The University of Hartford announced that it has purchased the former property of the Thomas Cadillac distributorship on Albany Avenue, in order to convert the three buildings on the site into a performing arts education facility. In accordance with the University’s mission, the site expands the institution’s presence in North Hartford, providing a major new focus for the University’s efforts in this part of the city. The Thomas site is a highly visible gateway to the Avenue and the city of Hartford and has the potential to significantly enhance the Upper Albany area, which through Upper Albany Main Street has already begun revitalization efforts.

The University’s first goal in redeveloping the site is to address the critical space needs for its renowned Hartt School, a performing arts conservatory that was founded in 1920 by Julius Hartt & Moshe Paranov and which houses several divisions: Instrumental, Vocal, Music Education, Academic, Dance, Theatre and the Community Division. The Hartt School has grown from a college student body of approximately 250 and a Community Division of 1,000 in 1962 to today’s enrollment of approximately 700 higher education students and 140 full and part-time faculty, as well as 2,400 Community Division students with 160 faculty.

The 7.2 acres of land and 71,000 square feet of space at the Thomas Cadillac site offers the University an opportunity to relieve the space crunch at its on-campus facility, as well as allowing it to consolidate programs for which it is now renting space at various sites.

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CMSC 2002 Annual Meeting
“The Power of Place”

With an inspirational welcome from First Town Downtown president Jim Martin, Connecticut Main Street Center’s 2002 Annual Meeting and “Welcome to Main Street” Reception was underway in historic Windsor Center. Hosted by Windsor’s five-year old Main Street program, First Town Downtown, the CMSC annual event was held at Aglow Auction Services, a building that stands as one of Windsor Center’s proudest accomplishments, brought back to life and contributing to the vitality of the downtown. FTDT president Martin expressed his thanks to CMSC directors, staff and supporters for giving his community “the blueprint and the support for making our vision a reality”. He spoke with passion of the moment he was personally introduced to the comprehensive approach through a CMSC tech visit, where he met a consultant from Iowa with whom he shared similar values and “made me understand how important a vibrant center is to

continued on page 6
On a beautiful June day, in a fitting location at the center of Main Street, Niantic Main Street announced their acceptance as a designated Connecticut Main Street Community. The Niantic Cinema was the scene of an enthusiastic press conference that featured Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell, State Senator Melodie Peters, State Representative Gary Orefice, East Lyme First Selectman Wayne Frazier and representatives from the Connecticut Historical Commission, Connecticut Light and Power Company and the Connecticut Main Street Center, along with a large crowd of residents, business & property owners, town staff and others. Lt. Governor Rell, a long-time supporter of the program, emphasized the goals of Main Street - to build on the history of the town; to bring new life to what already exists. “Revitalization means to be reborn. You’ve heard the saying, ‘If you build it, they will come.’ Well, if you rebuild it, they will come even more,” said Rell. Aware of the demanding process in place to earn entry into the Main Street program, Rell gave a nod to the local volunteers by commenting how impressed she was with the promotion and fundraising work done by Niantic Main Street.

Siting the benefits of the program as seen in New London, Senator Peters noted the importance of this step forward. “This is a pivotal moment because it speaks to your strength, your vision and your wisdom,” said Peters. Representative Orefice commented on his roots in the town and his personal desire to recapture the Main Street of his youth, “It’s my dream that this Main Street program will turn Main Street back into what I remember growing up,” said Orefice.

The seed for Niantic’s revitalization was planted when it was suggested that the town of East Lyme participate in a 1997 Yale Urban Design Workshop Charrette. That Charrette report created a vision that inspired the formation of Niantic Main Street. In her comments, Niantic Main Street President Candy Shapiro said, “The Charrette is no longer a dream, but a plan now to be realized.”

CMSC executive director John Simone characterized this group as “passionate, well-organized, energetic, thorough and well represented. Niantic Main Street has already secured tax-exempt status, established a strong board and committees and incorporated as an organization, “steps usually taken after acceptance,” stated Simone.

John Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer and Chair of CMSC, said the application is not for the faint of heart. After working hard to address areas of concern in the 2001 application round, Niantic was unanimously accepted into the program this year by the CMSC selection committee. Shannahan noted that a successful Main Street program depends on the vision reflecting the many, not just a few. Saying it is a grassroots program, Shannahan said, “Ultimately, it will be the people who determine if it will succeed.” East Lyme First Selectman Wayne Frazier agreed, “With everyone working together as a team we can make progress.”

