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A program of the Western Erie Canal Alliance and
Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

Main Street Advisory Board: Meeting Minutes

WECA Office, Alling Coverlet Museum

122 William Street, Palmyra, NY

Wednesday, May 27, 2009

1 PM – 2:30 PM

Main Street Advisory Board Members:

- Andrew Meier, Attorney, Webster, Schubel & Meier, LLP
- James Whipple, Director of Operations, Orleans Economic Development Agency
- Josephine Matela, Small Business Owner, Red Bird Tea Shoppe
- Corrine Kleisle, Mayor, Village of Lyons
- Andrea Rebeck, Architect
- Steven Yantz, VP, First Niagara Bank
- Joseph G. Eicheldinger, Keybank - Community Development Lending
- Kal Wysokowski, Executive Director, Fairport Industrial Development Agency (WECA Board)
- Martin Busch, Code Enforcement Officer, Village of Medina (WECA Board)
- David Richards, Chief Finance Officer, Wayne County Industrial Development Agency
- Chuck Bell, Economic Development Coordinator, Lumber City Development Corporation
- William Evert, Director, Greater Lockport Development Corporation
- Jack Martin, Business Owner, J. Fitzgerald Group

Staff:

- Jayme Breschard, Program Coordinator
- Tom Kicior, Assistant Program Coordinator

Ex officio:

- Joan Delaro, WECA Project Manager
- Todd Lippa, New York State Canal Corporation

Guests:

- Maureen Palumbo, Community Developer,
Office of Community Renewal Division of Housing and Community Renewal
- Andy Kitzmann, Program Manager, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
- Jerry Ashley, Program Manager, Lyons Main Street

1. Action Items from April 1, 2009:

1. WECMSP should request potential dates from the NTMSC for the Work Plan Workshops.

Jayne received potential dates, but only one of the communities has received a final report, so the Work Plan Workshops are going to be pushed back. They all need to be scheduled on consecutive days according to the NTMSC Agreement for Services.

2. Advice from the NTMSC about how to publicly disseminate and educate about the findings in the Resource Team Visit reports. The Advisory Board members should also be able to review, but the WECMSP is sensitive to broad email distribution. The communities can decide how they wish to publicize it. Remember that the information can be obtained by FOIL. The Albion report did not contain anything that the community shouldn't see; other reports will likely be similar in this fashion. Any member on the Advisory Board can request a PDF copy of the report.

3. Dates that the Resource Team Visit reports will be delivered to the three local Main Street programs. Albion's report was delivered the week ending April 13th. Both Lyons' and Lockport's reports are late. Elise Tinsley said that both reports would be delivered by May 28th. (Update – The reports will be delivered by Friday, June 5th.) We have not received the invoice for these services. It is assumed that an invoice will come with the final reports, or shortly following.

2. Maureen Palumbo, Community Developer, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal

- Brief Overview of NYMS Program:

In April 2008, the Office for Small Cities, which has administered New York State's federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program since 2000, took over management of the New York Main Street (NYMS) program. To reflect the additional duties, the name of the agency was changed to the Office of Community Renewal, and it was completely integrated into New York State's Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). The purpose of the NYMS Program is to provide financing to help communities with their efforts to preserve and revitalize mixed-use main street/downtown business districts. The NYMS Program will provide grants to stimulate reinvestment in properties located within mixed-use business districts in urban, small town, and rural areas consistent with Articles 16A and 178 of the Private Housing Finance Law (PHFL). The program was started 2004 and has had one round per year, except for 2008 which had 2 rounds. It is administered by the Office of Community Renewal in Albany, but there is a staff person in Syracuse and in Buffalo (Maureen). Maureen's service area covers both the WECA and G/FLRPC service regions (seventeen counties basically west of Seneca Lake).

 - Local Program Administrator (LPA) – These organizations are awarded and administer NYMS money and make the decisions on how to distribute the money to the local building owners.
 - Eligible Applicants – Not-for-Profits
 - Eligible Buildings – Must be operated by private or non-profit organizations. Can be owned by governments but can not be operated by them.
 - Annual Competitive Applications – Very competitive, last year 5 million dollars was available and 78 applications were received requesting a total of 14 million dollars.
 - Project funding cap: \$200,000 – per LPA, not per building.
 - No administration funds – Funds must be used for the buildings not to administer the grant.
 - Target area – A downtown target area (mixed use area) has to be identified by the applicant. Usually no more than 4 blocks.
 - Two (2) year contract term
 - Assets maintained for 7 year – A lien is placed on properties requiring them to repair any of the NYMS renovations that are damaged for 7 years. Residential units must remain affordable for 7 years.
 - Housing projects need to be affordable to the 80% of median income group (HUD parameters), but do not need to be rented to a low/median income person.
 - NYMS used to pay up to 50% of "hard" costs like facades, interior construction, roofs, but also some other things like architectural services, radon testing etc. They now pay up to 75% of these costs. In-kind contributions can not be used as a match but loans and other grants can be.
- Private Housing Finance Law - Article 26: (S3787- ESPADA) (A7967 – HOYT) – Could be in place for the 2010 round of funding. This would change the program to make it more beneficial to LPAs and building owners.
 - Local Program Administrator (LPA) – Same as above.
 - Eligible Applicants – Not-for-Profits and Units of Local Government
 - Eligible Buildings – Same as above
 - Annual Competitive Applications – Same as above
 - Project funding cap: \$500,000 – Per LPA, not per building.
 - 7.5% for Administration & Planning – Could be used for salary of someone administering the program. 40% of this money can be received up front.
 - Target area – Same as above.
 - Two (2) year contract term.
 - Assets maintained for 5 years – A lien is placed on properties requiring them to repair any of the NYMS renovations that are damaged for 5 years. Residential units must remain affordable for 5 years.
- Is Your Community Prepared to Apply for a NYMS Grant?
 - Does your Main Street or downtown need revitalization?
 - Does the NYMS Program fit into the overall plan for the community? – This should not be the only program that is focusing on downtown revitalization.
 - Does your organization have the capacity to administer a building rehabilitation?
 - Does your community or organization already have design guidelines in place (required)?
 - Has the program been marketed to property owners? Do they support it?

