



Main Street Solutions Conference A Hit!

They started arriving at 7:15 am. While conference organizers encouraged early-bird attendees to take advantage of the delicious breakfast spread while they put the finishing touches on the welcome area, it became apparent that *Main Street Solutions* was off and running. "There is so much positive energy at this conference. Congratulations!" shared Valecia Crisafulli of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center, one of the day's featured speakers.

Two leading statewide non profit organizations dedicated to the revitalization of the state's downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts, the Community Economic Development

Fund (CEDF) and the Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC), partnered to develop *Main Street Solutions*, Connecticut's First Annual Commercial District Revitalization Conference. This full day conference, held on Tuesday, October 29, 2002 at the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center in Cromwell, focused on tools and strategies that lead to action-oriented, comprehensive revitalization programs that work in traditional downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts throughout Connecticut. Major sponsors of this conference included Webster Bank, First Union, Fleet, The Connecticut Light and Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

With over 280 attendees from 3 states and 67 municipalities in Connecticut, our first statewide conference seemed to be just what attendees were looking for in their challenge to revitalize their traditional downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. The diverse group of attendees included elected officials, municipal staff, local non-profit community organizing groups, design professionals & economic development agencies. "I think the turn-out is testimony to the fact that economic development people and others have a hunger for good, solid information and advice that can help them in their work," said CERC President Marty Hunt. A big thank you goes to the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, who worked in the final week to accommodate a crowd that turned out to be much larger than conference organizers originally

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Luncheon guests, from left: Donna Wertenbach, CEDF Executive Director; Keynote Speaker Stanley Lowe, VP National Trust; George Scott, President of Upper Albany Main Street; CMSC Board Member and Liberty Bank VP Calvin Price; Carol Heller, VP of Fleet Bank; CMSC Board Member Larry Lusardi, DECD.

GOOD 'HOODS: Diverse dwellers vital to downtowns

by John Stearns, Tom Zoellner and Craig Harris

Healthy downtowns bustle after the workday ends. They have a crowd even when there's no pro game or convention in town. They hum with people walking their dogs, going out to eat, buying vegetables at the corner market and picking up their dry cleaning. People who call downtown home are critical to the energy and economies of their cities, according to urban experts. Downtown dwellers both feed and attract retail in a symbiotic relationship. Usually, convenience is king to downtown residents. They typically work nearby and walk, pedal or ride a bus

or train to their jobs. They save time and money by escaping commutes and car payments. Their favorite activities are within blocks. "I moved here six years ago, and five years ago I got rid of my car," said Marsha Hammack, 49, who owns a loft in the trendy Pearl District of Portland [OR]. "That's my favorite, favorite thing."

For others, there's a coolness to living downtown amid the action. But whatever their motivations, residents tend to feel connected to their surroundings, including neighbors whom they pass on the sidewalks or shopkeepers whose shingles often hang under their bedrooms. They take pride in their neighborhoods' appearance and

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Community Dialogue on Main Street Initiative

Niantic Main Street brings together experts and community members

by Colleen Martin Gresh

Niantic Main Street welcomed a resource team to offer suggestions on revitalizing downtown, but perhaps more importantly, they welcomed the community into what appears to be the start of an ongoing dialogue. Groups of people, from retailers and developers to community leaders and town staff, met with a resource team coordinated by the Connecticut Main Street Center. In their first year in the Main Street program, Niantic Main Street will be using the observations and suggestions presented in the team's report as a launching point for revitalization efforts.

Those group sessions, however, appear to have offered the organization a chance to bring together diverse voices from the community into a burgeoning discussion about issues surrounding downtown. "You often see people come in the room who should have been talking to each other for years," commented John Simone, Connecticut Main Street Center executive director and member of the resource team, following the four-day visit.

Bringing together groups of people who share a common interest but lack a forum to meet marked one of the week's greatest accomplishments. "We found all the input, all the suggestions were very important to get ideas to the resource team, but they were also very stimulating," said Niantic Main Street Executive Director Tony Spinelli. Bankers, developers and other professionals found the opportunity to exchange ideas valuable and desirable to repeat.