Speaking on behalf of CMSC sponsor CL&P, Lisa Bumbera shared her excitement at Niantic’s acceptance as a Main Street Community. “I spent a good deal of time in Niantic, when the Main Street program was first discussed. I felt at that time that the volunteers in this town had done a good job in setting the table and planning the first course. Well now, you’re preparing the main course. Soon you will be ready to invite the guests.”

### BOARD BASICS Tips for Main Street Boards

**What is conflict of interest?**

Conflict of interest is difficult to define; yet many people think they know it when they see it. The legal definition of conflict of interest, usually set out in state laws governing nonprofit corporations, is very specific and covers relatively few situations. Most conflicts fall into a gray area where ethics and public perception are more relevant than statutes or precedents.

Conflict of interest arises whenever the personal or professional interests of a board member are potentially at odds with the best interests of the nonprofit. Such conflicts are common. A board member performs professional services for an organization, or proposes that a relative or friend be considered for a staff position. Such transactions are perfectly acceptable if they benefit the organization and if the board made the decisions in an objective and informed manner. Even if they do not meet these standards; such transactions are usually not illegal. They are, however, vulnerable to legal challenges and public misunderstanding.

Loss of public confidence and a damaged reputation are the most likely results of a poorly managed conflict of interest. Because public confidence is important to most nonprofits, boards should take steps to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. These steps may include:

- Adopting a conflict-of-interest policy that prohibits or limits business transactions with board members and requires board members to disclose potential conflicts.
- Disclosing conflicts when they occur so that board members who are voting on a decision are aware that another member(s) interests are being affected.
- Requiring board members to withdraw from decisions that present a potential conflict.
- Establishing procedures, such as competitive bids, that ensure that the organization is receiving fair value in the transaction.
Simsbury Main Street Partnership (SMSP) is pleased to announce the appointment of Sarah Floroski as Executive Director. In her role, Floroski is responsible for leading the efforts of SMSP in increasing the social, physical and economic value of downtown Simsbury. Under the direction of the Board of Directors, Sarah will coordinate activities aimed at supporting and promoting the downtown business district within Simsbury, and will work closely with local business owners and managers and other community members to foster consensus and support.

“We are happy to welcome Sarah to the Simsbury Main Street Partnership and are excited about the ideas she has for enhancing the vitality of our Main Street business community,” said Mike Goman, President of SMSP. “Her enthusiasm and talent will surely help us achieve our goals.”

Sarah joins SMSP from John Casablancas in Berlin, CT, where she has been responsible for public relations, marketing, special events and admissions. Her experience also includes marketing for Westfarms Mall in Farmington, CT. Sarah holds a Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Connecticut in Communication Sciences with a concentration in Public Relations and Mass Media.
The Rediscovery Of The Downtown As A Place To Live

by Peter Beronio

There is a major trend in downtown revitalization that has taken off all over the country. It is the rediscovery of the downtown as a place to live. No really successful downtown revitalization can take place without population density. Much has been written about the changes in American culture that caused the decline of our downtowns. The department stores that moved to the highways, the movie theaters that closed down, the chain stores that flocked to the malls all contributed to the problems that we face today. But as important as these trends were to the decline of downtown, the reduction in residential density is an equal contributor. Many of the wonderful old apartment buildings, hotels and stately homes that once lined the streets of our downtowns disappeared in the mid-part of the 20th century. Planners and city officials contributed to the problem by allowing owners to take off the top floors of their buildings or to convert them into offices. Often older multi-storied buildings were taken down and replaced by one-story retail-only buildings with little character and detail. The total effect of this movement was to reduce once thriving around the clock downtowns to poorly planned strip mall copycats. Thankfully, planners, city officials, and developers of today are realizing their mistakes and are busily looking for new ways to populate downtown.

Who is interested in living downtown?

- People who work downtown
- Well-off singles, empty nesters, DINKs (double income, no kids)
- People using public transportation to commute to work
- People who like amenities like museums, theaters, restaurants, walk-to shopping, cinemas, etc.
- People who enjoy pedestrian friendly environments
- Senior citizens

Why is more housing Good for Downtown Revitalization?

