

**HIGHLAND MAIN STREET MEETING**  
**Highland Town Hall- Highland, Indiana 46322**  
**January 4, 2018 MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

At 6:31 PM, the Highland Main Street (HMS) meeting was called to order by President Dawn Diamantopoulos at Highland Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road in Highland, Indiana.

**Roll Call:**

The following were present: Board Members Dawn Diamantopoulos, Marie Russo, Lola McKay, Mary Wells, Julie Larson, Doug Van Ramshorst and Redevelopment Assistant Lance Ryskamp. Board Members Mario DeGeorge and Darlene Barron were absent. Also, present at the meeting, via conference call, was volunteer Theresa Pecsek.

**Election of 2017 Officers:**

A motion was made by Lola McKay, and seconded by Julie Larson, to nominate Dawn Diamantopoulos as the 2018 President and to nominate Doug Van Ramshorst as the 2018 Vice President. No additional nominations were made. The motion passed on a voice vote 6-0.

**Minutes:**

Marie Russo made a motion, seconded by Julie Larson, to approve minutes from the August 3, 2017. The motion passed on a voice vote 6-0.

**Festival of the Trail**

Dawn reported that she would like to get an early start on this year's festival, in the hope that it would become an event for artist vendors only, accompanied by food and entertainment. In light of the cancellation of last year's event because of weather, she hoped that an alternate indoor location could be planned for the event in case of bad weather.

It was determined that Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> would be the date closest in line with last year's date. There was consensus that the event should again be located on Jewett Street, as was planned in 2017. In order to attract more artists, it was discussed that applications should begin to go out in March, with the incentive of an early-bird booth discount. After an initial three-month period, booth fees would go up an additional \$10. Entertainment such as music, poetry and possible one-act plays would again be scheduled at the murals. Food vendors would be invited to participate as in 2017. There was discussion of possible alternate sites in the event of bad weather, such as Zandstra's Greenhouse and Lincoln Center. Lance said he would reach out to find out possible availability.

Marie Russo made a motion, seconded by Doug Van Ramshort, to set the date of the 2018 Festival of the Trail for Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, from 11am to 3pm on Jewett Street, and to set booth prices as follows: \$25 "Early Bird" fee from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>; and, \$35 from June 1<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>. The motion passed on a voice vote 6-0. Lance said he would work on a booth fee resolution for the Redevelopment Commission to consider at their February meeting.

### **Highland Rookery**

Lance reported that he has reached out to find out information about a proposed butterfly garden that had been discussed a few years ago, but had not received any input to date. He also mentioned the discussion between he and Director Kathy DeGuilio-Fox about exploring the possibility of obtaining discarded utility poles to be used as possible nesting areas for the herons. The idea was looked at favorably, but Doug cautioned about whether the utility poles were treated with chemicals that might seep into the water.

### **Pop-Up Gallery**

Lance mentioned a few vacant downtown sites for possible pop-up galleries in 2018. He mentioned the former Smith Insurance Building at 2925 Highway, the vacancy at the Gandhi Medical building at 2733 Highway, and the vacant cleaners at 2720 Highway. Dawn said she would look at the sites to see if any of them could work.

### **Coupon Program**

No report.

### **Car Cruise**

A tentative date of June 2nd (Rain Date- June 3rd) has been set for this year's Car Cruise. Lance said that he would reach out to Thunder Road and see if those dates were available and if so, would look to prepare a resolution in February for the Redevelopment Commission to contract with them again for the event.

### **Façade Improvement Grant**

No report.

### **Cash Mobs**

There was a discussion about possible 2018 cash mob sites. Lance suggested that a possible first cash mob event of 2018 could be in March to coincide with the move by The Annex apparel store next door to the new YaYa Sisters store on Highway and 4th. The event, pending approval from each of the owners, would be a joint event with both stores on a Saturday in March. Lance said he would reach out to the owners and report back to Main Street.

### **Municipal Parking Lot**

No report.

### **Poet Laureate**

Julie reported that the current Poet Laureate's term will run through April, which is National Poetry Month. Janine Harrison's next event will be held at Promise you Art House on February 19<sup>th</sup>, with additional events scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 6<sup>th</sup>. Julie will be putting together a draft call for the selection of a new Poet Laureate, to be issued sometime in February. There was some discussion as to whether to make the position a one year or two-year term, and/or whether an incumbent Poet Laureate would be eligible to apply for a second term. There was also discussion about adding to the call additional information to guide the new selection on the expectations of the position, including the idea of having the Poet Laureate being made a board member of Highland Main Street. Julie said she would have a draft ready for the February 1st HMS meeting.

### **Sculpture and Art Tour of Highland**

Lance reported that preliminary discussions are underway with the South Shore Visitor & Convention Authority on possible assistance and partnerships with future downtown public mural projects. He said until those discussions

are further along, all town funds and grant resources available to the town are being held in place, until it is known what will be needed going forward.

Lance reported that the only pending issue in the first quarter of the year, was what to do with the current sculpture along Highway Avenue. The lease with the artist and the easement approval for that sculpture with NIPSCO expires in May. Dawn said that an organization she belongs to, Dyer Arts Visionaries, was possibly interested in making a donation to help fund a new sculpture project. Lance explained that the only other potential nonprofit funding available would be through either the Town Theatre Board or the Highland Community Foundation. A discussion ensued as to the various options available: the purchase outright of Randy Simko's current sculpture; replacement of the current piece for a new sculpture; or, purchase of the Simko piece and obtaining a new sculpture for another location. Lance said any of those options would be entirely dependent on obtaining funding from either the Town Theatre Board, the Highland Community Foundation, the Dyer Arts Visionaries, or some combination of those groups.

Dawn asked Lance to contact Randy Simko and find out whether he is willing to sell his sculpture, and if so, what would be his asking price. She also said that to be eligible for funding through the Town Theatre Board, an application would need to be submitted by the end of January. Lance noted that the Highland Community Foundation's most recent grant cycle had ended, but that the Foundation would be meeting later in January and could possibly address the issue at that meeting, if need be.

#### **2018 Work Plan**

Lance presented the revised list of sample downtown "Catalyst Strategies", updated to include only those strategies that favorable input had been obtained from various Main Street members, as well as the Redevelopment Director. Lance suggested that this list be narrowed further to include a hybrid approach highlighting apparel, the arts, and food/dining and entertainment elements. Based on existing downtown businesses, as well as the potential of future downtown development, the consensus was that this hybrid approach would be a good fit for Highland's downtown. Lance said he would refine the approach further for the February meeting.

#### **Discussion**

The number of volunteer hours provided by Main Street members was discussed for use on the Indiana Main Street assessment report. It was also discussed whether Main Street should consider sponsoring another downtown event, possibly in conjunction with the Park Department, in lieu of funding the warm-up bands at the summer Midweek Markets. Some possible ideas included a "Battle of the Bands", a Student Film Festival or a craft beer festival. Lance said he was going to try and set up a meeting with reps from the Park Department to discuss this issue.

There was also a discussion and agreement that in 2018, more use of student volunteers should be considered, as community service is being required more and more in the Highland schools.

#### **Adjournment**

With no further business, Julie made a motion, seconded by Doug to adjourn. It passed on a voice vote 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.