosts around town similar to the organization of the Winter Fest. Hosts would include businesses, civic and religious sites, as well as outdoor ‘take back the sidewalks’ stations & vendors.
- **Art in Attica Festival.** Have a “Plein Air” festival to ‘take back the sidewalks’
 - Area artists, school students, etc.
 - During the first ‘warm’ weekend, when folks are excited to be outside again? OR during the Walking Tour? OR during another downtown event?
 - Barb shared that there is an Attica Artists Association meeting at the Library that would be happy to participate in this event.
 - And that the Attica Artists Show should be included in the events calendar.
 - If this were to gain enough momentum, a long-term plan would be to apply for an arts grant and have ‘artists-in-residence’ doing plein-air painting at all the First Saturday events that are weather or venue appropriate.
- **Founders’ Day & Winter Fest liaisons.**
 - **PR!** We discussed the fact that the BDN didn’t include Attica’s Winter Fest in their lengthy article regarding area holiday events, and that the ADC needs an appointed volunteer for Press Releases.
 - These items should also go to WBTA & WCJW community calendars.
 - Barb volunteered again that any events with flyers, leaflets, inserts can be distributed via the library, including the Attica Brochures and the 12 Months of Downtown Events Calendars.
 - **Bringing Founders’ Day back downtown.**
 - We need to distribute a “Save the Date” flyer announcing that this is the 10 year anniversary, and that we’re “taking back main” or having a “deca-celebration” etc.
 - Barb & Kate shared that they’d like this year to shake things up and make things big.
 - They also shared a list of possible barriers to bringing the event back downtown that they’d like ADC assistance with.
 - **Nicole will link** Kate to the Drop Box folder.
 - **Kate will upload the list** as it stands, as well as any additional ideas from the committee.
 - **Tom will add his brainstorming** suggestions to date to this document.
 - Dave shared that his company would be willing to donate a generator.

- Tom shared that he has connections with Brass Swing Band and a Rockabilly band, both of whom may be willing to come for a reasonable price.
 - In general, everyone was looking forward to helping out with the planning of the event, and agreed to re-convene at the next ADC work session with a break-out group for a new sub-committee.
- “Forum for Dialogue” / Facebook
 - The conversations have continued, and even sparked interest in a new website for marketing the Attica area. More monthly flyers to follow, with distribution throughout downtown.

PLANNING:

- Business Recruitment & Retention
 - **Parking.** The planning group worked out an action plan for rolling out the old/new initiative of enforcing parking.
 - **Mayor will find out** when DOT will have the signage up.
 - ADC should draft a simple letter to the Village requesting this and explaining why it is important to create a climate attractive to potential businesses as well as to support existing businesses. **Nicole/Rick can draft** it and send it around to ADC business owners for their approval, after which their names should be appended and it can be submitted to the Village.
 - Based on that, **Village will set a date** for enforcement to commence.
 - In advance of enforcement date, ADC should prepare a press release for BDN, and text for a village-placed notice in the pennysaver explaining the "why" for the step, in order to assure people understand this is a positive step. It is not up to police to explain the why, only to enforce the what.
 - Police may choose to initially issue warning tickets for a period of a couple weeks.
 - **Target Businesses.** The planning group reviewed Rick's notes about previous suggestions and we went around the table sharing ideas for businesses.
 - Top tier seemed to be:
 - **Coffee Shop/Bakery.** These might be separate or the same business. Deliveries, good hours important. Opinion was that WCCC was a model that did many things right but some critical things wrong.
 - **Butcher Shop/Deli.** Rick shared the positive reception Canaan's received in Perry and the business model that seemed to be working. People care about their meats, enjoy purchasing from the person who prepared it, who can answer questions, etc. Canaan's is very new and more time is needed. They may ultimately even be approached about opening a second business in Attica once their business model is refined and they've trained other family members/staff properly.
 - **A hybrid** business combining above with additional products and services, similar to Lantz's in Warsaw.
 - Options for #3:
 - **Restaurant.** A "Valley Inn" type, upscale restaurant that could draw regionally. A creekside location could help in establishing a unique setting but obviously finding a chef/restaurateur with the requisite business skills and capital would be a huge undertaking.

- **Clothes/Apparel.** Not sure of the business format. "Boutique", "co-op", "classy consignment" were all suggested. The underlying theme is that other than a few basics at a dollar store one cannot buy much in Attica. Prisoner visitors often need (one assumes cheap) appropriate clothing to be permitted in; residents and employees and regional residents would benefit; a business selling outdoor clothes, work clothes, carrharts etc was another branch of this discussion.
- **Shoe/shoe repair.** This could be a great type-1 business because shoe repair now needs to be taken into Rochester since the Batavia store closed. Serve a broad area and provide quality footgear that does not compete with the cheap sneakers available at big boxes and dollar stores.
- **arts/crafts/local products, etsy-driven.** Front door-back door business that could be an individual or could be a co-op. Roger L shared with Rick his business making canes (now the cane factory llc) that was the largest in the country; he sold it to someone in Pembroke. It now has a web presence which is the main source of business.
- **Optometrist.** The sense of the group was that Dee Opticians closed because their business plan did not accept certain kinds of insurance including that offered by the prisons. The demand appears to exist. No one present really understood the nuances of why certain places can or cannot accept certain kinds of insurance.
 - This list is open for comment, changes, additions, after which it will be shared with our partners such as Jim Pierce at the County for recruitment assistance.
- **National Register Historic District.** Rick summarized that this district can serve as an important tool helping make the "generational reinvestment" needed in Attica's key buildings financially viable. He emphasized that work undertaken for tax credit purposes within an NR district needs to be substantial (greater in cost than the building's basis value) and must meet standards for rehabilitation. But those standards only apply to "contributing elements" such as windows, trim, pressed metal ceilings, plaster details, etc. The credit however can be taken on every rehab expense including heating and cooling, electrical, framing, drywall, roofing, etc and that at 40% (20 state and 20 federal) it can return to the owners \$80,000 on a \$200,000 rehab project. Rick also noted that owners in a district can still do whatever they want to their building as long as they don't want state or federal money (and as long as they were already allowed to do it).

RE-CAP, WRAP-UP

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- **Next Work Session.** Thursday, January 12 2012
- **Next Public Meeting.** Thursday, February 9 2012