

# MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## Report of Main Street Subcommittee

### June 30, 2003

#### Table of Contents

<b>What is the Main Street Program?</b> .....	2
<b>What the Main Street Program is doing in America's Communities</b> .....	2
The 2001 National Reinvestment Statistics .....	3
What is the Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization? .....	4
The Main Street Philosophy .....	4
<b>Wisconsin's Main Street Program</b> .....	5
The Four-Point Approach .....	5
Main Street Benefits .....	6
Application Information .....	7
<b>Monroe Main Street Investigation</b> .....	8
Presentations by James D. Engle, Sherrie Avery-King and Amy Charles – January 22, 2003 .....	8
Public meeting to solicit pros and cons of Main Street Program – February 27, 2003 ..	9
Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – March 17, 2003 .....	9
Chippewa Falls Main Street Awards and tour – April 4 & 5, 2003 .....	9
Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – April 7, 2003 .....	10
Fort Atkinson visit - May 8, 2003 .....	10
Darlington and Platteville visits - May 15, 2003 .....	11
Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – June 9, 2003 .....	11
Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – June 16, 2003 .....	12
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	13

#### **Exhibits:**

- Exhibit A:** Wisconsin Main Street Annual Report 2001 - 2002
- Exhibit B:** Summary of February 27, 2003 public discussion and written comments submitted by interested parties
- Exhibit C:** April 4, 2003 Main Street Awards Program
- Exhibit D:** April 5, 2003 tour of award winning Chippewa Falls revitalization projects
- Exhibit E:** May 8, 2003 Fort Atkinson Visit [Downtown Maps]
- Exhibit F:** Funding sources for Wisconsin Main Street programs [March, 2002]
- Exhibit G:** Main Street Subcommittee meeting notices, agendas & minutes
- Exhibit H:** Monroe Times articles; December 9, 2002, January 23, 2003 & March 3, 2003
- Exhibit I:** Budget information from Pewaukee, Sheboygan Falls, Marshfield, Antigo and Chippewa Falls
- Exhibit J:** Buildings rimming Monroe Square [pictures]

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 2

## **What is the Main Street Program?**

*Adapted from New Hampshire Main Street website: <http://www.nhcdfa.org/mainstreet.html>*

**The Main Street Program** is a comprehensive revitalization program designed to promote the historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts.

Even to the most casual observer, it is apparent that many downtowns and village centers are in trouble. Some attribute this as the result of our national love affair with the automobile. Others point out the high vacancy rates on Main Street are a natural consequence of the construction of popular shopping malls or convenient strip developments. Regardless of the reason, the vitality of community centers has been sapped nationwide.

Various programs have been tried over the years to address this problem. Witness the Model Cities and urban renewal programs of the late 60's and early 70's, Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG) and the HUD Small Cities programs of the 80's, and today's most popular reincarnation, enterprise or empowerment zones.

Interestingly, none of these efforts, though driven by federal funds, has proven to be successful in effectively addressing the problems of downtowns, particularly in smaller communities. These programs have led to building renovations and job subsidies, but have not provided comprehensive solutions to the problems of decaying central business districts or depressed village centers.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation developed a pilot Main Street program in three Midwestern communities in the early 1980's that has proven over time to be the most successful approach to downtown rejuvenation yet. Using its Main Street Four-Point Approach and by working with state Main Street Centers and local Main Street programs, the National Center's record in stimulating downtown redevelopment is unparalleled.

## **What the Main Street Program is doing in America's communities**

*Adapted from The National Trust For Historic Preservation Main Street Center website: <http://www.mainstreet.org/>*

Since 1980, the National Main Street Center has been working with communities across the nation to revitalize their historic or traditional commercial areas. Based in historic preservation, the Main Street approach was developed to save historic commercial architecture and the fabric of American communities' built environment, but has become a powerful economic development tool as well.

The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to Main Street's future as recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings, and expanding parking. Building on downtown's inherent assets -- rich architecture, personal service, and traditional values and most of all, a sense of place -- the Main Street approach has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local

## MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### Report of Main Street Subcommittee

June 30, 2003

Page 3

resources and conditions. And because it is a locally driven program, all initiative stems from local issues and concerns.

