

Memorandum

Date: November 13, 2008
To: Members of the Main Street Monroe/Downtown Development Authority
From: Andrea Jones, Main Street Manager
Re: November Monthly Report

I have received great comments on the website which launched last month. Those responding have stated how professional the site looks, what useful information it has and in general how nice and/or great it is. After reviewing the statistics for the first half of October with the old website, and the second half of October with the new website, over six times more people visited our new website. There is typically a surge when a new website launches, but the first half of November still showed five times more unique visitors to our site than the first half of October. In fact, $\frac{1}{4}$ as many people have visited our new site in the first half of this month as compared to our old website in the entire time it was live in 2008 (January-mid-October). Several organizations and businesses not located in the DDA district have requested to be added to the website and I have reviewed those requests based on relevance to the site since our focus is highlighting the DDA district. I will be making a presentation of the website at the November 17th City Council meeting. I am continuing to meet with Monroe Publishing to finish the final set-up and details of the website.

The following is an update on the Design Committee projects approved at the August MSM/DDA meeting: The Christmas décor is being hung by our seasonal employee. The wreaths with bows will be hung on alternating lamp posts to the garland and string lights. Once the light poles are up in the new alley, those will get garland and lights on them. The additional skyline purchased this year will not be hung since one of the poles that would hold up the skyline needs repairing. We were aware of this when we ordered the skyline, but wanted to purchase it at this year's price in case prices go up next year. The banners will be hung once DPS picks them up. Final details are still being determined on the bike racks. The flower basket brackets are back ordered and will tentatively be delivered at the beginning of December. Four pictures are currently being framed for the office and all of the framed pictures (including black and white historic) can be hung once a finish coat has been put on the picture rail.

The Façade Grant signs previously discussed have been created and I have six in my office to distribute to projects. I already have one property owner that has agreed to display the sign in their window.

We have one seasonal employee left on staff and he is working Tuesdays through Fridays. I am looking at the budget to determine if we can keep him a few days longer than originally thought to ensure that certain projects get completed.

I sought resumes through Monroe County Community College for someone to make changes to the Access Database for our Building/Business Inventory. I have received two resumes and several calls of interest. I will be selecting a candidate if I feel any of those interested would be suitable.

I have visited roughly half of the establishments listed on the Business Guide.

I attended the webinar "Attracting Retail to Downtown and Neighborhood Redevelopments" sponsored by Buxton Company.

I met with Jeff Green from the City and Terry Nisley from MBT to discuss interest in reviving the Heritage Loan Program. Terry will be getting back to us with details of the bank's interest. We can then set up an updated version of the program that will be another tool for building renovation. Several ideas were suggested as to how it could be structured. I will have strong involvement in the development process. Once the details are determined I will be able to send information for our new building and business incentive brochure out for design layout.

I assisted several businesses with permit and zoning compliance questions and issues with the review process.

I sent a contract to the owner of 36 South Monroe Street that would allow the MSM/DDA to paint the bright green portion of the building on the first floor. This is part of the Façade Grant Committee taking on small projects with the remainder of their budget for this fiscal year. I have received the signed contract returned to me with alterations to it. After consulting an attorney it was agreed that the alterations to the contract leave the MSM/DDA susceptible to having a claim brought against us should the owner be unsatisfied or if any alterations beyond painting occur. I will be attempting to get a signature on the original unaltered contract. If the owner does not agree then we will not move forward with the project.

The 9,000 paper tote bags purchased by the Promotion Committee in an attempt to promote the website are being distributed. Each business in the DDA district is eligible to receive up to 100 free bags. Additional bags desired beyond that can be purchased at the cost of \$0.45 per bag. 1,120 have already been passed out and another 1,150 have been reserved.

Thank you.