

# HIGHLAND MAIN STREET

Agenda for August 6, 2020

6:30 PM

This meeting will be convened as an electronic meeting pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, and 20-25 now extended by Executive Order 20-30 through 3 August 2020 by his Order 20-34, allowing such meetings pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the emergency.

People may observe the meeting by joining the meeting on the Zoom platform  
<https://zoom.us/j/99465917349?pwd=bmRJV0lnWGIOTXlwdUNqSkVDL1NHQT09>

Further, persons wishing to offer comment in the meeting may access the electronic meeting by using the preceding and adding the password for Meeting ID: 994 6591 7349

Passcode: 255664

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,99465917349#,,,,,0#,,255664# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 994 6591 7349

Passcode: 255664

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abJFKSCftZ>

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Minutes—July 2, 2020
3. Committee Reports
  - A. Community Garden
    1. Garden Update/ Produce Distribution
  - B. Events
    1. Maker's Market- Discussion/ Action on Event Cancellation
  - C. Art- Mural Repair- Mural Alcove- Update
  - D. Downtown Promotions
    1. Feedback from Downtown Businesses- Teri Yovkovich
    2. Restaurant Promotions
  - E. Design/ Aesthetics & Historic Preservation- No Report
4. Other Business
  1. Discussion- 2021 Redevelopment Budget
  2. Discussion/ Action on Poet Laureate Program
5. Discussion
6. Adjournment

**HIGHLAND MAIN STREET MEETING**  
**Highland, Indiana 46322**  
**July 2, 2020 MINUTES**

The Highland Main Street Bureau met in an electronically conducted Public Meeting on July 2, 2020. This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, and 20-25 now extended by Executive Order 20-30 through 4 July 2020, allowing such meetings pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the emergency. All persons were meeting remotely using the Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction, and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings.

**Call to Order**

At 6:34 PM, the Highland Main Street (HMS) meeting was called to order by President Dawn Diamantopoulos.

**Roll Call:**

The following were present electronically, via the Zoom platform: Board Members Dawn Diamantopoulos, Lola McKay, Teri Yovkovich, Kali Rasala, Marie Russo, Redevelopment Director Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Town Council liaison Roger Sheeman and Redevelopment Assistant Lance Ryskamp. Board Members Julie Larson joined the meeting after the call to order. Board members Mary Wells, Emily Foreit, Aubrey Velasquez, and Mary Ellis were absent. Also, present electronically was Michael Blejski, Jacqui Herrera of the Council of Community Events and Robyn Radford of the Highland Redevelopment Commission. NOTE: Board members Kellie Shelton and Renee Reinhart submitted their resignations from the Board, since the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Downtown Promotions:**

While waiting for the presence of a quorum, President Dawn Diamantopoulos asked Teri Yovkovich to report on her efforts getting feedback from downtown businesses. Teri Yovkovich reported that she had forwarded a letter to 17 downtown businesses and received 5 responses back, all of which were Jewett Street businesses. Suggestions included hayrides and the Farmers Market in downtown, business banners and greater emphasis on business retention. She said she would try and get additional feedback from other businesses and report back at the August meeting.

During this report, Board member Julie Larson joined the call and a quorum of the Board was established.

President Dawn Diamantopoulos said that the balance of discussion on agenda items related to Downtown Promotions would be continued later in the meeting.

**Minutes:**

Lola McKay made a motion, seconded by Teri Yovkovich, to approve minutes from the March 3, 2020 and May 7, 2020 meetings, as well as the Meeting Memorandum of the June 4, 2020 meeting. The motion passed on a voice vote 6-0.

**Community Garden Committee**

Michael Blejski, Community Garden Chairman, reported that the garden was looking healthy and there were already some produce ready to be picked. A discussion ensued as to how and to whom the garden produce would

be distributed. Suggestions included distribution to the families assisted in 2019, the food pantry operated by St. James Church, and the possibility of a community callout. In addition, Michael Blejski indicated that consideration be made to include a co-worker of his on any list of needy families. With the produce harvest to date being smaller, the consensus was that it was insufficient to offer to the St. James food pantry at this time, but as the yield increased later in the season that would be re-visited.

Jacqui Herrera suggested that the garden distribution be coordinated with the Park Department's "2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays" events at Main Square. However, the consensus was that the committee did not want to compete with any market vendors at the Park event, as well as needing a weekly, rather than monthly, distribution point.

Councilman Roger Sheeman said that a community callout would not work and would not be feasible, citing potential traffic and organizational issues. He said that he believed that the produce should be forwarded to groups such as St. James or the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, which already have operations in place to distribute the food.

Michael Blejski mentioned the idea of using a "Free Little Library" approach to distributing the produce. President Dawn Diamantopoulos said that outreach should be made for families in need to be nominated.