- Artists who are seeking large open spaces with high ceilings, large windows, and an urban feel
- More residents help create a built-in demand for many retail and entertainment functions. They are also important to the attraction and development of good restaurants.
- More downtown residents help create a more interesting and safer environment after dark.
- Downtown residents, in Jane Jacobs’ terms, take “possession” of the area they live in; they help make sure it is properly maintained and safe.
- In many mixed-use projects, it is the residential component that makes the project financially viable.
- Empty upper stories can be the sources of social and physical problems.
- In older buildings, rehabilitated apartments can enable a property owner to wait and go after better tenants for street level commercial spaces.

Housing created by converting old factories had been a growing trend since the 1970s. There is hardly a major older city in the country that has not created a residential district in old industrial neighborhoods. The results have been impressive. From the art and warehouse district in New Orleans to Soho in Manhattan the success stories are growing. In smaller communities across the country the trend is growing as well:

- Aiken, SC (30,000) is using financial incentives to attract more housing downtown. Additional housing is a prime engine of the downtown’s revitalization strategy.
- Downtown artist’s housing has been a key element of revitalization strategies in Eureka, CA (27,000) and Peekskill, NY (19,500).
- Asheville, NC (61,000); Bangor, ME (33,000); Burlington, VT (39,000); and Sheboygan Falls, WI (5,800) have also seen substantial growth in downtown housing.
- Hoboken, NJ (41,000) has seen no fewer than 18 factory to housing conversions since it was the first small city in the nation to complete a project in 1976.

National developer Jonathan F.P. Rose was quoted in Roberta Gratz and Norman Mintz’s excellent book Cities: Back from the Edge explaining his housing redevelopment projects downtown as “defense during economic swings that affect one part of the economy”. Rose explains his theory that it makes more sense economically to integrate housing into downtown projects rather than try to fill an entire old building, such as a department store, with retail. The introduction of housing into a retail or office location insures much higher lifetime occupancy rates. It is much less likely that 10 (ten) separate 1,000 square feet apartments will become vacant at any one time as compared to the possibility of 10,000 square foot retail tenant moving out. In creating housing downtown we create the density needed to make downtown viable.

Excerpted from the report: Highest and Best Use Analysis and Conclusions: 33 Mechanics Street, Windsor, CT

Prepared for Connecticut Main Street Center & First Town Downtown (Windsor, CT) by Peter Beronio, Executive Director, Englewood (NJ) Economic Development Corporation. Mr. Beronio has been contracted by CMSC to work with local Main Street programs in East Hartford and Windsor on redevelopment sites. He provided suggested use analyses for the sites, along with a process to market these sites to developers.
Burgeoning Partnerships in Rockville Result in Worthy Pilot Program

by Luise Ernest

Downtown revitalization takes on many challenges, few initial glories and a host of speculation. Areas that need to be addressed range from creation of a new image, boosting civic awareness and support, to selection of streetscape amenities and market repositioning.

Elsewhere, just a few steps off “Main Street” the surrounding neighborhoods often need some problem-solving unique to themselves. Without healthy surrounding neighborhoods a vital link of the revitalization process is missing which can support the economics and sheer “people-presence” within downtown.

In Rockville, CT a strong and supportive partnership between the 6 Street Block Watch and the Main Street Program, administered by The Rockville Downtown Association, Inc. (RDA), has championed a major obstacle in neighborhood preservation and stabilization. The result has been a supportive partnership involving public and private agencies working together towards common sense solutions for challenging problems.

The 6 Street Block Watch, through its membership, identified that the lack of overnight parking was contributing to a destabilization of rental properties and homeownership. Today’s families depend on vehicles for commuting to the workplace, shopping and recreation. Closely built neighborhoods (circa 1870-1900—prior to auto travel) which provide the ring around the Main Street core on three sides sorely needed access for overnight parking.

The Block Watch enlisted the support and partnership of the RDA as it brought this issue to the Town of Vernon for consideration. Attracting the attention and full support of Town Administrator Laurence Shaffer, the three partners proceeded to plead their case to the Vernon Traffic Authority. A task force was established involving the Town Administrator, Police Chief Rossmy, chair of the Traffic Commission and David Tomko, Director of Public Works.

