



Gateway Aesthetics

April 12, 2007

Newsletter

Our First Meeting

Over 25 community members attended the initial Gateway Aesthetics meeting at the Mather Board Room on April 10. The group represented a diverse mix of business owners, dedicated civic activists, church leaders, county and city government officials, and state and federal representatives. A list of participants is available from Gregg Bruff. Though many of the discussion topics have been broached historically in the community, this meeting indicates a broad level of support for renewed engagement and action. Thanks goes out to Bob Eslinger who welcomed participants and introduced the evening's activities.



Overview of the Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities

After a round of introductions led by Teresa Chase, Jim Northup provided an overview of the workshop attended by six area residents. He then mentioned the key lesson from the workshop that applied to the evening's discussion was that economic viability is directly tied to the appearance of the downtown and approaches to rural communities.

McMahon Video

The Gateway Aesthetics Group watched a 30 minute video produced by Ed McMahon of the Conservation Fund. Mr. McMahon is an internationally known author and lecturer on small town economies and their relationship to community design and planning, gateway community aesthetics, infrastructure, arts and culture. After viewing the video, a list of discussion topics were posted on flip charts. The group was asked if additional copies would be useful to show at various community groups. Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore has ordered 10 copies of the DVD for sharing with your group. We will contact you when they are received.

Discussion Topics

The following list is taken from participant comments and flip chart notes recorded during the meeting.

- Develop a turn of the century theme.
- Bike/walking trail will add a lot to the community.
- Money <> mindset?
- Money and beauty go together - need to develop a business plan.
- Idea of putting lights back in the downtown trees - hummingbird feeders too?
- Beautification - especially while city is doing infrastructure improvement projects - replace trees (Arbor Day) curb line flowers, theme, color scheme.
- DDA facade program - 10 grants.
- Architectural theme so buildings and signs complement each other.
- Sign theme is critically important - needs to extend to Townships.
- Emphasize brownstone (Jacobsville sandstone) buildings and interpret history.
- Nasty billboard about Munising in Trenary - needs rehab.
- Bugaboo to get across M-28 downtown - walkway with town entrance archway (like Houghton).



- Keep sidewalks clear of snow in winter and dog poop in summer.
- Support beautifying east and west entrances to town and Superior Street - not just businesses - also homes.
- Murals - Carl's Quonset hut, good example in Ashland, Wisconsin, using area themes.
- Joanne's corner also needs work to make people go "WOW" (rather than coal pile).
- Connect other activities around bicycle path/tour - signs, hot dog stand, entrepreneurs.
- Planning difficult with many different entities - need coordinated effort - all Townships and City and adjacent counties.
- Litter leads to more litter.
- Celebrate successes in community - The Modern Woodsmith, Lincoln School, AmericInn, facade improvements - award or articles in paper.
- Appeal of safe community, sense of neighborhood, spirit of cooperation.
- Housing development with porch swings - city benches?
- Helpful to do asset listing - what is working with aesthetics?
- Build on what is already happening - start with asset mapping.
- E-mail to folks with info on projects already underway - participants take that list and share and get feedback.
- Take a tour of town and look at the current condition.

Ask Yourself a Question -

Is there a topic or three on the flip chart list that you are passionate about? Are you willing to lead a group or be a part of a group to forge ahead with that initiative?



Upcoming Meeting

The group agreed to meet again on Tuesday, April 24, at 7 p.m. at the Mather Board Room. At that time, we will begin to narrow down the list of ideas and select one or more projects to develop that will lead to an enhanced aesthetics of our Gateway Community. Help spread the word - print and pass this newsletter to a friend. See you there!

Related Events

Pastor Lynn Hubbard distributed an informational packet on commencement of the Grand Island Conference and Retreat Program, sponsored by the Turtle Island Project, Northern Great Lakes Synod, Lutheran Youth Ministries. Please take a few minutes to read of this interesting series of lectures and discussion.

The Arts and Culture Enhancement group's next meeting is Tuesday, April 17, 7 p.m. at the Alger County Heritage Center at 1496 Washington Street in Munising. Please join us if you are interested in this effort.

What Do You Think? Give Us A Call...

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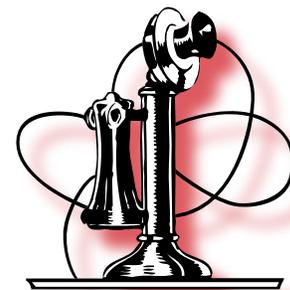
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"Failure to plan is planning to fail" - Ed McMahon