#### **Events Committee:**

##### **Makers' Market**

President Dawn Diamantopoulos advised the Board that the Highland Council of Community Events, who will be hosting a Fall Festival at Main Square on September 25<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>, asked HMS if the Board would consider coordinating Makers' Market with their festival. Specifically, they wished to consider having Makers' Market be a two-day event, instead of just one day. Other considerations include whether to keep the event on Jewett Street, or re-locate it Main Square, and whether to recruit food vendors for Makers' Market.

Teri Yovkovich said that re-locating the event to Main Square would hurt the Jewett Street businesses. No Board members expressed support to move the event to Main Square. A discussion ensued as the CCE's plans for the Fall Festival. Councilman Sheeman indicated that it did not appear that there would be carnival rides as thought for the Fall Festival. He said instead, there will probably be a "Touch A Truck", though he said that there were some sanitary concerns about that, as well as a scaled down Canadian Northern train. He also expressed concern about competing against the Town of Griffith, who will be having a two-day craft fair on the same weekend as Makers' Market. Finally, he said that he thought it would be fine to have food trucks or vendors at both Makers' Market and the Fall Festival.

Jacqui Herrera said that she did not think there should not be food vendors at Makers' Market, but she did not know if a prospective food vendor would have a problem giving up an opportunity to participate in a three-day event versus a shorter event. The consensus from the board members was to continue to seek out food vendors as originally planned.

A discussion ensued as to whether to have Makers' Market a one of two-day event. Teri Yovkovich said that even though while many businesses are closed downtown on Sundays, if it were going to be two days, Saturday and Sunday would be preamble to Friday and Saturday. Lola McKay asked if the Police Department would be ok with having the street closed for a two-day event. The Redevelopment Assistant said he was not sure and that the Police Department would need to be consulted. He was also asked about security at past Festival of the Trail

events and he advised the Board that no police officers were used for security, as there was no alcohol being served, but that a few members of Highland's Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) did assist with traffic control. Councilman Sheeman stated that there would be police and VIPS onsite in downtown for the Fall Festival.

President Dawn Diamantopoulos asked Board members whether there should be a booth fee change, if the event went to two days. Board members Julie Larson and Kali Rasala said they thought the fee should remain as is at \$35. President Dawn Diamantopoulos said if the event went to two days, would vendors be permitted to leave their booths up overnight with security on Jewett Street, or would they have to breakdown Saturday and set-up again on Sunday. Councilman Sheeman said he would discuss that with the Police Department.

At the end of discussion, Teri Yovkovich made a motion that pending approval from public safety officials on street closures and overnight security, Makers' Market would be held on both Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> on Jewett Street. The motion was seconded by Marie Russo, and the motion passed unanimously on a voice vote 6-0.

**Art:**

The Redevelopment Assistant reported that he had been in contact, via email, with Jessica Haug concerning repair of her mural in the Jewett Street Mural Alcove. He said that Ms. Haug indicated that she would try in the next couple of weeks to block out time to make the necessary repairs.

**Downtown Promotions (Continued):**

President Dawn Diamantopoulos said that also at the June meeting of the Highland Council of Community Events, Highland Main Street was asked if they would be willing to participate in three upcoming CCE events.

The first event is the August 8<sup>th</sup> Community-Wide Garage Sale. Jacqui Herrera said that she was hoping that HMS could advertise the event on social media, as well as inform downtown businesses about it, in case they would be interested in either a sidewalk sale or some type of promotion that day. She said that any business participating will be listed on the map being created for use during the event.

The second event was the October 24<sup>th</sup> Trunk or Treat at Main Square. Highland CCE was asking downtown businesses to consider passing out candy to kids who came downtown for the event.

Finally, the third event was participation in the November 28<sup>th</sup> Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting in downtown. President Dawn Diamantopoulos said that at the CCE meeting there was discussion about whether to have the parade earlier and perhaps have some type of an event downtown, between the parade and tree lighting, such as a scavenger hunt. Teri Yovkovich said that there would be some issues with trying to hold a scavenger hunt. She suggested having some type of card to take around to businesses, similar to what Promise You Arthouse did in previous years. President Dawn Diamantopoulos said that perhaps the Highland High School Orchestra could perform again at the library as a Christmas event. She also said that the Park department had expressed some reservations about separating the parade from the tree lighting out of concern for lowering the attendance for the tree lighting. She also said that there is not a need by HMS to make a decision on this now and it will be discussed further at upcoming meetings.

As for other types of downtown promotions, President Dawn Diamantopoulos said she would like to try and implement the restaurant crawl that had been discussed earlier in the year. She said she had drafted a letter to the

downtown restaurants back in March. Michael Blejski suggested that consideration of having a Facebook Live restaurant review be considered to showcase downtown restaurants. Councilman Sheeman discussed the idea of having a weekly event, such as is done in Mishawaka, and he would follow-up with more details.