Armed with data collected by the 6 Street Block Watch on where parking problems were most pervasive, the task force identified three streets where overnight parking in designated areas would be effective, safe and provide continuation of access for emergency vehicles. They further developed a set of criteria, guidelines and a full pilot program which was reviewed and endorsed by both the 6 Street Block Watch and RDA. This “Overnight Parking-Pilot Program” was then presented to the Vernon Town Council for approval. Representatives from both the Block Watch and RDA testified in support of the pilot program. The program received unanimous support from the Town Council. By resolution, an amendment was made to the town’s parking regulations and specific criteria was adopted relating to use of overnight areas, adoption of alternate side of the street parking enforcement and clear consequences for non-compliance of the program.

Police Chief Rudolf Rossmy noted, “I have been in Vernon for over 8 years and serve as chair of the Vernon Traffic Authority. Overnight parking issues have been a voiced concern for a long time. While we continue to support the need to restrict overnight parking there has been a recognition that certain conditions and circumstances exist especially in historic areas built prior to the automobile. Given that, there is a value in offering relief of some parking restrictions in select, well-defined areas. This pilot parking program will serve as a measurement tool to determine the effectiveness of a creative, selective overnight parking program. If deemed successful, we may look for other streets within the Rockville historic district that may be applicable. Public safety is and always has been the top priority.”

The RDA took the lead in designing informational program flyers for door-to-door and mailed distribution to tenants, homeowners, landlords/property owners. A doorknob “hang tag” was also designed by the RDA for broader, frequent distribution by both RDA volunteers and the Vernon Police Department. The Town of Vernon covered the costs for all marketing materials and signage needed for the program.

To measure effectiveness and success of the pilot program, the Vernon Police Department will keep the 6 Street Block Watch informed of user ship of the selected overnight parking areas on a quarterly basis throughout the first pilot year. At the end of the year, all the partnering agencies will review the program. Residents within the pilot area will be encouraged to provide input throughout the year. If deemed effective the partnering groups have already begun to identify other specific streets for expansion of the program.

This process has brought together a variety of partners who, working for a common goal have produced a worthy pilot program and strengthened the relationships of those working to revitalize this historic downtown. If you would like a copy of the complete “Rockville Overnight Parking Pilot Program” and marketing materials please contact Luise Ernest, Downtown Coordinator at (860)875-7439 or email to rda ct@hotmail.com.

ATTENTION MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES!

Has your town recently been featured in articles in local publications? Please send CMSC a copy! We want to know how your program is being covered in the media and would love to share this coverage with our readers!
economic well-being of an entire town.”

CMSC Board Chair Jack Shannahan covered the Year in Review, expressing thanks and recognition to CMSC’s major funders the Connecticut Light and Power Company and the state of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and also acknowledged support from United Technologies Corporation. He also introduced each member of the CMSC board of directors, highlighting the individual contributions of expertise and the successful organizational partnerships that have developed. In recognizing the CMSC staff, Shannahan painted a picture of a very busy year where the focus has been on delivering high-quality services to a diverse range of communities and helping prospective communities understand how to successfully apply to the program. “Over the past year, CMSC staff has made 108 on-site visits to current Main Street communities; took advantage of 65 networking and professional development opportunities; made 26 visits to 16 Connecticut towns to help them assess their readiness to begin a Main Street program. The last two application workshops conducted by CMSC were attended by 78 people from 36 different municipalities. CMSC staff has worked with 12 different consultants and 15 partnering organizations in providing technical assistance to local Main Street programs,” he said.

Executive Director John Simone echoed praise for the CMSC board “who bring both a collective enthusiasm and diverse expertise to the table. Special thanks must go to Board Chair Jack Shannahan and his unflinching commitment to this program. He always gives of his time and expertise whenever called upon,” he stated. Simone then discussed where CMSC is going, saying to community representatives “our job is to provide you with the tools to maximize the potential that clearly already exists in every town. While our staff has focused on many initiatives over the past year, at the core of our work is a commitment to helping our communities develop strategic plans.” Simone emphasize the need for a managed approach to the job of breathing new life into downtowns: “While a Main Street program may not be the answer for every town (although it clearly is the most successful downtown revitalization program throughout the country), it is clear that without a managed and comprehensive approach no downtown revitalization initiative can succeed.”

The Connecticut Light and Power Company Award for Outstanding Contributions to Main Street Revitalization was presented to the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. First presented in 2001, this award was named for CL&P for single-handedly launching and generously supporting the Connecticut Main Street Center. CL&P Vice President of Customer Relations Rodney O. Powell presented the award to DECD “for generously supporting the Connecticut Main Street Center’s programs and helping to build the capacity of Connecticut’s communities to compete economically based on the traditional assets of unique architecture, personal service, local ownership and a sense of community.” Deputy Commissioner Rita Zangari accepted the award on behalf of DECD.

