

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for September 2, 2015

Wednesday, September 2, 2015
11:30 AM

Present: Sharon Lenz, Paul Cohen, Carrie Ann Schubert, Linda Le Claire, Stewart Strauss, Evelyn Orr, Cameron Irtifa, Bernie Kurtz, Nhedti Colquitt, Tara Pedersen, Sue Anderson

Absent: Amy Koski, Larry Cavasso, Claudia McCarter, Hailey Freeman

Guests: Sheri Stuart, Pam Clarke, Michelle Smith, Harold Nolder, Bill Berg, Donna Sanson

Location: Lanphere Conference Room, 12505 SW Broadway St., Beaverton, OR 97005

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m.

Oregon Main Street Program

Sheri Stuart joined the group to report on the Oregon Main Street Program and how the BDA can move between the levels. Oregon Main Street is a state-wide program for downtown revitalization. It uses the nationally recognized Main Street approach. At present, 92 communities participate. The Oregon Main Street Program started in 2008, but the process has been around since 1977. The OMS program will look at organizational structure in place; the BDA can be that organizational structure. Things considered by OMS are: (1) private sector improvement; things that impact the feel and character of the downtown (2) public sector improvement, e.g., street lights and trees. The state legislature passed a bill on August 12 to create a \$2.5 million Oregon Main Street grant program. These funds are designated to go to communities. There is a competitive application process for brick and mortar types of things. Anyone participating in the OMS network will be able to apply for these funds. The higher you are in the OMS network, the more points you earn. The more points you have, the more opportunities you receive to be competitive for these monies.

Paul Cohen asked if cities could apply for those grants, or can the BDA apply on behalf of a particular business. The business would indicate that they were part of a downtown organization. Grant programs are only for historic preservation projects, e.g., remodeling and historic preservation. New applicable projects will be eligible to apply. Projects have a higher likelihood of success the stronger the downtown organization is. There also should be a strong state program. That is why the higher up the chain you are, it shows that the community is more dedicated to downtown revitalization. The more a community is invested, the more the OMS wants to see the community succeed.

A key component is overall revitalization; having an organizational structure working on physical improvement through design element—economic vitality. That is strengthening businesses and is an important piece of the overall development. The OMS uses a four-prong approach. It has a long history with the national district. There are 44 state-wide programs similar to the OMS. Portland has its own Main Street Program. The Oregon Main Street Program works with the rest of the state.

The OMS provides technical assistance; e.g., committee training and work plan development. It does not provide direct dollars. The grant program that was just funded will be the first OMS funding tool. It is mainly for brick and mortar businesses as well as economic development. The OMS anticipates it might be done organizationally for brick and mortar. Some of the funds have to go to under-served communities, but all communities will be eligible.

Each state that has a state-wide main street program is allowed to design its own program. The OMS developed a tier system. Right now, about ½ of its communities are affiliates, which fall outside of the tier system. These communities are only eligible to attend workshops and receive phone assistance. Main street track communities see that downtown revitalization is important. The OMS has three different levels—exploring, transforming and performing. The BDA is at the exploring level in the Main Street program. It is part of the main street track, which allows it to access some technical assistance. At the exploring downtown level organizations are allowed training once per year. The OMS commits to providing technical assistance, for example, meeting with the committees to develop work plans. The BDA already has a non-profit in place. To move to the next tier, it needs dedicated staff at least one day a week. At the transforming level, the organization is fully committed to the Main Street model and is

working toward having a full-time person. The BDA has been participating at the exploring downtown level but should be moving toward the transforming downtown level. That would require developing a budget a little bit more strongly so it is able to hire at least a part-time staff person.

Paul asked how the BDA could get on the mailing list for new grant opportunities. Sheri responded that the BDA should provide an email address and she would send any new information about grant programs as well as training and workshops. The Oregon Main Street program is moving to a biannual meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for October 7-9 in The Dalles. There is no charge for the conference.