The National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, Phone: 202.588.6219, Fax: 202.588.6050. Email: [mainstreet@nthp.org](mailto:mainstreet@nthp.org)

## The 2001 National Reinvestment Statistics

The Main Street program has been incredibly successful, making it one of the most powerful economic development tools in the nation, even though it focuses on historic preservation and retaining community character. These statistics are tracked *from 1980 to date* and reflect activity in over 1,650 communities:

- The total amount of public and private reinvestment in Main Street communities is \$16.1 Billion
- Average reinvestment per community (i):\$9,659,000
- Number of net new businesses generated: 56,300
- Number of net new jobs generated: 226,900
- Number of building rehabilitations: 88,700
- The Ratio of Reinvestment into the Community (ii): the *average* number of dollars generated in each community for every dollar used to operate the local Main Street program: \$39.96 reinvested for every \$1 spent
- Average program length, to date: 7.36 years
- Average cost per job created: \$2,504
- Average cost per business created in a main street district: \$10,090

#### Notes:

*(i) The AVERAGE REINVESTMENT PER COMMUNITY reflects investment in communities, which have recently begun commercial district revitalization programs as well as those which have been actively involved in main street for more than a decade. In addition, it includes investment in communities of all sizes and in all parts of the country. For these reasons, communities should be extremely cautious in using it as a benchmark for local performance.*

*(ii) The REINVESTMENT RATIO measures the amount of new investment that occurs, on average, for every dollar a participating community spends to support the operation of its Main Street program, based on average annual program costs reported to the National Trust's National Main Street Center by statewide and citywide Main Street programs.*

## MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### Report of Main Street Subcommittee

June 30, 2003

Page 4

## What is the Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization?

The Main Street program's success is based on a comprehensive strategy of work, tailored to local needs and opportunities, in four broad areas, called the *Main Street Four Point Approach*:

**Design:** Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.

**Organization:** Building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.

**Promotion:** Marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors.

**Economic Restructuring:** Strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities -- and challenges from outlying development.

## The Main Street Philosophy

The National Main Street Center's experience in helping communities bring their downtowns back to life has shown time and time again that the Main Street Four-Point Approach succeeds only when combined with the following eight principles:

**Comprehensive:** A single project cannot revitalize a downtown or commercial neighborhood. An ongoing series of initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.

**Incremental:** Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that "things are happening" on Main Street and hone the skills and confidence the program will need to tackle more complex problems.

**Self-Help:** Although the National Main Street Center can provide valuable direction and hands-on technical assistance, only local leadership can initiate long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.

**Public/private partnership:** Every local Main Street program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. For an effective partnership, each must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.

**Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets:** One of the National Main Street Center's key goals is to help communities recognize and make the best use of their unique offerings. Local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful Main Street initiative.

# MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## Report of Main Street Subcommittee

June 30, 2003

Page 5

## Wisconsin's Main Street Program

[adapted from Wisconsin Main Street program website: <http://commerce.state.wi.us/CD/CD-bdd-overview.html>]

The Main Street Program is a comprehensive revitalization program designed to promote the historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts in Wisconsin.



The Wisconsin Main Street Program was established in 1987 to encourage and support the revitalization of downtowns in Wisconsin communities. Each year, the Department of Commerce selects communities to join the program. These communities receive technical support and training needed to restore their Main Streets to centers of community activity and commerce.

The results in Wisconsin have been impressive. Wisconsin Main Street Programs have brought significant numbers of new businesses and jobs to their respective downtowns. Facade

improvements and building rehabilitation projects have upgraded the image of Main Street. Promotional activities bring the community together in a positive way.

## The Four-Point Approach

In 1980, the National Trust for Historic Preservation established the National Main Street Center to assist nationwide downtown revitalization efforts. The Wisconsin Main Street Program is based on the Trust's philosophy, which advocates restoration of the historic character of downtown while pursuing traditional development strategies such as marketing, business recruitment and retention, real estate development, market analysis, and public improvements.

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 6

There are no quick fixes for declining downtowns, but success can be realized through the comprehensive and incremental approach of the Main Street Program.

**Four elements** combine to create this well-balanced program:

**Organization** involves building a Main Street framework that is well represented by civic groups, merchants, bankers, citizens, public officials, and chambers of commerce. Everyone must work together to renew downtown. A strong organization provides the stability to build and maintain a long-term effort.

**Design** enhances the attractiveness of the business district. Historic building rehabilitations, street and alley clean-ups, colorful banners, landscaping and lighting all improve the physical image of the downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live. Design improvements result in a reinvestment of private and public dollars into the downtown.

**Economic Restructuring** involves analyzing current market forces to develop long-term solutions. Recruiting new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants are examples of economic restructuring activities.

**Promotion** creates excitement downtown. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways Main Street encourages consumer traffic in the downtown. Promotion involves marketing an enticing image to shoppers, investors, and visitors.

## **Main Street Benefits**

### **Investment**

In the first five years of a local Main Street program, the state of Wisconsin invests approximately \$93,000 in on-site visits, training, and technical assistance.

The Wisconsin Main Street Program, the National Main Street Center, and private consultants spend more than 80 days in each new community during the start-up phase.