"The energy that was created from individuals communicating about the problems and promise of the town was tremendous. Now we want to keep those doors open," said Niantic Main Street Board of Directors President Candice Shapiro.

In the interest of offering an honest assessment, the resource team was not shy about getting to the heart of problems and identifying assets in their interviews and initial report presented January 30 at the senior center. "People want to live here, but don't want to spend money here," said Kent Burnes of Burnes Consulting, addressing the aspect of economic restructuring. "This community hemorrhages money to other communities." He continued to say that East Lyme pushes commercial development to other communities in spite of the fact that developers are "ready, willing, and able" to establish projects in town.

Burnes suggested zoning issues be examined, such as restrictions on housing in second stories over retail storefronts. He also pointed to local businesses' need to be better apprised of market trends. He suggested Niantic Main Street be a part of helping

businesses identify trends and market niches as well as provide business training programs and keep track of market conditions.

"The saddest thing that happened to downtowns," said Valecia Crisafulli, senior program associate at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center, "is that they lost their social vitality." People don't feel they have much reason to come downtown, said Crisafulli of Niantic. She noted that the appearance of the Main Street is not compelling and businesses are not meeting people's needs. A main focus was the lack of constant activity. While it was hard to expect people on the street during the bitter cold days, Main Street does not see the foot traffic it would like year-round.

The good news, she said, is everything can be fixed. She suggested building on the recreational and leisure activities while encouraging arts opportunities. She also spoke to retail promotions such as special events.

Michael Haverland, assistant professor at the Yale School of Architecture and co-director of the Yale Urban Design Workshop, offered suggestions that epitomized the idea of starting small in moving toward the larger goals. A contributor to the Yale Charrette report that remains a vital guide for downtown improvements, he noted the ease and rewards of organizing around a physical project. With tangible results, volunteers are buoyed to continue working. An adopt-a-planter program

would make an inexpensive visual effect that would help to connect the Main Street area's lack of continuity.

"I think we all left feeling there are lots of untapped resources in Niantic," said Simone, noting the four access points to water at the river, pond and beaches. He agreed the approach for now should be first approaching the many simple things that can be done. "It doesn't happen overnight," he said of major projects. "To really see it work, it takes a lot of people working

together as a finely honed machine."

The role of Niantic Main Street was well illustrated in the week's opening of dialogue. Through questions raised at the meeting, it was made clear the organization's purpose is not to take over downtown events but to facilitate discussion, bring together parties with similar interests, and serve as a partner to existing groups to work on projects that will contribute to reawakening downtown Niantic.

This article appeared in the February 13, 2003 edition of the East Lyme Thymes, who has granted permission for this reprint.



East Lyme Town Officials and residents at the Niantic Resource Team Public Presentation



SPOTLIGHT

CMSC Board Member Sitkowski Receives Law Award



*Robert J. Sitkowski, Esq. AIA
of Robinson & Cole, LLP*

CMSC board member, Robert J. Sitkowski, Esq., AIA, of Robinson & Cole, LLP, has received the Development of the Law Award from the Connecticut Law Tribune. Connecticut's New Leaders of the Law, of which the Development of the Law Award is a part, honors attorneys practicing for ten years or less whose success is indicated by their influence on the law, profession or bar, by service to clients, or by gaining the respect of their colleagues in the profession.

The author of numerous publications and presentations (including: "Enabling Legislation for Traditional Neighborhood Development Regulations", published in Land Use Law and Zoning Digest and presented at the 2001 American Planning Association's National Planning Conference and "Local Codes: How to Change the Rules of the Game",

presented at the 1999 Congress for New Urbanism Conference), Bob Sitkowski concentrates his practice in representing private landowners and public entities in land use matters and in evaluating, drafting and implementing zoning and planning regulations.

