

**SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
WORK SESSION**

September 19, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers and Via Videoconference

1. Call to Order

Mayor Boley, present, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present: Melissa Wilson, Ronald Russell, Marv Atkins, Leeah Shipley and Dan Ulledahl. Dan Hartman was present via Zoom.

Staff present: Cynthia Wagner, Gina Pate, Chief Lockridge, Chuck Soules, Stephen Larson, Jack Hendrix, Matt Denton and Linda Drummond.

2. Main Street Update

Alyssa Sander presented the Main Street District's update report to the Board. She noted in 2021 Main Street District was able to enter into an agreement with the City of Smithville to have the ability to hire a full-time staff person. Alyssa explained that she was hired that October as Executive Director.

She gave a brief history of the Smithville Main Street District. A few years ago, business owners, City employees and the Chamber of Commerce attended a training in Jefferson City to learn about Missouri Main Street. They provide support to help create a culture of community and economic vitality.

In 2019 the group applied for and received the Community Empowerment Grant and then started Smithville Main Street District, which was formerly the Heritage District. In 2021 Smithville Main Street District 2021 Main Street District was able to enter into an agreement with the City of Smithville to have the ability to hire a full-time staff person. Alyssa explained that she was hired in October 2021 as Executive Director. Her job was to continue to facilitate the mission using the four-point tier approach to help out downtown remain the pulse of the community.

Alyssa recognized the Main Street District Board:

Alicia Neth – President, Sarah Ulledahl - Vice President, Leeah Shipley – Secretary, Crystal Calvert – Treasurer, Cara Braithwaite - Board Member, Adam Royds - Board Member, Eugene Diamond - Board Member and Kortney Caldwell - Board Member.

The Main Street's Four-Tier Approach:

Design

In 2022 they partnered with the City to obtain an ARPA grant for Wayfinding Design Guidelines, the project was completed in 2023. She noted that this was an exciting project. They got to do an analysis of the town, they drove throughout the town to see what signs Smithville did and did not have. They formed a committee to help choose the signage design and are excited to get it implemented. Main Street will continue with the creation and implementation of these signs by way of grants.

They were able to raise the bulk of funds to put the lights on the stage, which has been met with many compliments and accolades. An effort that brought many residents together in an excellent show of pride for our downtown community.

In 2022 they had a successful holiday season with help from the City's Parks and Recreation staff. She thanked them for all their help!

Alyssa was able to serve on the committee to help begin to bring art downtown by way of Art on the Move, which is now located at the corner of Main Street and Commercial Street.

They were part of the discussion of the Downtown Use Guidelines and what changes needed to be made.

She gathered resources to begin a Design Assistance packet for business owners to help with their question about tuck pointing, awnings, etc.

Promotion

They had a successful event season in 2022 and part of 2023. They held both wine walks, the whiskey walk, city-wide garage sale, vendor portion of the bike race and Junkville. With these events they were able to raise almost \$30,000 for Main Street.

Alyssa created a Downtown Event Guide for other organizations to assist in seamlessly hosting events. She worked with the Chamber of Commerce on several events and initiatives. They partnered with the Smithville Farmer's and Maker's Market with advertising, promoting the event and the Courier Tribune has been an incredible help to them.

They created a map of the downtown area to hand out to people so they can see where businesses, parking and parks are located.

They utilized social media for brand recognition, promotion, fundraising and community events.

Alyssa noted that they have won two awards at the Missouri Main Street Connection's Premiere Revitalization Conference.

Best New Promotion - Whiskey Walk 2022

Outstanding City Official - Damien Boley

Organization

They formed a new team of the organization and identified a leader for the Community Engagement team. This team was created to help take the message of Main Street to the people and then help them get connected in a particular way.

They hosted several community engagement events to help inform the community about their mission and vision statements, goals, and initiatives.

Alyssa noted that with the help of volunteer Nicole Turner, they created a new logo and rebranding process, to ramp up the brand of the Smithville Main Street District. They feel like this nod to nostalgia and architecture, while giving a modern and unique feel is just what Main Street needs to continue becoming the heart of our community. Nicole is also in marketing and is going to help them with the roll out of the new brand.

Also keeping up with the normal housekeeping with ongoing budget tracking.

Alyssa noted that they have been affiliated with the Missouri Main Street Connection since the beginning. In July the board began a cost benefit analysis regarding their partnership and whether it was a benefit to continue with Missouri Main Street Connection. While their philosophy and four-point approach provided an excellent road map for the organization to begin, they have decided to not renew their partnership with Missouri Main Street Connection for the next calendar year. She explained that when calculating expenses for the required trainings to stay affiliated throughout the year the cost was in the ballpark of \$10,000. Missouri Main Street Connection requires four quarterly trainings, a national conference, a state conference, directors' retreats and monthly calls. The time commitment required for Alyssa and the two other board members was very difficult. She explained that they have decided not to renew their membership for the next calendar year. They are using many of the resources they have provided and feel confident in implementing them moving forward.

Alyssa said that this would be her last report to the Board. She is resigning as the Executive Director. She was offered a new position that she could not pass up. She will remain with Main Street as a volunteer.

Alicia Neth thanked Alyssa for everything she has done to help the Main Street District get up and running. She reiterated the fact that the requirements for being a member of the Missouri Main Street had the volunteers having to take days off from their jobs to attend, but they will continue to use their framework.

Alicia noted that at their board retreat two weeks ago, they rewrote their Mission and Vision Statement.

