

Main Street Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 10, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m.

Committee Present: Candy Barnett, Kristen Horn, Ben Gates, Margo Rettig, Bronte Dod, Suze Riley

City Staff Present: Kevin Lewis

Visitors Present: Donna Henderson, Ursula Schaefer, Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch

Discussion: Revitalization Grant Interest Form scoring online

In order to give committee members time and space to review the Revitalization Grant Interest Forms, there was discussion about moving the review and scoring to an online form. The committee conducted a simple majority vote and unanimously agreed to a new method, and instructed Bronte to create the form and send to the committee. Members (Candy Barnett, Bronte Dod, Mark Roper, Lindsay Roper, Kristen Horn, Suze Riley) would have until 4 p.m. on Friday, February 11 to submit their scoring and comments. Bronte will put together the online form, compile the scores, and the highest scoring application will complete the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant application.

Presentation: Economic Vitality Workshop

Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch from Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. presented information about the Economic Vitality workshop series that is open to Oregon and Southwest Washington Main Street groups. Workshops would take place in person and virtually and would cover a range of topics about economic growth in rural towns and how that fits with the Main Street model. She also mentioned that the workshop will highlight funding sources that Main Street will have access to.

Q (Bronte Dod): Do you have an idea about the time commitment for the year? I'm interested but concerned about the time commitment.

A (Lauren): Workshops are about 2 hours every month, and homework is a recommendation and you give what you'd like to. In-person programs would be a half-day workshop. Overall, it would be between 2 and 8 hours a month.

Q (Ben Gates): Is the audience Main Street committee members?

A (Lauren): We are using the Main Street lens and supporting Economic Vitality committee members. But it is open to city staff, volunteers, business owners if they are interested. But it is focused on the economic vitality functions of a Main Street.

Q (Ben Gates): It seems like Oregon is focused on innovation hubs based on the grants that are available right now. Can you explain what an innovation hub is?

A (Lauren): Innovation hubs are a function of what the community needs. So, it could be a community kitchen, a shared workspace, a maker's space. They are about shared resources and offer catalytic space for entrepreneurs. They should look different in every community based on what the community needs and different economic bases.

Bronte said this is not a requirement for Main Street members. She said she is thinking about joining the program, but is still unsure. Ben Gates said that Maupin Works will be hiring a community manager at some point this year, and it may be a good opportunity for that hire to participate in the workshop series.

Discussion: Formula or chain businesses in Maupin

Bronte opened the committee to a discussion about the potential for formula or chain businesses in Maupin, and suggested that the committee could form an opinion on it that could be added to our Main Street plan and presented to City Council at the next meeting.

Formula/chain businesses were defined. City Manager Kevin Lewis talked about some of the legal constraints to banning certain businesses. There was discussion about clarifying what the committee supports, and defining what “local business” means and what “local dollars” mean. Main Street could also consider what types of businesses residents may want, and not everyone is against formula or chain businesses. There was also discussion about using zoning ordinances in the City, and whether this falls under Main Street’s established scope. There was discussion about how franchises could benefit the economic development of the town as well.

It was suggested that the topic is too broad and the committee would like to have more research before making a decision. Suggested that the topic be discussed at the next meeting.

Review and Presentations: Revitalization Grant Interest Forms

Ben Gates shared information about the grant interest form application from Maupin Works.

Q (Kristen Horn): What types of businesses are you talking about?

A (Ben Gates): It would be a mixture of folks. Could be people developing whitewater products, could be tech workers who are building a business. There are several businesses like legal or professional services who may be looking for space. It’s open to everybody and anybody. A larger pool of diverse businesses should be an asset.

A (Margo Rettig): In the library we are visioning a co-working space. City Hall will be a production/makers space. Could be food services, production, fulfilling.

Q (Bronte Dod): What would happen if you didn’t get this grant?

A (Ben Gates): What it may do is prolong the construction period while we look for other funding or grants. Or we would have to value engineer and think about what we could do with less.

Ben added that the Maupin Area Chamber of Commerce and South Wasco Alliance will have desks in the co-working space.

Donna Henderson shared information about the grant interest form application from Canyon Wren Wellness LLC.

Q (Bronte Dod): Since the business is for sale, what types of businesses could move in?

A (Donna Henderson): Current zoning would need to change and it could be a storefront for a type of recreational business.

Q (Candy Barnett): Since the business is for sale, why would take on the initiative to get grant to make improvements? If she were to get the grant and then sell the building for a higher value, she would benefit from the financial gain of the grant money. And should Main Street have some sort of time frame for keeping the business the same after the grant?

C (Kristen Horn): The application is not really for improvements but for maintenance.

A (Donna Henderson): I haven’t thought about that. It does need to be considered.

C (Candy Barnett): I think we should have some stipulations for the grant.

C (Bronte Dod): I agree, and I didn't expect any applications from businesses that were for sale, and we should think about this moving forward. I don't know.

C (Donna Henderson): These were all improvement we were going to make, regardless of whether we were going to sell.

Ben Gates brought the committee's attention to the two main requirements from Main Street for the grant. Donna said that when she read that her project still falls into those requirements. Kevin said that the rezoning does not necessarily mean it would be a business, because Recreational-Commercial allows for single-family homes. Ben Gates brought up a scenario where a developer applies for a grant to rehabilitate a vacant building with the intent to sell to a viable business. Even though a contractor is the beneficiary of the higher value, if it leads to a new business that could be a good thing overall. Kristen Horn brought up her real estate experience and talked about the difference between maintenance and improvement. Kristen Horn agrees that the application fits.

Q (Mark Roper): Is the current state of the building preventing it from being used currently?

A (Donna Henderson): No.

Bronte thanked everyone for their discussion and reiterated how the grant process will work.

Ursula Schaefer asked about the significant difference in dollar amounts for the projects, and Margo Rettig responded that Main Street does not score based on the dollar amounts, and that Main Street generally awards one grant to each geographic community.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.