



## Main Street Board

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A regular meeting of the Main Street Board was held on Monday, March 5 2018, beginning at 4:00 p.m. at Brenham City Hall, 200 W. Vulcan Street, Brenham, Texas.

Members present:

Chair Margie Young, Vice Chair Jim Moser, John Hermann, Walter Jackson, Tiffany Morisak, Dona Lynn Parker, Mark Schneider, Tom Whitehead and Connie Wilder

Members absent:

Jon Hill and Traci Pyle

City staff present:

Main Street Manager Jennifer Eckermann, Director of Community Services Wende Ragonis, and Community Services Coordinator Alexandra Dill

Others present:

Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau Representative Jenny Mills

**1. Call Meeting to Order.**

**2. Citizen/Visitor Comments.**

None

### 3. Approval of Minutes from Monday, February 5, 2018 Meeting.

A motion was made by John Hermann and seconded by Mark Schneider to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2018 meeting.

Chair Margie Young called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Chair Margie Young	Yes
Vice Chair Jim Moser	<b>Absent</b>
John Hermann	Yes
Jon Hill	<b>Absent</b>
Walter Jackson	Yes
Tiffany Morisak	Yes
Traci Pyle	<b>Absent</b>
Dona Lynn Parker	Yes
Mark Schneider	Yes
Tom Whitehead	Yes
Connie Wilder	<b>Absent</b>

Connie Wilder arrived after the vote.

### 4. Discuss and Consider Approval of Staff Recommendation to Allocate \$15,000 of Raised Funds to Promotion of Downtown Brenham.

Jennifer Eckermann first apologized for the agenda packet for this meeting being less formally put together than other packets.

Jim Moser arrived during the discussion of this item.

Eckermann presented a report created by Kevin Boggus, which outlines the Downtown Brenham website traffic since 2011. The newly updated website has not generated more visitors due to lack of promotion. Eckermann showed the Board the current available grants and funds including:

- Downtown Improvement Fund (\$54,933.82)
- Incentive Awards (\$2,51.70)
- Main Street Grants Fund (\$2,500.00)

At the February Main Street Board meeting, the Board discussed combining the Main Street Grants fund with the Incentive Awards, which would now total \$5,451.70.

Additionally, funds totaling \$15,000 for the EIIG Fund and \$10,000 for the Incentive Grant Fund would also be moved from the Downtown Improvement Fund to the newly combined Incentive Awards and Main Street Grants funds. This would leave \$29,933.82 in the Downtown Improvement Fund and \$30,451.70 in the combined fund.

Eckermann is requesting the Board approve allocation of \$15,000 from the Downtown Improvement Fund to be used for promotion of Downtown Brenham. Promotion ideas include billboards and rack cards that direct visitors to the website rather than a Downtown business directory. Eckermann reminded the group that this fund is replenished throughout the year through funds raised at events such as the Uptown Swirl, brick sales, and sales of “The Burning of Brenham” books among other events throughout the year.

Chair Margie Young inquired who would be working on this promotion project. Eckermann said design and printing would likely be hired out, but most of the promotion projects would be done within the Promotion Committee.

John Hermann asked if this item should be approved, would the Board then also be approached to approve what the \$15,000 is spent on. Eckermann stated that ideas would be sent out to Board members for comments and review.

Chair Margie Young stated that previously the Board had not approved use of billboards for promotion. John Hermann noted that many are vacant on Highway 290. Eckermann stated that they are hoping to get a good price on a billboard campaign due to number of vacancies. Eckermann also stated that digital advertising will be explored as well.

A motion was made by John Hermann and seconded by Mark Schneider to approve staff recommendation to allocate \$15,000 of raised funds to promotion of Downtown Brenham.

Chair Margie Young called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Chair Margie Young	Yes
Vice Chair Jim Moser	Yes
John Hermann	Yes
Jon Hill	<b>Absent</b>
Walter Jackson	Yes
Tiffany Morisak	Yes
Traci Pyle	<b>Absent</b>
Dona Lynn Parker	Yes
Mark Schneider	Yes
Tom Whitehead	Yes
Connie Wilder	Yes

## **5. Discuss and Consider Approval of Updated Main Street Brenham Vision Statement and 2018 Goals.**

Jennifer Eckermann reminded the Board of the workshop held by Debra Drescher in 2017 regarding updating the Main Street Mission and Vision Statement. The task of updating the vision statement was given to the Organization Committee. Eckermann feels the new vision statement is more personal to Brenham and takes into consideration the wide variety of projects and programs that Brenham Main Street focuses on. The updated Vision and Goals are as follows:

### **Our Vision**

Main Street Brenham envisions downtown as a growing destination  
and the vibrant heart of our community;  
where history is preserved, interactive and comes to life;  
where a varied business mix is active, engaged and thriving;  
and where our community's culture is recognized and celebrated.