The final feature of the evening was an unveiling of phase one of a comprehensive design services program for Connecticut Main Street communities. “Main Street: Past, Present & Future - an introduction to Main Street Design” was presented by Alan J. Plattus, director of the Yale Urban Design Workshop (YUDW). CMSC and YUDW have partnered to develop a comprehensive program to communities utilizing design as both a community organizing and economic development tool.
New Gateway To Upper Albany — continued from page 1

An independent, comprehensive institution of higher education, offering educational and career programs in 85 undergraduate majors and 61 graduate programs of study in its nine schools and colleges, the University is located at the point where Hartford, Bloomfield and West Hartford intersect and has worked to build strong partnerships with its neighbors. The University is committed to increasing and enhancing its connection with the North Hartford community. University students have been working in North Hartford schools for more than a decade, as tutors in the Educational Main Street program, and University faculty and students have assisted a variety of community organizations in projects coordinated by the University’s Center for Community Service. In addition, University faculty and administrators have worked to help launch the Upper Albany Business Training Network and to help community leaders gain “Connecticut Main Street” designation for Albany Avenue.

The University of Hartford Performing Arts Center project will allow The Hartt School to strengthen its collaborative efforts with the nearby Artists Collective to develop more complementary programs between these two arts institutions.

Built in 1929, the original buildings on the site were designed by famed architect Albert Kahn, who is revered for incorporating into his designs the “human element” of natural light for the assembly worker in industrial settings. Originally a final assembly plant for GM at points of delivery, the site later became a dealership. The Thomas family, which bought the business in 1978 and moved its dealership to the North Meadows in 1995, is delighted with the University’s plans.

Architect Michael Howard, AIA, NCARB, of the firm Howard-Montgomery-Steger in New Orleans, La., has provided schematic drawings to the University. Calling this “a very special client and community,” Howard discussed what the site has going for it: masonry, sloping roof-lines, exposed steel truss-work, natural light and good natural acoustics. He continues: “What is being proposed is studios, rehearsal space, experimental theater - the ‘business side of the performing arts.’ We are not turning the site into something it is not - it is a perfect fit!” He considers this to be an unbelievable opportunity - the ability to preserve historic assets, coupled with the revitalization of the Upper Albany neighborhood. The special challenge is turning this site into what the University wants but, at the same time, embracing the community - how the facility reaches out to the community,” Howard said. The new location of the Hartt School will combine performance education with retail space. A coffee shop and a bank branch are among the elements being discussed in the planning of this facility.

Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez has stated that this project could be become a catalyst to revitalize business and cultural activities in the neighborhoods near the site. University of Hartford President Water Harrison, who has built ties with North Hartford neighborhood leaders and pushed hard to enlist community support for the arts center, has drawn praise from several civic leaders, including Dollie McLean, executive director of the Artists Collective, an educational and cultural outreach program that brings art, dance and music instruction to thousands of city youngsters. At a June 2002 press conference, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving announced that it was making a $1.3 million grant to the project, $300,000 of which will be used to promote collaborations with the Artists Collective and other groups “to ensure this facility is truly part of the surrounding neighborhood,” said Michael Bangser, the foundation’s executive director.

The University completed its purchase of the property this spring, and with the latest grant, it has now has raised about 25 percent of the money needed for the arts center. In an August 2001 ceremony at the site, Gov. John Rowland announced that the Connecticut Development Authority, in partnership with the City of Hartford, was providing $2 million for the project.

As President Harrison introduced Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez at the June 13 event, he praised the mayor for focusing on revitalizing Hartford’s neighborhoods. “I hope we are following his vision for the city of Hartford,” Harrison said.
The efforts of New London Main Street, The Rockville Downtown Association and First Town Downtown (Windsor) have earned these towns recognition for excellence in the field of downtown revitalization by meeting high standards for performance set by the Connecticut Main Street Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center. These three Connecticut towns join 400 other Main Street Communities (out of the 1,600 nationally) that have received the designation of 2002 National Main Street Community.