Mr. Sitkowski, a registered architect, certified planner and land use lawyer, has emerged as one of the few attorneys in the country who has established a national reputation in the area of land planning and development known as New Urbanism. He serves as chair of the New Urbanism Subcommittee of the Land Use Committee of the ABA Section on State and Local Government Law, and has taken a leadership position among lawyers in the premier national advocacy organization, the Congress for New Urbanism. Attorney Sitkowski has been a CMSC Director since January 2001.

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To visit any Connecticut Main Street Community's website, go to www.ctmainstreet.org, and follow the links





Downtown is the Center of Life in Our Community

by Mike Goman

I'd like to spend a few minutes sharing with you my own view of the importance of our Main Street Program. I grew up in a small town that had a healthy downtown business district. At that time, much of our day-to-day shopping meant making a trip "downtown", as we called it. We did live next to a large city with vastly larger shopping opportunities, but we only went there occasionally. Most of our shopping was done right in the smaller downtown area of our community.

For me, that meant visits to the barbershop, the drug store, the grocery store and the hobby shop. It also, however, was where many went to church, where a lot of kids went to school nearby, where the Scout hall and baseball fields were, and where we gathered to attend a variety of community activities. In short, it was the **center of life in our community**. Our town was a community primarily because of the shared activities that took place in our downtown area, and the communication and interaction that took place between us as we engaged in those activities in our downtown area.

That sharing and communication points us to one definition of what a community is, after all: **A community is a group of people who have common interests**. In fact, the word "community" further speaks to a sharing of interests, a level of individual participation in those interests and an important element of fellowship among the community members.

I've traveled around considerably since growing up in that community, and I've been heavily involved in development projects in two countries and numerous communities. I've seen many examples of successful, and not so successful communities, and those examples serve to reinforce the lessons I learned in the community where I grew up. Those lessons stay with me to this day. In the course of my travels, I have found that **the common thread among successful communities has been that they have a strong and vibrant downtown business district**.

There are, of course, many tangible benefits to a successful downtown business district, not the least of which is that the taxes paid

by those businesses represent a vital component of the Town's financial well-being. As we know, property taxes paid by businesses represent a significantly greater amount of money than the cost of the services provided to those businesses by the Town, so taxes paid by businesses are a net financial "add" to the bottom line of the community.

An additional benefit is that traditional downtown business districts represent what is today referred to as "smart growth". For those not familiar with the definition of "smart growth", think of it this way:

- A variety of land uses that are mixed or integrated with each other in a specific area,
- Higher density of land use: more efficient and compact,
- More pedestrian friendly: "walk-able areas"

In my experience, however, the most important benefits of a successful downtown area are two things:

1. A successful and vibrant downtown area establishes the identity of the community to the rest of the world. The fact is that visitors to a community draw much of their impression of a community and its' people from what they see in the downtown area. These visitors may be the family looking for a new home, they may be a corporation looking for a new headquarters, or they may be a retailer or restaurant looking for a new location. No matter who they are, those visitors will use the downtown business district as a barometer for the kind of community it is. The sad fact is that a troubled downtown speaks of a community with troubles. In fact, a downtown area establishes the identity of the community by conjuring up a visual image when the name of the community is mentioned. The success of our downtown area can create a powerful impression of our community in the minds of those outside our town's borders. Making that impression the best one possible is what Simsbury's Main Street Program is all about. The key elements of Main Street: historic preservation, economic development, marketing and outreach are the foundations upon which a successful downtown area is sustained.

2. The second important benefit is that **a successful and vibrant downtown area establishes the identity of the community to the members of the community itself.** Not only does the downtown area reflect or represent the community to the outside world, it also tells the residents what kind of community they live in. A vibrant and successful downtown is one that is:

- where neighbors meet each other while out shopping,
- where we go with our friends and family to enjoy a meal, or just a coffee together,
- where we go to participate in community activities or attend social or cultural events,
- where many go to worship,
- where we hold our parades and services on Memorial Day,
- where we gather when something is going on in our community,
- full of life.

That is a successful downtown, and is one from which residents of our town can draw a tremendous feeling of pride, and that most important element, our sense of community.

