

**Special Meeting**  
**Midway Renaissance Inc. Board of Directors**  
**November 17, 2009**

**Members Present:** Joy Arnold, Cecelia Gass, Phil Gerrow, Blythe Jamieson, Becky Moore, Pam Thomas, Randy Thomas, Mary Thoreson and Sarah Rathbone

**Members Absent:** Bob Rathbone and Mary Weese

**Guests Present:** Marcie Christensen, Diana Queen, Grayson Vandegrift and John McDaniel

The sole item on the agenda was discussion of a grant funding opportunity from the Renaissance on Main program. Representatives from the city and the Merchant's Association were invited to attend the meeting. Diana Queen attended on behalf of the city council and Grayson Vandegrift and John McDaniel attended as members of the Merchant's Association.

Randy reviewed the parameters of the grant application, noting that grant applications are due by December 31, 2009 and that the city/Renaissance can only submit one application under one category. Randy informed the group that a smaller group from the Renaissance Board met with Becky Gorman a week ago, and that Becky said that she would provide input before the grant application is submitted if we request input.

Diana reported that she has a couple of recommendations or requests for consideration from the Council. Mary noted that the merchants have a couple of ideas as well.

Ideas from the Merchants:

- Mary said that the merchants would like to turn the caboose into a visitor center, however the amount available will probably not come close to doing that.
- Mary said her personal opinion is that Midway is desperate for a market analysis – businesses are struggling and we need to figure out how to get people into Midway and a market analysis would help.
- Marcie mentioned signage as a real need.
- Grayson mentioned the condition of some of the buildings and that many of the merchants have concerns about that. Pam noted that the façade grant requires 50% contribution by the property owner and that we may not have time to get the level of collaboration that we need in the time that we have available.

Ideas from the City Council:

- Diana presented a couple of ideas from the City Council. One is to repair the stone wall on Gratz Street. Phil asked whether the project needs to be on Main Street and Randy responded that this is the type of question that we can ask Becky Gorman. The group had a discussion about whether the wall is public or private property.
- The other suggested project from the city council is to create more parking for downtown, again on Gratz Street.

After ideas from the merchants and the city council were presented, everyone present was asked to offer additional ideas and suggestions:

- Marcie noted that Becky Gorman indicated that a market analysis would be a good thing to request funding for, but that she was concerned that the Merchants may not find it valuable

because it isn't tangible. Grayson said that he believes a market analysis would be a good tool to have. There was a discussion about what a market analysis would provide. Joy asked how much a market analysis would cost. Marcie responded that Becky Gorman said the cost would likely be between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Marcie also noted that there has been information on the Main Street list serve about firms that do market analyses for Main Street programs including recommendations. Randy noted that updating the market analysis is part of our current plan.

- Joy suggested that we should establish as a priority turning the caboos into a visitor center with bathrooms. Grayson noted that the caboos is owned by the city. Sarah said that there may be grant funds available from another source to renovate the caboos.
- Diana said that the grant opportunity is a great opportunity for collaboration among the city, the merchants and the Renaissance Board and that we should keep this in mind in identifying a project.
- Blythe asked if there is any place for a visitor center without expending a great deal of money – someplace where people can get information and have questions answered.
- Marcie suggested that the front of the old bank building where there used to be an ATM could be used - there are shutters there now – it is bricked and out of the weather. The building is privately owned, however it is a potential place that is out of the weather where people could pick up information.
- Sarah agreed that the market analysis is a good idea.
- John suggested that the theater could be used as a visitor center – they could run a video about Midway. He also suggested getting a van to transport people to other area attractions. He noted that the theater board would have to agree to this.
- Phil agreed that the market analysis makes a lot of sense, and that a physical construction project can't be touched with the amount of money available. Phil also agreed that working with the theater on including a visitor center component is a good idea.
- Becky suggested that the area across from Celtic Trends could be beautified and improved to make it useful and functional – benches, bike racks, etc could be installed there. Becky also expressed support for the market study.
- Cecelia expressed support for the idea proposed by Becky, noting that there aren't a lot of places just to sit down, and that bike racks are needed.
- Pam expressed support for many of the ideas presented and noted that Renaissance could probably do many of the projects with or without the grant funds. Pam also noted that we should be mindful of the application requirements and not deviating too far from them as it may hurt our chances for funding.
- Joy suggested that we support the market analysis, and that simultaneously we compile a list of the other ideas, prioritize them, find funding sources and move forward on as many fronts as we can. She noted that we can work to make the market analysis visible by letting people know about it, and that we begin working on some of the other ideas. Grayson agreed with Joy and expressed a desire to continue collaboration.
- Randy expressed mixed feelings. He expressed support for the market analysis, noting that it could be very beneficial, and that it is an opportunity to get funding for something we wouldn't be able to get funding for otherwise. Randy also expressed support for the visitor center, and doing something visible. Randy suggested that all of the ideas with merit be included in our next work plan, and suggested that we take on the task of developing them and following through with them. He noted that we will likely have an easier time getting support for projects besides the market analysis from donors.

- Marcie agreed to find out more information about the market analysis, what it involves, and what the results would be and to e-mail everyone with the information.
- Diana reported that the next council meeting is December 21st, which will be the only meeting between now and when the grant application is due.
- It was noted that we need to develop a priority list of projects at the next meeting.