Mission Statement

The Smithville Main Street District is a community-driven nonprofit organization that preserves, promotes, rejuvenates, and enriches the historic, cultural, and economic landscapes of downtown Smithville, Missouri.

Vision Statement

The Smithville Main Street District envisions a thriving, historic, and diverse downtown that is the pulse of the community.

They are not replacing Alyssa's position at this time. Since they are not renewing their membership with the Missouri Main Street that will eliminate a lot of the day-to-day work. The volunteers will meet once a month to plan their two large events each year and one small event each month, community information and host a monthly Merchant Mingle after hours event.

Alicia explained that their marketing and communications goals are: one social media post

a week, monthly newsletter, implementation of new branding and work towards a Media Day - spring 2024.

The financial and development will still have the same framework: budget, fundraising, identifying three potential grant opportunities and applying for at least one grant a month.

Alicia noted they have discussed possibly getting an intern and have talked with Carol Noecker about some client-connected projects through the high school. Having a student come in and help them with social media and photography.

Alderman Wilson wished Alyssa the best with her new endeavor. She also explained that Smithville is not the first community to not renew their membership with Missouri Main Street. After communities realize how much time was dedicated outside of being in your own community and the expense that come with it that is why they have also not stayed with the Missouri Main Street.

Alyssa noted that after being in the Missouri Main Street for two years much of the information they are receiving now is the same. She said that she had not learned anything new in probably the last year.

3. Downtown Design Guidelines

Jack Hendrix, Development Director, noted that in 2019, the Board of Aldermen adopted the current Sidewalk Design and Use Guidelines after the completion of the Streetscape construction project.

The policy was created to balance the public use of sidewalks, for pedestrian and downtown businesses to use these same areas as other communities. At the time this was adopted, the plan was to annually review those guidelines to make sure that the guidelines still met the needs of the businesses, etc. Unfortunately, in April of 2020, Covid happened, and no review occurred. Now that we have a Main Street District, City staff has been meeting with them and they have had a lot of ideas as to what is working and not working with the guidelines we started. Based on their ideas and suggestions, staff has put together a new Use Guidelines packet. The first change is to remove the sidewalk sign leasing program and convert it to a merchant use permit which means they will be leasing the area. Sidewalk sales will still be allowed. The only thing that is changing with it is the fee structure. There would now be a one-time fee for merchant use and sales. They would still be limited to 45 days per calendar year. The other significant change is the ADA path. Following several meetings staff and the Main Street have developed an amended structure of the guidelines that is believed to open the areas for more flexible uses of the areas, while still preserving the ADA requirements of the sidewalks and keeping it safe for disabled visitors and pedestrians.

The fees have changed but the insurance requirements remain the same. The annual cost for the two types of permits is \$50.00 for a sidewalk café permit and \$25.00 for the Merchant Use Area Permits.

Another change is hanging banners in the downtown area. In the summer of 2019, we had an entity request to hang event banners on the street light banner hangers in the Streetscape project. Staff submitted a proposal to the Board through a work session to

add a fee for staff's costs to install and un-install banners for events in the downtown area. That matter was approved by the Board in August of 2019 and effective on November 1, 2019. While preparing for this presentation, our research indicates that other than the fee approved by the Board, there were no other written guidelines for issuing these permits. Over the last several years, staff have identified several issues that are recommended to be incorporated into an official policy by the Board. That recommendation is:

Throughout the downtown areas with Streetscape improvements the streetlights have incorporated hangers for banners. If a festival or event is scheduled in the Courtyard Park area, it may apply to use the streetlights to place event banners. The installation of banners must be by city staff, and all banners must meet the design specifications of existing city banners in order to be installed. Any such banners may only be placed 14 days prior to the scheduled event, unless there is a prior event that will occur less than 14 days prior to proposed event.

The applicant must provide the city with the proposed design of the banners and provide assurance that the vendor making the banners understands the city's design specifications and will submit compliant banners. The applicant must also provide the proposed number of banners. No more than 20 banners may be installed four at the intersection of Bridge and Church, Bridge and Main, Main and Mill, Main and Commercial, as well as two at Main and 169 and two at Bridge and Meadow). If the applicant seeks a different placement, the locations of the 20 banners must also be provided. Once the city is assured that the signs meet the design specifications, the applicant will be released to order the banners. The completed banners must be delivered to the city no later than five (5) business days prior to the proposed installation date. Once the city removes the banners, the applicant shall come pick up the banners within five (5) days of notification that the banners have been removed.

Alderman Russell asked how well the sidewalk signs program worked and how it is changing.

Jack explained that in the four years there have only been maybe four signs leased. If the changes are approved merchants will be able to have their own signs for advertising, but they have to be brought in at night. They cannot be left outside.

Alderman Russell asked if the ADA path will be marked.

Jack explained that the businesses need to work together so that the sidewalk remains clear for a walkable path to accommodate all disabilities.

Jack noted that this will come back to the Board for approval as an Ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances and a Resolution to approve the Sidewalk Use Guidelines.

Alderman Hartman noted that he thought this was a great opportunity for our downtown businesses to match what other cities are doing. He thanked everyone for their work on this.

4. Adjourn

Alderman Ulledahl moved to adjourn. Alderman Atkins seconded the motion.

Ayes – 6, Noes – 0, motion carries. Mayor Boley declared the Work Session adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Linda Drummond, City Clerk

Damien Boley, Mayor