- Application Process:
 - Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
 - Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - Community Development Online (CDOL)
 - Application Instructions
 - Program Guide
- NYMS Application Scoring:
 - A. Need – target areas with higher need are scored higher for this section.
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - B. Impact – what impact will it make? What % of target area that will be affected by the program?
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - Local Initiative
 - Communication, Outreach & Marketing
 - Design
 - Business Strategy
 - C. Leveraging
 - Private Investment
 - Public Investment
 - D. Capacity
 - Program Experience – Has the organization submitting an application received NYMS money in the past?
 - Implementation Capacity – Is this organization able to administer this grant or have a plan how to do so?
 - Readiness – Are business owners signed on and interested in receiving the money? Are design guidelines in place?
- WECMS Advisory Board Brainstorm
 - WECA would have to apply for this if any of the communities wanted the money. G/FLRPC could not because they are not a non-profit. The local programs could not because they are not incorporated non-profits yet and NYMS requires the non-profits to have been in existence for over a year before they can apply.
 - WECA could not apply for one grant to be spread to the three communities; they would have to apply for three grants, one for each community because NYMS wants the money to go to a concentrated target area.
 - An outside consultant could be hired to do the administration of the grant.
 - WECMSP could ask other organizations to help with the funding match.

3. Regional Coordinator Report

- Landmark Society of Western New York's conference in Medina on Saturday, May 2. There was a Main Street educational track, in which Jayme was a presenter. Henry McCartney, Interim Executive Director for Preservation Buffalo Niagara, asked for the contact information of each of the local Main Street programs and will offer them free memberships.
- Roberta Lane from the N/E Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation attended informational meeting in Albion on Friday, May 1 to discuss various funding and technical assistance resources available to the WECMSP.
- Jayme will present to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission on Wednesday, June 24 in Ithaca. Joan will accompany from WECA.
- Program Manager quarterly meeting to occur on Thursday, June 25 (hosted by Lyons Main Street). Fran Gotcsik of Parks & Trails NY, as well as John Dimura of the NYS Canal Corporation, will conference call into the meeting to provide "training" to volunteers conducting the pedestrian-cyclist-boater counts in July and August, 2009. The meeting falls on one of the Lyons 1939 Film Retrospective nights and all attendees are encouraged to attend!
 - Todd Lippa has canal boater count information that he can provide to us. The lift bridge operators count boats and the total number of visible passengers.

- Quarterly meetings coincide with the quarterly reports, so this is our way to get canal data into the NTMSC stats that are required.
- Anticipated NYS DOS EPF-LWRP 09-10 application round in June. Continued operating budget for the WECMSP and possible “demonstration” project for three original communities (based on Resource Team Visit reports). We could create a theme that can be implemented in each of the Main Street communities, perhaps three WECMSP signs. We must keep in mind that this money takes some time to be awarded, executed, and reimbursed.
- Regional Resource Guide – The guide will be a compilation of free resources (trainings, workshops, grants, online resources, data/information clearinghouses, etc.) that the communities can look to for assistance in each of the Four Points™. A draft will be ready by the June 25th Program Manager meeting. It currently contains a good amount of federal and state resources, but lacks a sufficient amount of quality local resources. Contact Tom if you know of any organizations that should be included.
- Lyons Main Street launched their website, see <http://www.lyonsmainstreetprogram.org>
 - Jerry has a folder of positive media articles about their organization.
 - Lyons Main Street is now selling merchandise, such as market bags, t-shirts, and polos.

Action Items:

1. Email Jayme if you would like a copy of the Albion Resource Team Visit report in PDF.
2. Todd Lippa will provide information about Canal Corporation boater counts.
3. Advisory Board members are encouraged to contact Tom Kicior about organizations that should be included in the WECMSP Regional Resource Guide.

Next Main Street Advisory Board meeting is
Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at 1:00PM, preceding the 3:30PM WECA Board meeting, at:
Lockport Main Street, Inc.
1 East Avenue
Lockport, NY 14094.