By defining the identity of our community in a positive and dynamic way, a successful downtown binds us together as members of our community. It also makes us realize that not only do we share something great and important, what we share must also be supported, and that support must, by necessity, include financial, political and community support. In my view, our Main Street Program exists to encourage our residents to support our downtown business district and thereby enrich that all-important sense of community, and that is why it's critical that we work hard to build upon the support that Main Street already enjoys. I'll hope you'll join us in this, and support Simsbury's Main Street Program as we undertake this work which is so vital to our community.

Mike Goman, President and Chief Operating Officer of Konover & Associates, is the President of the Simsbury Main Street Partnership. This address, given to the town of Simsbury in September 2002, is reprinted with Mr. Goman's permission.



RDA Task Force Proposes Historic District Code

by Luise Ernest, Executive Director, The Rockville Downtown Association

The Rockville Downtown Association's Economic Restructuring Committee has undertaken a major project in its first year of organization-changing the current zoning in the historic commercial downtown district to something more user-friendly but with a stronger historic preservation ethic. We also wanted a zoning code that, while not overly restrictive, could effectively guide the future of economic development in our downtown. Our ultimate goal is to guide positive and smart development that compliments the community's vision, makes way for mixed-use development and works in concert with the built environment. What began as a simple review of existing zoning codes, a quest to streamline the application processes, and a closer look at what businesses would be a "nice fit downtown", has resulted in a team approach to improving the economic, physical and social value of Historic Downtown Rockville.

For nearly two years the RDA's Zoning Task Force pored over zoning materials published through the National Main Street Center's Library, reviewed downtown zoning ordinances of comparable communities, interfaced with existing downtown business owners, and even shadowed a new business owner through the zoning process. The RDA's role was to get people thinking outside the box, looking at other communities with similar historic fabric and mixed-use components and to bring idea people together. A chronology, laid out by sub-committee chair Christopher Crowne, dictated that the process be an inclusionary one, involving business owners, town commissions and committees, Main Street consultants and the RDA board. Ultimately, the Vernon Planning & Zoning Commission will have final say on how the finished product will read and be adopted.

The Zoning Task Force of the RDA held 6 brainstorming meetings, 2 public presentation meetings and 3 board of directors reviews. Four consultants through the CT Main Street Center also were influential in the process. Along the way informal reviews were held with town staff and their Master Plan consultant firm. Articles and updates were published in the RDA's weekly email news highlights and also in their organization's newsletter. Task force members were kept abreast of new developments and concepts.



Through the entire process the Town of Vernon, it's Planning, Building and Economic Development Departments were mentors, sounding boards and full team members.

We now stand at the threshold of presenting a four page document submitted as a formal proposal to create what we have labeled a "Historic District: Downtown Business & Residential. It is with a great debt of gratitude that we thank RDA board member, Attorney Dorian Reiser of The Law Offices of Kahan, Kerensky and Caposella for her guidance, expertise and time commitment to

this project. Special appreciation goes to ER Committee chairs Marie Herbst ('00-'01) and Daniel Waskiewicz ('02) who have consistently kept the process going and Christopher "Kit" Crowne who has served as sub-committee chair and group facilitator.

This proposal now paves the way toward an even more public side of the process. We anticipate that the Vernon Planning & Zoning Commission will take this application up this spring for review and to set a series of hearings to receive public comment. The RDA's role has only begun. We will be on hand at all hearings to present our findings using material gathered during our comprehensive study and research, to provide testimony to advocate for historic preservation as a catalyst for thoughtful and dynamic economic development and to provide answers to any questions the commission or public may have.

Do we hope for full acceptance of our proposal? Sure we do, but we are also mindful that where there is compromise there is growth-where there is creative thinking there is potential for wonderful things to happen, and where there is new learning our lives (and in this case also downtown) become enriched.