After the start-up phase, the state annually invests approximately \$5,000 in each Main Street community to provide quarterly volunteer and director training sessions, design assistance, business consultations, and town-specific technical assistance. Other benefits are an annual awards ceremony, cooperative marketing opportunities, and an extensive library of slides, videos, and printed materials. In addition, scholarships are available for local Main Street program directors to attend the National Town Meeting on Main Street.

### **Results**

Together, Wisconsin Main Street communities have impacted the heart and soul of our communities—the downtowns. A significant number of new jobs have been created; many new businesses have been attracted; and millions of dollars have been privately invested in the communities.

Successful applicants are committed to the following key principles:

- **Establishment of a volunteer board of directors**
- **Procurement of stable, local funding**

## MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### Report of Main Street Subcommittee

June 30, 2003

Page 7

- **Development of public/private partnerships**
- **Commitment to hire a program manager**
- **Commitment to the four-point approach**
- **Establishment of a well-defined commercial district**
- **Commitment to historic preservation and**
- **Willingness to work and succeed over time.**

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## Application Information

### Application Workshops

Communities interested in applying to the Wisconsin Main Street Program are required to send at least one representative to a workshop. Communities are strongly encouraged to send more than one representative. For more information call (608) 266-7531.

### 2001 Wisconsin Main Street Criteria

**Need** – The need for the Main Street Program in the municipality and its expected impact on the municipality.

**Organizational Capability** – The capability of the applicant to successfully implement the Main Street Program.

**Public Sector Commitment** – The level of public sector interest in and commitment to a local Main Street program.

**Private Sector Commitment** – The level of private sector interest in and commitment to a local Main Street program.

**Financial Capacity** – The financial capability to employ a full-time manager (at least half-time if the population of the community is 3,500 or less), fund a local Main Street program, and support business-area projects. A variety of funding sources should be utilized. A minimum budget of \$60,000 annually (including in-kind donations) is expected of applicants hiring a full-time manager and a minimum budget of \$40,000 annually is expected of applicants hiring a part-time manager.

**Physical Capacity** – The cohesiveness, distinctiveness, and variety of business activity conducted in the proposed Main Street Program area.

**Historical Identity** – The historic significance of the proposed Main Street Program area and the interest in and commitment to historic preservation.

If, after comparing the application, the department is unable to distinguish between two or more of the highly rated municipalities then, to distinguish one applicant from another, the department shall consider the following:

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 8

**Geographical Variety** – The contribution to the geographic variety of the program made by the applicant.

**Population Diversity** – The contribution to the variety of community size in the program made by the applicant.

For more information regarding the Wisconsin Main Street program, contact the Bureau of Downtown Development at:

Bureau of Downtown Development  
Division of Community Development  
201 West Washington Ave.  
PO Box 7970  
Madison, WI 53707  
(608) 266-7531

## **Monroe Main Street Investigation**

Monroe's investigation of the Main Street Program began in the fall of 2002 when the Downtown Business Improvement District adopted its budget for 2003 and included in the budget a set-aside of \$10,000 to be held pending the outcome of an investigation of the merits of a Main Street Program in Monroe. Shortly thereafter, BID Board president, Nancy Maliszewski, appointed a Main Street Investigation Subcommittee consisting of BID Board members Rex A. Ewald [chairperson], Dr. David Riese, Michael Doyle, Pam Lakowski and Nancy Maliszewski.

### **Presentations by James D. Engle, Sherrie Avery-King and Amy Charles.**

The Main Street Subcommittee began its investigation by inviting James D. Engle, Director of the Bureau of Downtown Development of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Sherrie Avery-King, Main Street Manager for the City of Watertown and Amy Charles, Main Street Manager for Darlington-Blanchardville to speak at a meeting of interested parties. The meeting was held on January 22, 2003 in the Community Room at AMCORE Bank N.A. Mr. Engle spoke for about an hour and described for the 30-35 people in attendance what the Main Street Program in Wisconsin offers to a community. He explained that the application process for designation as a Main Street community is competitive and that only 1 to 3 communities are selected each year to participate in the program. For a community the size of Monroe he said the program requires a local Main Street Budget of at least \$60,000 and the hiring of a full-time Main Street Manager. If these minimum requirements are met and Monroe is selected, the Wisconsin Main Street Program will provide in-kind services over a period of 5 years and these services are valued at approximately \$93,000. The Wisconsin Main Street program also provides training for the Main Street Manager.

Sherrie Avery-King and Amy Charles each spoke highly of the benefits the Main Street Program has provided to their respective communities. Each also observed that Monroe appears to be a good candidate for a Main Street Program.

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 9

An impromptu public discussion followed the presentations during which a consensus emerged that a second public meeting should be held where community input is solicited regarding the pros and cons of seeking a Main Street designation for Monroe.