The national designation program annually evaluates downtown revitalization programs based on strict criteria such as: broad based public support, historic preservation ethic, active board of directors, adequate funding, a paid professional manager and reporting of economic progress by providing statistical information. The program’s performance was evaluated by the Connecticut Main Street Center, which is the statewide coordinating organization for Main Street programs in Connecticut.

A successful, well-run Main Street program creates a vibrant downtown of many uses, where people come not only to shop but to meet or even live. By increasing economic vitality and focusing on reusing historic buildings, it creates a place that defines the community,” says Kennedy Smith, director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Center. “The designation of New London Main Street, The Rockville Downtown Association and First Town Downtown reflects well-run downtown revitalization initiatives, and the citizens of New London, Vernon and Windsor should be proud of their efforts, and maintain their commitment to revitalizing their downtown area.”

Congratulations to our National Main Street Communities!

Visit the websites of these outstanding Main Street communities:

www.newlondonmainstreet.org
www.vernonct.org/rda
www.firsttowndowntown.org
GREAT WEBSITES

State of CT Deptartment of Economic & Community Development .......................... www.decd.org
State of Connecticut ............................................. www.state.ct.us
Connecticut General Assembly .................................. www.cga.state.ct.us
National Main Street Center ..................................... www.mainst.org
National Trust For Historic Preservation ......................... www.mnhp.org

Resources:
Economic Restructuring / Business Development
American Demographics ........................................... www.inside.com/default.asp?entity=AmericanDemo
Burnes Consulting .................................................. www.burnesconsulting.com
Claritas ................................................................. www.claritas.com/index.html
Community Economic Development Fund ........................ www.cedf.com
ConnEDO .............................................................. www.cerc.com/connedo.html
Connecticut Dept. of Economic & Community Development ........................ www.decd.org
Connecticut Department of Labor ................................ www.ctdol.state.ct.us
Connecticut Development Authority ................................ www.state.ct.us
Connecticut Economic Resource Center .......................... www.cerc.com
Connecticut Innovations ........................................... www.ctinnovations.com
Connecticut Small Business Development Center .................. www.sbcd.uconn.edu
International Council of Shopping Centers ...................... www.icsc.org
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) ......................... www.liscnet.org
Office of Secretary of the State .................................... www.sots.state.ct.us
Service Corps Of Retired Executives (SCORE) ..................... www.score.org
Small Business Administration .................................... www.sba.gov

Project for Public Spaces ............................................. www.pps.org
Regional Planning Association .................................... www.rpa.org
State of CT Department of Transportation ........................ www.dot.state.ct.us
The American Institute of Architects, CT Chapter ................ www.aiact.org
Town Greens ......................................................... www.towngreens.com
Transportation for Livable Communities ............................... www.tlcnetwork.org
Urban Land Institute .................................................. www.uli.org
Walkable Communities, Inc. ......................................... www.walkable.org
Yale Urban Design Workshop ...................................... www.yale.edu/udw/udw.html

Promotion
Allen Consulting, Inc. ............................................... www.allenconsulting.com
International Special Events Society ............................... www.ises.com
Promotion Link ......................................................... www.promotionlink.com
Schallert & Associates, Inc. ......................................... www.retailusa.com
Special Events Magazine ............................................ www.specialevents.com

Organization
Center for Community Change ..................................... www.communitychange.org
Connecticut Council for Philanthropy .............................. www.ctphilanthropy.org
Foundation Center .................................................... www.foundationcenter.org
Fund Raiser Cyberzine ................................................ www.fundraiser.com
Grants Hotline .......................................................... http://grantshotline.com
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving .............................. www.hfpg.org
United Way of the Capital Area ..................................... www.uwcact.org
U.S. Census Bureau .................................................... www.census.gov

Check Out Our Local Main Street Websites
New London Main Street Corp. ................................. www.newlondonmainstreet.org
Rockville Downtown Association ................................. www.vernonct.com/rda
First Town Downtown (Windsor) ................................. www.firsttowndowntown.org

and the new CMSC website!
www.ctmainstreet.org

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
This spring, the Connecticut Main Street Center participated in the Community Internship Program of the Sociology Department of Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). Michelle Rancourt, a senior majoring in Sociology with a minor in Urban Studies, joined the CMSC staff for the spring 2002 semester.

Students accepted into CCSU’s Community Internship Program are expected to spend approximately 110 hours in their placement. Additionally, interns meet weekly in a three-hour long seminar with other internship participants serving different organizations. Knowledge and experiences gained in the applied setting are then used in the classroom, serving as a “capstone” to students’ major requirements. Internships are awarded on a competitive basis. The primary expectation for internship placement is that students engage in a learning activity that enables them to extend their effort and energy into the community.