Stewart Strauss asked if working with one of the universities for some sort of master's thesis program, would fulfill the requirement for a part-time staff person. Sheri responded that the BDA would need some kind of staff support. It could be a volunteer. There is no paid staff requirement. Canby funds a full-time staff person through urban renewal. Other communities have a paid staff person. There are different ways you can meet that requirement. One avenue would be to help the Organization Committee build their funding strategy. Some cities have funded a staff person through urban renewal. Other communities are funded directly through the city's general fund. Harold Nolder informed the group that he has the skills necessary and he would be willing to volunteer to fill that need.

Sheri noted that the BDA hasn't made a lot of requests for her time. There are some things for which the BDA is eligible. She could meet with the Board to work on funding strategies. The BDA can request assistance from OMS to move to the next level. Beaverton has a lot of new businesses opening and a lot of building improvement. She said that she has applications for the transforming downtown level.

Evelyn Orr asked if the Board still was working on a retreat. Paul responded that a retreat will be scheduled for 8:30 to 11:30 on October 19th. Sheri said that the purpose of the retreat will be to establish over-all goals and objectives. Fund-raising strategies and volunteer development would be discussed. Getting a strong foundation in place is the key. At some future date, there could be a follow-up meeting when the Board would break off into groups. She suggested that the BDA invite a broad base of people with a broad overview. It is what you want to achieve as a result of that process. There was some discussion about the physical attributes of the meeting location. Sheri noted that she will need clear wall space.

Paul said that he would work on a venue for the retreat. He also asked what the deadline for the transforming downtown application was. Sheri responded it would be the end of December. A lot of things are required. One requirement is a resolution of support from the city. It takes some time and she likes to give communities three months. A decision will be made around the first of the year.

Letter of Support

Harold Nolder told the group that he has run into some minor obstacles with the city while trying to renovate his new space for a proposed tea room. He indicated that he was getting conflicting signals from the city and he had encountered some roadblocks. He asked if the BDA had any ideas and stated that he might need a letter of support. Paul asked if he had met with Bill Berg. Bill responded that they had a meeting scheduled. He said that it is always good to have letters of support. It is always good to hear from businesses. He encouraged the BDA to do that. After roundtable discussion, Paul said that if the Board wanted to do this, the Executive Committee could put together a letter of support. Bill suggested that he meet with Harold first to see if the issues could be resolved without a letter of support.

Review and Approve Minutes

Cameron Irtifa moved to approve the minutes of the August meeting. Evelyn Orr seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Tara Pedersen presented the Promotion Committee report.

- The final First Friday for 2015 is September 4.

- Broadway will be closed to allow bands and vendors to set up.
- Riverside Northwest will be performing on Broadway. They have been asked to turn their speakers so they don't face the Fisher/Rossi Building.
- Doug Fulton will be playing at the Vault.
- Graceless Lady will play at Beaverton Florist.
- There will be 12 vendors.
- Someone needs to be at the BDA table.

Carrie Ann Schubert said that signage states the event continues through October. Tara replied that the city will take the signs down after the September event.

Carrie Ann asked if anything was being planned to coincide with the tree lighting ceremony. Tara responded that the Committee had nothing planned. Downtown business still will be encouraged to decorate their windows. Carrie Ann said that she would take her wares down to the tree lighting ceremony. She said that she was not going to stop promoting her business during that time and suggested that the BDA put a table at the Library. Paul responded that there is still time to make a decision about that.

Old Business

There was discussion about future funding for the BDA. Sharon said she heard that the BDA would need to apply for funds through the Chamber. Bill replied that the process is being reworked. There are proposals but nothing definitive. Until the BDA received official word, he would not say anything about it. Sheri said that in the past she had done a work plan and then submitted a report. Checks were issued on a quarterly basis. She has lots of examples of contract for services. Bill said that Amy Koski was working specifically on that.

Evelyn reported that she found an old Board roster and it had term limits on it. She asked that this be an agenda item for October. There are several seats that will be vacated at the end of the year.

Bill said that the city was again competing for a TIGER grant. He said that one item they had received feedback on was a lack of business support. He distributed information on the TIGER grant as well as a script and asked that each business owner contact his/her representative and senators to support the grant.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40.