**Discussion**

Jacqui Herrera suggested possibly having some type of event on the weekend of the Fall Festival and Makers' Market at the Community Garden. The consensus was that there would be insufficient manpower available to handle HMS events at multiple locations.

**Adjournment**

With no further business, Julie Larson made a motion, seconded by Lola McKay, to adjourn. The motion passed on a voice vote 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

DRAFT

## Highland Main Street Staff Report- August 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting

**1. Community Garden-** Contact has been made with the coordinator of the St. James Food Pantry, and they are willing to take and distribute all of the produce we can give to them. St. James distributes food to Highland families in need weekly. Julie Larson has agreed to coordinate with St. James as produce is harvested.

As I believe most of you know, recently Michael Blejski contacted us to advise that due to a personal matter, he had to step away from the Community Garden project. The rest of the Committee is organizing to coordinate all aspects of the garden operations, in the wake of Michael's departure.

**2. Events- Makers' Market-** Based on recent COVID-19 developments, there has been concerns expressed at the Town Council level as to whether the town should proceed with its September events. **The Board will be asked to review whether to cancel the event or not.**

Planning to date:

- currently three vendors have submitted applications and booth fees, with a handful of other vendors indicating they would enter if the event is going forward. In recent days, Dawn and I have been reaching out to prospective vendors and generally, there has not been favorable feedback, with COVID concerns being a primary factor. I have also heard from some who are favorable toward participating that they are already getting cancellation notices for events scheduled for October and beyond.
- current estimate (because there has been some difficulty getting quotes) on insurance costs will be \$200-\$300, up from \$125 last year. Possible hold harmless agreements may be required by the underwriter.
- Two quotes for rental of a portable toilet for two days: quote from downtown's Aide Rentals of \$191 (which would have normally been \$156 more, if they used the standard rent-per-day cost); and, a quote of \$98 from Service Sanitation to be part of the CCE quote for their toilet needs.

To date, no expenses have been incurred or committed to at this time.

**3. Mural Repair-** I have reached out to Jessica Haug for an update on her work repairing her mural at the Mural Alcove on Jewett, but I have not received a response yet. I made a drive-by at the site this week and it appears that no repairs have been done. I will continue to follow-up.

**4. Downtown Promotions-** Teri Yovkovich was going to get further feedback from downtown businesses on possible promotions to assist downtown businesses.

A revised draft letter has been prepared for downtown restaurants for the proposed downtown restaurant crawl. A copy of the draft is in meeting packet.

**5. Discussion on Poet Laureate Program-** Lainie Polen's term expired back in April and no successor has been sought out to date. I don't know if HMS wants to go forward with this program during the balance of this year or not. This can also be taken up at the 2021 planning sessions at the end of the year, if there is no consensus on how to proceed at this time.

Dear Downtown Restaurant owners,

Highland Main Street would like to create a monthly restaurant crawl. The idea is to bring in additional patrons on a non-peak evening, and to introduce your restaurant to new members of our community. We have a wonderful selection of restaurants downtown to show off!

I am proposing a Tuesday evening from 5-9. If this is not your slowest night, please tell me that! I want to make this best for as many of you as possible. And if there is a night you are closed, I need to know that, as well, so I don't schedule this for a day you are normally closed. Would you prefer to have this at a specific point in the month?

Additionally, I'm asking you that have one item on your menu that night for \$5 or less. Just one, and only for that evening. It can be a drink, appetizer, side, salad, smaller portion entrée, or dessert.

In this way, a patron can get an appetizer at one restaurant and then a small entrée at the next restaurant, perhaps a 2nd small entrée or side somewhere else, and dessert somewhere else, etc. My hope is that retail businesses will also choose to stay open that same evening.

HMS understands that the ongoing COVID-19 emergency has impacted the restaurant industry tremendously, and we are very sensitive to that. We feel this concept could have both a dine-in and/or carryout component to it, depending on how your restaurant is operating under the Executive Orders of Governor Holcomb.

Here's what I need to know:

1. Will you participate?
2. What's your slowest night of the week?
3. Is there a night you are not open?
4. Do you have a preference between early in the month, middle, or end?
5. Would you like it to be dine-in only, carryout only, or both?

If there is enough interest, I would like to start this in September, and have it continued as a monthly event.

In addition to this, HMS is looking at other restaurant- oriented ideas, such as Facebook Live cooking events and other social media-related promotions to help get the word out for you. If you have any ideas for us to consider, please send them our way. We are here to help!

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts.

Dawn Diamantopoulos  
President  
Highland Main Street