Dr. Renee T. White, Associate Professor of Sociology at CCSU, guides students accepted into this internship program. Additionally, Dr. White has met with CMSC staff to begin a discussion regarding the role of CCSU in the work of revitalization of town centers and neighborhood commercial districts. Partnerships between academic institutions and the communities in which they are located is a focus of CMSC’s work and the work of local Main Street organizations (see cover story). CCSU is poised to provide resources and expertise in their own back yard - the city of New Britain has been working on the revitalization of their downtown.

Together, CMSC staff and Michelle identified three areas of responsibility: research, community outreach and administrative tasks. Michelle’s community outreach ranged from shadowing CMSC staff to training sessions in strategic planning for local Main Street communities, workshops and committee meetings to meeting local Main Street program managers and reconnaissance tours in prospective Main Street communities.

In her research project, Michelle tackled the complex issues of safety in urban commercial neighborhoods and best practices of comprehensive downtown revitalization programs in urban areas. Through interviews with leading consultants and professionals that specialize in the revitalization of urban neighborhoods, Michelle compiled a wealth of information and resources on “taking back the neighborhood”, touching on issues such as crime, residential mix, partnerships with law enforcement and the community, market realities, designing for safety and how a community sustains itself over a long period of time. As part of her academic requirement, Michelle prepared a report on her findings which will be used by CMSC to continue the exploration of best practices in urban neighborhood revitalization. CMSC staff will discuss this report at the first ever national Urban Main Street Forum in Boston this summer.

With Michelle’s sensitivity and professionalism, as well as her passion for the subject matter and her aptitude for urban studies, she was a perfect fit for CMSC and we wish her much success in her future!
BOARD BASICS Tips for Main Street Boards

Main Street Boards should embrace a set of principles sometimes known as “norms” to guide the organization and its operations. Collectively, these organizational and operational norms will define the culture of the program. They will help remind the program’s board and staff of who they are and how they get things done as an organization. Organizational Norms define the organization. As in the case of an individual, they are character-defining traits and closely held values that answer the question, “Who are we?” Operational Norms describe how an organization will function or do things. By embracing organizational and operational norms, the local Main Street program will develop a culture of achievement and excellence that will ensure the long-term success of the revitalization effort.

Patricia Wilson Aden

BOARD BASICS

Operational Norms

Meeting expectations - how much time, what information is shared, how are meetings conducted, purpose of meetings
- Meet once a month - 2-hour meetings
- More than just information distribution - needs to be discussion on issues
- Leave with a to do list of assignments
- Need for underlying trust
- He/she who speaks the most or the loudest is not necessarily getting the most done
- Every board member is valued
- For the board to work and think strategically, it must be a real working board - 10 hours/month
- There must be excellent dialogue between board and community - set up appropriate vehicles for this
- Attend all meetings, come on time - the board does its homework
- Consensus is the goal - this requires underlying trust
- Be open to positive criticism, difference of opinion is healthy, but criticism should not be personal, or taken personally, we must agree to disagree

Behavioral Norms

Expectations of fellow board members and yourself
- Board needs to be unified, when consensus is reached, then everyone must support and respect the decision when speaking to the community at large
- Attend all board meetings (bylaws say one can miss three per year)
- Board needs to see themselves as ambassadors for projects and community
- Board be welcoming and understanding and supporting what other organizations are doing
- Board serves as a catalyst for collaboration, cooperation and support for other organizations and all of community
- Board must be sensitive to others and find a process for conflict resolution and institutionalize this, so we are pre-armed before the conflict comes up
- Board will pursue the mission of the organization and not individual agendas
- Financial contribution from the board must be 100%
- Must give of time, do homework, be knowledgeable
- Board can demonstrate their commitment by buying locally, being part of the community, being visible and connected to neighborhood

developed by Upper Albany
Main Street’s Board of Directors
Connecticut Main Street Center  
c/o CL&P  
P.O. Box 2370  
Hartford, CT 06146-2370

Name and address updates requested

Connecticut’s First Annual Commercial District Revitalization Conference  
*presented by*  
Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF)  
and  
Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC)  
Tuesday, October 29, 2002  
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center  
Cromwell Connecticut

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