

DOWNTOWN DOVER PARTNERSHIP

DESIGN COMMITTEE MEETING

March 12, 2009 – City Hall Conference Room – 4:00 PM

MINUTES

Attendance: Laura Simmons, Susan Johnston, Arden Bardol, Dawn Melson-Williams, Don Parks, Ann Baker Horsey, Kristin Pleasanton, Elena Tkacz, Carrie Happoldt

Staff: Bill Neaton, Ed Perez, Beverly Jackson

Ms. Simmons called the meeting to order and welcomed the new committee members: Ms. Pleasanton, Ms. Tkacz, and Ms. Happoldt. She then asked the members to introduce themselves.

Agenda

Mr. Neaton requested the item 5 become item 4.

Minutes

Dr. Parks moved and Ms. Horsey seconded the motion to approve the minutes of November 13, 2008, January 8, 2009 and February 12, 2009. The motion was unanimously carried.

Finalize previously awarded Main Street grant applications

Mr. Perez provided a brief overview of the Main Street Façade Grant process for the new committee members. He then reviewed Grants Number 60, 61 and 62 for the committee. Grants Number 60 and 61 were awarded to Diana Welch for work at 115 W. Loockerman and 233-239 W. Loockerman. Mr. Perez recommended that the files be closed and the balance of funds remaining in the amount of \$4961.20 be returned to the Façade Grant Program.

Mr. Perez reported that Grant number 62 was awarded to Penny Alston for 231 W. Loockerman. Mr. Perez noted that Phase I of the project was completed and reimbursement approved. Phase II of the project was completed but the renovations were not the ones approved for the original grant and the reimbursement request was denied by the committee. Ms. Alston has since resubmitted her request for reimbursement.

Mr. Perez then stated that in several instances, the Main Street Board of Directors had made exceptions to the requirement that reimbursement could only be received for work described in the approved grant application. He also stated that the replacement of the cracked window next to the newly installed glass front door, should qualify for reimbursement and he requested the committee reconsider and recommend payment of \$442 to close out this grant. Mr. Perez noted that when these three files are closed, the Main Street Façade Grant Program would be completed.

Dr. Parks moved that Grants Number 60 and 61 be closed and the funds released to the Façade Grant Program. Ms. Horsey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

Dr. Parks moved that Ms. Alston's reimbursement request be approved and that she be asked to resubmit her paperwork. Ms. Horsey seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ms. Melson-Williams and Ms. Bardol voting no.

New Façade Grant Applications

Mr. Perez reported that he has received four (4) new applications under the guidelines of the Main Street program. Mr. Neaton asked what percentage of the project cost can be funded. Mr. Perez responded that was for the committee to decide.

Ms. Simmons stated that the committee doesn't want to delay projects. Dr. Parks noted that under the Main Street guidelines, if a project is completed before the application is approved, it can't be reimbursed. Ms. Simmons then stated that the new guidelines would not be in place until after the Work Plan has been finalized and the Main Street's Façade Grant Program criteria should be used as the basis for reviewing the four (4) new applications.

It was noted that the maximum allowable grants for a property under the Main Street program was \$12,000. When these applications are reviewed, it will be important to determine if the buildings have received any previous façade grant monies.

Mr. Neaton recommended that a subcommittee be appointed to review the applications, determine if any funds have previously been awarded to the property and make recommendations to the full committee.

Ms. Melson-Williams recommended that no new applications for façade grants be accepted until the new guidelines are developed and funding has been identified. She also recommended that the four (4) pending applications be reviewed using the Main Street façade grant guidelines.

Ms. Bardol stated that the committee will need to address the fact that the guidelines limit grants to applications approved prior to the actual work being started.

Ms. Simmons asked for volunteers to review the applications and Ms. Melson-Williams, Ms. Horsey, and Ms. Johnston agreed to provide their recommendations to the committee at the April 7, 2009 Design Committee meeting.

Ms. Happoldt asked what criteria are used as the basis for the design guidelines. Ms. Melson-Williams responded that the City of Dover's Historic District Guidelines were used to develop the Main Street Façade Grant Program. The Historic District Guidelines are available for \$15 at the customer service counter in City Hall. Ms. Melson-Williams requested the presentation she prepared on the Façade Grant Program be provided to the new members of the committee.

Ms. Bardol noted that the Design Committee's purpose is to offer assistance and guidance and façade grant applicants should have to seek guidance from the committee for their projects.

Work Plan

Ms. Simmons provided committee members with the final draft of the work plan. The committee discussed the proposed projects and timelines. Dr. Parks stated that he has done some research into the federal stimulus package and he thinks there may be some resources available. Ms. Simmons invited the new committee members to assist with grant research and proposal writing.

Ms. Horsey moved and Mr. Parks seconded the motion to approve the Design Committee Work Plan. The motion was unanimously carried.

Ms. Simmons thanked Ms. Melson-Williams for her careful attention and assistance with the final plan.

Open Discussion

Ms. Simmons announced that the Partnership will be conducting a contest for a new logo.

Dr. Parks provided information on a program to be offered at the Schwartz on April 2nd.

Ms. Johnston asked if there are any programs that provide rewards for property owners who make improvements by giving them a small incentive award of \$250 to \$500. She noted that their improvements might not be compatible with all our design criteria but there may be a WOW factor to be gained through recognizing them.

Ms. Simmons stated that she didn't know of any but that she liked the idea. Ms. Horsey stated that Main Street used to publish a newsletter featuring before and after photos of properties but that had not been done recently.

Ms. Happoldt stated that volunteers can be recruited to help spruce up Loockerman St. and that is a way to get families to buy-in to Main Street. She noted that Polytech ROTC is always willing to be involved in community projects.

Ms. Bardol responded that when the committee had funds available it was fun and exciting. Now it's sad and frustrating due to the lack of funding. She added that we need to look at funding for small projects with a volunteer base, power-washing windows was used as an example.

Ms. Happoldt stated that she recently learned Lowe's has huge grant resources and will donate paint and painting supplies, gift cards and other items. She also stated that NASCAR has grant resources for projects and each driver has a Foundation.

Ms. Pleasanton asked about the funding sources for the Downtown Dover Partnership. Mr. Neaton stated that funding is provided by the City of Dover, the Parking Authority, the Downtown Dover Development Corporation, and about \$54,000 from the Main Street Program's reserve account. The majority of the DDP's funding is for the purchase of property and redevelopment projects.

Ms. Melson-Williams added that the Façade Grant Program was initially funded through the 21st Century Fund, and Community Redevelopment funds.

Ms. Johnston suggested that the committee look at providing information on resources available to implement design/improvement projects to give applicants ideas on how to collaborate on similar programs.

Ms. Happoldt noted that she maintains the website for Volunteer Delaware and Markell's Better Delaware volunteer projects. Any projects undertaken by the partnership which need volunteers can be posted on these websites.

Ms. Simmons asked Ms. Melson-Williams about the Downtown Dover Master Plan. Ms. Melson-Williams noted that the Master Plan was an implementation item from the City's Comprehensive Plan but the Planning Department has not yet identified how it will proceed.