The RDA's Zoning Task Force will be happy to share the finished regulations to any community, group or Main Street Program once they become adopted in their final version. The RDA office can be reached by calling Luise Ernest, Executive Director at (860) 875-7439 or via email at rdaCT@hotmail.com



GOOD 'HOODS: DIVERSE DWELLERS VITAL TO DOWNTOWNS — continued from page 1

give a downtown 24-hour occupancy. “The city of Portland has made it incredibly easy to live your entire life down here,” said Tracy Prince, assistant professor of urban studies and planning at Portland State University in downtown Portland.

Cities with strong downtowns, such as Portland, Denver and San Diego, realized the importance of urban dwellers years ago and made expanded urban housing a major element of their planning through mixed-use developments and supportive transportation. Others, such as Houston, entered the ballgame later but have seen projects such as the renovation of a historic hotel into high-end apartments fuel a downtown rediscovery by a new set of urban pioneers. A block here, a block there and pretty soon there's a neighborhood. “Once you create a neighborhood, people start to think of it as a location, and it just keeps building momentum,” said Larry Brown, senior development manager for the Portland Development Commission.

Housing builds confidence

Portland's central city has accommodated roughly 85 housing projects, either renovation or new construction, since 1972. About 25 have developed in the past five years. Downtown's housing didn't happen by accident, Mayor Vera Katz said. “It was a public-private partnership,” she said. Much of the action has occurred in Portland's Pearl District, a once-obscure warehouse and industrial zone that exploded with loft conversions and new apartment, loft and condominium construction. Fashionable sales offices beckon passers-by, and hip restaurants such as the Pho Van Vietnamese Bistro also lure residents, whom co-owner Elizabeth Nguyen calls “very important” to business. The city's commitment to downtown has given people the resolve to invest without feeling it's a bad bet, Brown said. “There's enough confidence in the city that people are willing to pay enormous amounts of money (to live there),” he said. The average selling price for Pearl District condos is about \$300 to

\$320 per square foot. Baby boomers are driving much of the growth, said Homer Williams, a developer in downtown.

Grown-up digs

“I used to like to do that stuff,” Ed Vanderpool, 54, said of home maintenance. But Vanderpool, who lives with his wife in a downtown Denver loft above a book and music store and camera shop, prefers his new digs. A sign on the building's door advertises a two-bedroom/two-bath loft with two-car garage for \$289,000. But living downtown isn't perfect. An urban supermarket seems atop most residents' wish lists in Portland and Denver. And a downtown home can be noisy at times, parking can be a nightmare and housing costs can soar with popularity. But people like 59-year-old Katie Reed, who moved to downtown San Diego in 1999, can grocery shop at Ralphs, a full-service supermarket in downtown's heart. “It's a simple life,” said Reed, who also walks to work. “If we didn't have Ralphs it would be a bit of a hassle. Everything you need is within walking distance.” Yet, some San Diego residents say the city has created a two-class system downtown. “To live here, you need to have a lot of money or no money,” said Mariana Martin, who lives in nearby Mission Valley. “If you are middle income, you can't do it. Unless you don't want to eat.” In Portland, where an urban growth boundary is credited with helping contain sprawl and concentrate urban living, high land prices can shut out some people from suburban home ownership, said Kevin Curry, spokesman for the Homebuilders Association of Metropolitan Portland. That has the effect of redirecting them to older urban neighborhoods. Increasing downtown rents can have the effect of pricing lower-income residents out of downtown, agreed Portland State's Prince. But offering developers tax credits in return for a minimum number of affordable units helps, she said. Retail clerk Mollie Shannon, 18, raves about her low-income apartment that rents for \$569 a month in the Pearl District.

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CMSC Board Members Cal Vinal and Alan Plattus with Conference Speaker Valecia Crisafulli of the National Main Street Center.

MAIN STREET SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE — continued from page 1

imagined. We anticipate approximately 300 people for our 2nd conference, to be held in October 23, 2003 at the Omni Hotel in Downtown New Haven. CEDF and CMSC have worked with New Haven's Office of Cultural Affairs to secure the Omni as the host site this year, recognizing the many benefits of holding a commercial district revitalization conference in a thriving downtown environment.