## Goals for 2018

Consider and develop alternate sources of funding.

Encourage varied and unique retail mix.

Encourage appreciation and support for preserving our history and architectural heritage.

Continue work on implementing the Downtown Brenham Master Plan.

Promote downtown as cultural destination to both locals and visitors.

Entice the interest of the public in downtown revitalization efforts.

Work to improve online and social media components of Main Street.

A motion was made by Connie Wilder and seconded by John Hermann to approve the updated Main Street Brenham Vision Statement and 2018 Goals.

Chair Margie Young called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Chair Margie Young	Yes
Vice Chair Jim Moser	Yes
John Hermann	Yes
Jon Hill	<b>Absent</b>
Walter Jackson	Yes
Tiffany Morisak	Yes
Traci Pyle	<b>Absent</b>
Dona Lynn Parker	Yes
Mark Schneider	Yes
Tom Whitehead	Yes
Connie Wilder	Yes

### **6. Review of Evaluation of Annual Progress/Ten Criteria Report That Recommends National Accreditation for Main Street Brenham to the National Main Street Center/Main Street America.**

Jennifer Eckermann stated that Main Street Brenham did receive national recognition again this year as well as receiving an additional 3.5 points to our previous score. Ongoing improvements include update of the Mission Statement. Eckermann stated the entire report is available to any who ask.

### **7. Main Street Brenham Project Updates to Include Wayfinding; Oral History Project; Local History Day and Summer Sip 2018.**

Alexandra Dill began with an update on the Wayfinding project stating that a projected completion date near the end of April 2018 is anticipated. Sign sites have been located and approved, components are in the process of fabrication and they are hoping for no further manufacturer delays.

Chair Margie Young stated the Oral History project is going well and asked that any candidates the Board knows to please pass their contact information on to Young. The project is expected to continue beyond the May 2018 due date. Young said she had recently completed the interview with A.W. Hodde and is continuing to look for more interview candidates.

Jennifer Eckermann stated that Local History Day is moving forward and thanked the Rotary Club for their financial contribution.

Eckermann announced that the Summer Sip will be on June 9, 2018 and will be 80's themed. There will also be 80's movies shown at The Barnhill Center including "Ferris Bueller's Day Off", "Pretty in Pink" and "Footloose".

Dona Lynn asked if a logo for the Summer Sip could be sent to the Downtown businesses for use with promotion. Eckermann stated this would be emailed shortly.

#### **8. Design Committee Report to Include Update on Possible Workshop Speakers; Alamo Alley Lighting; Wayfinding Ribbon-Cutting; Possible Signage for Vacant Buildings; Incentive Grant Forms Out; Park Street Drainage Project; and Laundry Building Update.**

Jennifer Eckermann presented this item beginning with stating that lighting in Alamo Alley has begun and that maintenance is waiting for better weather to complete this project.

Eckermann says the Committee is discussing possible ways to mark the completion of the Wayfinding project.

Eckermann said the group is also working on possible signage for Downtown vacant buildings that would all match and perhaps give a history of the building to prospective buyers.

Eckermann stated the Park Street drainage project is ongoing. The contract was due to go to a meeting on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, however that meeting has been postponed until March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Once this contract is approved, work will begin. Cullen Holle is opening a restaurant in the area of the work, but the City has been working closely with him and other property owners to minimize the effect on their businesses and properties.

Finally, Eckermann noted that the Laundry Building continues to have work done including a slab placed next to the building. She also noted that a TABC sign has appeared on the nearby Kettler's building which may indicate it will be a new business, but currently little is known about this business.

#### **9. Organization Committee Report to Include Updating of Downtown Shopper's Guide; Local History Day; New Instagram Account; DAR Preservation Award; Downtown Farmers Market; Mission/Vision Statement Updates; and Possible Cultural District Application.**

Tiffany Morisak stated that instead of a shopper's guide, the Organization Committee is going to design a rack card to guide visitors to the new DowntownBrenham.com website.

Morisak states a new Downtown Brenham Instagram account has been created and will be promoted in conjunction with the Facebook page.

Morisak also noted that she and Eckermann are applying for several DAR Preservation Awards including one for Sharon Brass for her work on "The Burning of Brenham" book and another for the non-profit that worked on The Barnhill Center.

Morisak continued that a new Farmer's Market is being discussed with a group from the community and meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.

The Organization Committee continues work on the Brenham Main Street Mission Statement.