“One of our goals for our first conference

was to reinforce the comprehensive and integrated nature of commercial district revitalization. Through our selection of speakers, I believe that we offered a well-rounded window to the numerous, and interactive, disciplines involved,” commented John Simone, CMSC executive director. “We look forward to our 2003 conference in downtown New Haven!”



Denver also has offered loans or gap financing for developers willing to reserve a share of their projects for lower-income residents. Government help was critical to the launch of a lot of early housing projects in the historic lower downtown area, known as LoDo, where old buildings were converted to housing, said Ben Kelly, spokesman for the Downtown Denver Partnership. "A lot of those early projects were very complicated, multilayered financial undertakings," Kelly said. Low-interest loans and business support offices also were critical to businesses that emerged in LoDo, said John Hickenlooper, a pioneer in Denver's brewpub scene with the Wynkoop Brewing Co. in 1988. The business took off. Realizing that downtown needed more than bars, he bought his building in 1991 and converted the upper floors to lofts. "Long term, people living in a downtown are the ones who demand the trash be picked up, that the police ensure safety, taking it into a 24-hour city (attractive to residents and visitors)," he said. "You want to make sure that your civic leaders get that downtown residential is part of the solution for every issue you're facing, just about," said Hickenlooper, who's running for mayor.

Renovation a catalyst

Houston, with a relatively bland, sterile downtown core, wants to capitalize on what history and character it did not bulldoze during the oil and space frenzies of the 20th century. A small reurbanization trend began to take off in the 1990s, fueled by young professionals relocating from other cities and by suburban Texan Gen-Xers hungering for a more classic city experience. A major catalyst was the renovation of the old Rice Hotel, a 1913 grand dame that had fallen into decline and gone bankrupt in the 1970s. With some tax increment help from the city, developer Randall Davis and the Post Properties of Atlanta spent \$33 million to turn the building into high-concept rental apartments five years ago, complete with a stained-glass skylight, a lobby cigar stand and a ballroom. The Rice was a

piece of Texas history. It sat on the same plot of land occupied by the 1837 capitol of the Republic of Texas. President John F. Kennedy ate his last dinner there in 1963. The success of the Rice encouraged other downtown residential development. At least 10 other loft-style condominiums or apartments have opened since then in both historic and modern buildings. Houston's downtown population grew 69 percent during the 1990s, more than that of any other big U.S. city.

Cool community

What has happened as a result in downtown Houston? A sense of community, driven by the "coolness" factor. Mortgage broker Brett Grace said he made some friends for life during his first year at the Rice. They all shared the experience of forsaking the highway life and being downtown pioneers. "It seemed like a college dormitory," Grace said. "We never locked our doors. It didn't matter what race you were. It was a gumbo mix. And the 70-year-olds were just as cool as the 21-year-olds."

Kim Rohn, a 25-year-old schoolteacher, and her fiance paid more than \$300,000 for a 1,038-square-foot loft in Denver three years ago. "It's such an investment because people want to live in (downtown) Denver," Rohn said. "I feel really safe," Rohn said while walking her dog on a brisk Saturday morning. "Everybody's outside. Everybody's really great."

Williams, the Portland developer, emphasizes the need to develop to a human scale, not to scale for vehicles. "People will walk 1,000 to 1,200 feet before they get into a car," he said. "You can take two or three blocks and you can actually begin a neighborhood. These things can be nurtured from a much smaller area than most people think."

"This article appeared in The Arizona Republic, February 25, 2003. Used with permission. Permission does not imply endorsement."