Jennifer Eckermann noted that the Texas Commission on the Arts originally had a Cultural Arts designation available however the title has changed to a Cultural District. A Cultural District includes all factors that make up a community including the history, arts, food, religion, etc. Eckermann felt that Downtown Brenham certainly fits this description and would like to pursue this designation. The application process is lengthy and was discovered after the letter of intent was due. Eckermann will continue to research the process. Dona Lynn Parker feels this designation would be a great help to promoting Downtown.

#### **10. Promotion Committee Report to Include Development of Promotion Plan for Downtown Brenham; Discussion of Possible New Events.**

Tom Whitehead began by stating that there is interest among the Committee members to do a Pie Festival. Eckermann stated that the area has three of the top ten pies in the state – Royer’s, Must Be Heaven, Bever’s Kitchen. Promotion Committee continues to discuss this event as a possible fundraiser for Main Street.

#### **11. Economic Restructuring Committee Report to Include Review of Incentive Grant Application Timeline; Business Recruitment Discussion: EIIG Grant Application; and Downtown Stop Sign Request.**

Jennifer Eckermann reminded the group that the Economic Restructuring Committee has changed their name to the Economic Vitality Committee (EVC).

Eckermann continued, stating that the Committee is considering adding a six-month time limit for applicants for the Incentive Grant to complete work or inform the Committee of their need to extend the work timeframe.

Eckermann noted that a subcommittee of the EVC is considering an incentive to work with property owners to make money available to those with vacant buildings to hold their building while businesses are recruited to fill the space. The incentive is still under consideration.

Eckermann states the EIIG Grant requires an application and the Committee has enlisted help from Page Michel and Candi Eaton to develop the application.

The EVC continues to work on possible stop signs in Downtown. The request is being considered by the City before passing it on to Texas Department of Transportation. Dona Lynn Parker asked if video of speeding vehicles in Downtown would help make a case for the stop signs. Wende Ragonis agreed that it could be helpful.

#### **12. Brenham Heritage Museum Report.**

Tiffany Morsiak reported that the Brenham Heritage Museum will be hosting two exhibits. One being a Maifest exhibit at The Barnhill Center which will begin April 27 and be open to the public Tuesdays and Saturdays 1pm – 5pm and on May 4 from 1pm – 6pm and May 5 from after the parade to 3pm. The other exhibit is a World War I exhibit in Chappell Hill.

Morisak stated new banners are being designed which direct visitors to the Bus Depot and tie in to the Wayfinding signage.

She concluded that the Museum Board Chair Jo Ann Wolf is meeting Elizabeth Price to discuss the exact process and costs to reopen the Museum building.

**13. Washington County Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau Report, Including Recent Promotional Activities and Special Events.**

Jenny Mills began stating that April 25<sup>th</sup> is Administrative Professionals Day and the Chamber is hosting a luncheon and speaker LaDonna Gatlin.

The Small Business Forum will be held on June 12.

Mills stated that Bluebonnets and Indian Paintbrushes are beginning to bloom and that the VisitBrenham.com website will be posting updates on locations.

During Spring Break, staff from the Visitor's Center will be on-site at Blue Bell to help visitor's make the most of their visit to Brenham and Washington County.

Finally, Mills says a contest to win a trip to Brenham will be on Facebook soon. The contest will run through the month of April and a winner will be randomly drawn on May 1. Mills encourages any interested business to consider donating items/gift cards for the winner's basket.

Connie Wilder expressed concern about warning visitors about crossing property lines. Mills agreed and stated warnings are posted on the website and visitors are reminded often in-person.

**14. Staff Report to Include Building, Business and Program Update to Include Information on Mural Signage to Recognize Contribution; Main Street/Downtown-Related Items on Council Agenda for March 8<sup>th</sup>; and Business Updates.**

Jennifer Eckermann noted that a sign is in production for the new Austin/Alamo mural to recognize the contribution from Chamber, Main Street and mural artist Anat Ronen.

Eckermann continued that the Park Street drainage contract and review of the Main Street work plan was going to take place at Council on Thursday, however the meeting has been rescheduled for Thursday March 22.

Eckermann noted Las Americas is doing very well.

John Hermann stated Bluebird off the Square is closing in the upcoming summer.

Chair Margie Young reminded the group to continue to keep the Pyle family in their prayers as Charlie recovers.

**15. Next Meeting – Monday, April 2 or April 9, 2018.**

Jennifer noted that April 2 is the day after Easter and wanted the Board to decide. The group felt Monday, April 2 would work fine.

**16. Adjourn.**

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Margie Young  
Chair

**ATTEST:**

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Alexandra Dill  
Community Services

*Main Street Board  
March 5, 2018*