Main Street Solutions Sponsors, from left: Carol Heller, Fleet Bank; Timothy Coppage, Deputy Commissioner of DECD; Calvin Vinal, Webster Bank; Stanley Lowe, Keynote Speaker; Kent Burnes, Opening Speaker; Stephen Hudd, First Union/Wachovia; Lisa Bumbera, Northeast Utilities.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Connecticut Main Street Center 2003 Annual Meeting
& "Welcome to Main Street" Reception
Monday, June 9, 2003 at 5:30 PM
Vernon Senior Center in Historic Downtown Rockville**

**featuring presentation of the
2003 Awards for Excellence in Downtown
Revitalization**

presented to designated Connecticut Main Street
Communities that have demonstrated excellence in
application of the Main Street Four-Point Approach™
to downtown revitalization



Why Main Street Matters

By Liz McAuliffe

I have found myself in the habit of looking for characterizations of Main Street in magazines, books and movies lately. I wonder how Main Street is being portrayed and what is its role? I hear it in the song "The House I Live In" sung by Frank Sinatra, the Mitford Series by Jan Karon, the Harry Potter movie, "It's a Wonderful Life", and even today's sitcom's and dramas. Sometimes I think I am the only one obsessed by the Main Street concept, but now I see it permeates the entertainment industry too.

But I wonder, why is Main Street a key ingredient in many facets of entertainment? I think it is because it is about people making connections and having relationships with one another. Main Street embodies a level of civility you just don't feel in the mall, a big box retailers, or on the highway.

Main Street requires accountability, no one is anonymous and everyone has a role to play. In sociology there is a term called "mattering," which basically means that most people need to matter to other people in order to remain emotionally healthy. Main Street gives people a forum to mean something to other people, a sort of social checks and balances system. At a time when our

teenagers and young adults are struggling with an overwhelming world, mattering and Main Street are even more important.

Philip Landgon, an associate editor of the design and development newsletter New Urban News wrote an article published in the Hartford Courant Sunday, September 22, 2002. Mr. Langdon's article was entitled "The Lost Heart - Why Doesn't Connecticut Build Real Town Centers Anymore?" The article states, "The old pattern of Connecticut town-building wasn't merely appealing to look at. It was a satisfying social experience, for people of all ages." He goes on to say the "Part of the reason so many of us find old town centers charming is that we can imagine ourselves participating with relish in the day-to-day life that town centers made possible. It will not be easy for Connecticut to create traditional-neighborhoods and centers again." Lucky for Windsor Center, we have our beautiful Town Center and it is getting better and better every day!



Liz McAuliffe is Co-Chair of the First Town Downtown Design Committee and an FTDT Board member. This article was reprinted with permission of First Town Downtown.

Christmas Comes Early to Main Street in Portland

Thanks to the ingenuity and good will of Portland businesses and their customers and clients, four businesses made special commitments to the on-going revitalization of Portland's Main Street and beyond between mid-October and mid-November 2002:

• **Tri-Town Food Center, Rt. 66:** Thanks to all the Tri-Town shoppers who placed their green receipts in the collection basket on their way out of the store, and to Rick Sharr, Tri-Town Owner, 1% of the receipt total was donated to PRIDE.

• **Edward Jones Investments, 236 Main Street:** and Chris Johnson, Investment Representative - \$5 for each new client who visited Edward Jones was donated to the on-going efforts or revitalizing Portland.

• **Dr. John Mormile, Chiropractor, 220 Main Street:** \$1 for each client who visited Dr. Mormile between mid-October and mid-November was sent to PRIDE to continue revitalization efforts.

• **The Medicine Centre, 282 Main Street:** Joe Bordonaro, Jr. and Greg McKenna, pharmacy manager and owner, donated \$ 3 for every flu shot given at the Medicine Center to continue revitalization efforts.

The total contributions were over \$1,800. Thanks to these generous businesses and services for their support of the important work of creating a vital Portland. Says Portland PRIDE director, Liz Swenson: "We appreciate the initiative of these business leaders and their customers and clients in the on-going efforts to revitalize downtown Portland!"



New London Festival of Lights & Song

~Santa on the Pier~

NEW LONDON MAIN STREET

Penny Parsekian, Executive Director of New London Main Street, writes: “We had over 300 people on the pier when Santa came in, and you should have seen the kids! They went crazy. I just stood in the crowd shaking my head and exclaiming, “Can you imagine! All the way from the North Pole!”

After the arrival, we directed families to the lower level of Union Station, where Santa listened to the children’s Christmas wishes. Hundreds of VERY good children waited in lines curled around the building, while passengers and conductors in the station were entertained. Amtrak wants Santa to arrive by train next year!



Santa arrives on the pier in New London.



Amtrak employee, Valerie Brown, and volunteer, Richard Pfeiffer, dressed as a conductor sitting on Santa's lap.



Have you visited the Connecticut Main Street Center website?

Log onto www.ctmainstreet.org to learn the latest about the revitalization of Connecticut's town centers and neighborhood commercial districts.

Our new website tells you about CMSC, how to become a Main Street Community, lists the services we provide. You can also link to over 100 resources in downtown revitalization and download a copy of this newsletter, *CT's Main Streets*.

www.ctmainstreet.org

“The more things change, the more they remain the same”



The following letter to the editor appeared in the April 5, 1897 issue of The Winsted Evening Citizen.

Thanks to Fred Newman, Executive Director of the Winchester Housing Authority and Board member of the Friends of Main Street, Winsted Connecticut, who discovered this article.

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

To the Editor:

We stride along at such a rapid pace in this country and in our own town, we never once stop to enjoy the freedom which our good government supplies us with and also furnishes us with such boundless resources "right at hand."

We as villagers should ever be looking at our external conditions, how we may better our own place, how we can help to create the "village beautiful" out of the disorder and unkemptness which now accompany our village conditions. "In union is strength." How soon following on this motto could we see the increased benefits which accrue to the community from organized effort in this direction.

"Each for himself" is not the way to work for the general improvement, we must join and all work for valuable possibilities. Don't let us run to locating and building up towns and villages alone but let us take along at the same time a disposition to improve and adorn them. We have asked what shall we do. Well, before we go into that adorning business, let us have our streets and walks clean. All the debris must be kept out of the street, free from rubbish, alleys must be kept free from all refuse which is detrimental to the health of the community. If the care of sewers, drains and ditches and all sanitary necessities are not looked after by the local authorities, then a village improvement society should take all these in hand and see that they are kept in the highest efficiency.

Look at the difference of real estate where the proper care of towns exists. A civic pride is created as we noted all this, affects the physical as well as moral conditions of its inhabitants.

Just now, Mr. Editor, as good roads are coming into having so much attention, all this is one of the most important to help on the improvement of our village, as good roads require intelligence and money to construct them, but with all this we shall greatly improve present conditions.

A Member of W. V. I. S. (Winsted Village Improvement Society)



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON

- ⇒ Serves as the chief volunteer officer of the organization.
- ⇒ Is a partner with the executive director in achieving the organization's mission.
- ⇒ Provides leadership to the board of directors, who set policy and to whom the executive director is accountable.
- ⇒ Chairs meetings of the board after developing the agenda with the executive director.
- ⇒ Encourages the board role in strategic planning.
- ⇒ In consultation with the executive director, appoints chairpersons of committees.
- ⇒ Serves ex officio as member of committees and attends their meetings when possible.
- ⇒ Discusses issues confronting the organization with the executive director.
- ⇒ Helps guide and mediate board actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns.
- ⇒ Reviews with the executive director any issues of concern to the board.
- ⇒ Monitors financial planning and financial reports.
- ⇒ Plays a leading role in fund raising activities.
- ⇒ Formally evaluates the performance of the executive director and informally evaluates the effectiveness of board members.
- ⇒ Evaluates annually the performance of the organization in achieving its mission.
- ⇒ Performs other responsibilities as assigned by the board.

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is the quarterly newsletter of Connecticut Main Street Center. We welcome submissions of articles, editorials and photos. Permission to reprint any article must be granted in writing by Connecticut Main Street Center

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Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker

Graphic Design & Layout
Andree LaPointe

Printing
Hitchcock Printing

Production & printing costs graciously underwritten by The Connecticut Light and Power Company



Connecticut Main Street Center is generously sponsored by The Connecticut Light and Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

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