### **Public Meeting to Solicit Pros and Cons of Main Street.**

On February 27, 2003 the Main Street Subcommittee scheduled the requested public discussion of the Main Street Program. The meeting was again held in the Community Room at AMCORE Bank N.A. This meeting was facilitated by Sarah Burgert, Community Resource Development Educator with the UW Extension office in Green County. About 35 people attended. Ms. Burgert first asked the group to identify various alternative approaches for revitalizing the downtown. This produced a list of four options:

- **Apply for Main Street designation**
- **Apply Main Street principles without applying for Main Street designation**
- **Maintain status quo**
- **Use existing organizations, but increase revitalization activities**

A structured discussion followed with Ms. Burgert eliciting and recording audience comments regarding the pros and cons of each option. The comments collected are summarized in a report prepared by Ms. Burgert and attached to this report as Exhibit B.

The structured portion of the meeting was followed by a general discussion which included audience suggestions of what further steps should be taken in the investigation. Amy Charles suggested that a contingent from Monroe attend the Main Street Awards dinner in Chippewa Falls on April 4, 2003. In addition, several in attendance felt the Main Street Subcommittee should visit other communities, both Main Street and non-Main Street, to observe their revitalization efforts. Rex A. Ewald agreed to coordinate arrangements for a trip to the Main Street Awards dinner in Chippewa Falls.

Monroe mayor, William M. Ross, Jr., attended the meeting and expressed support for a Main Street program for Monroe and stated that the City Council has already gone on record in support of pursuing the designation and to provide funding at a level of 1/3 of the annual budget. He expressed interest in attending the Main Street Awards Dinner on April 4.

### **Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – March 17, 2003.**

On March 17, 2003 the Main Street Subcommittee met to assess the status of the investigation and discuss next steps. At this meeting arrangements for the April 4 Chippewa Falls awards dinner were confirmed and the subcommittee decided to schedule visits to Fort Atkinson, a non-Main Street community, Darlington, a Main Street community and Platteville, also a Main Street community.

### **Chippewa Falls Main Street Awards and Tour – April 4 & 5, 2003.**

On April 4, 2003 Rex A. Ewald, Sharon M. Ewald, Mayor William M. Ross, Jr. and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Matthew J. Urban traveled to Chippewa Falls to attend the 13th Annual Wisconsin Main Street Awards program. A dinner preceded the awards program

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 10

and Mayor Ross, Rex Ewald and Sharon Ewald sat at a table with Ward McDonald and Sally Hink from the Richland Center Main Street program. Both spoke highly of the benefits that Main Street has represented for the Richland Center community.

The awards program followed the dinner. Awards ranging from best historic preservation project to best downtown retail event were presented to representatives from various Wisconsin Main Street Communities. The awards program brochure is attached as Exhibit C. Those in attendance from Monroe were impressed with accomplishments and the enthusiasm of those receiving awards. On the morning of April 5 all four representatives from Monroe participated in a tour of award-winning revitalization projects in the downtown of Chippewa Falls. The tour included an impressive array of projects. The itinerary for the tour is attached as Exhibit D.

### **Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – April 7, 2003.**

On April 7, 2003 the Main Street Subcommittee met to again assess the status of the investigation and discuss next steps. Rex A. Ewald reported on the trip to Chippewa Falls and the subcommittee set tentative dates for visits to Fort Atkinson, Darlington and Platteville. The subcommittee also decided to solicit Main Street budgets from Pewaukee, Sheboygan Falls, Two Rivers, Marshfield, Antigo, Rice Lake, Sturgeon Bay and Chippewa Falls for study by the subcommittee.

### **Fort Atkinson Visit - May 8, 2003.**

On May 8, 2003 the subcommittee traveled to Fort Atkinson to meet with local representatives and observe revitalization projects in Fort Atkinson's downtown. Participating in this visit were Rex A. Ewald, Dr. David Riese, Michael Doyle, Pam Lakowske, Nancy Maliszewski and Sharon M. Ewald.

The subcommittee met with Dianne Hrobsky, Executive Vice President of the Fort Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce and John Wilmet, City Manager for the City of Fort Atkinson. Ms. Hrobsky and Mr. Wilmet first spent about an hour with the subcommittee discussing revitalization efforts in downtown Fort Atkinson. This was followed by a guided walk through the Fort Atkinson central business district. The subcommittee was shown several ambitious public and private projects, including a river walk project underway along the Rock River which flows through Fort Atkinson's downtown.

During the course of the discussion and tour it became apparent to the group that most of the projects were spearheaded by and the vast majority of new investment was contributed by a single developer with roots in Fort Atkinson. When questioned about the amount and significance of investment by other individuals or businesses Mr. Wilmet and Ms. Hrobsky acknowledged that there has been little initiated other than by the single developer. \$12,000,000 was the estimate given by Mr. Wilmet of the magnitude of investment so far by the private investor.

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 11

### **Darlington and Platteville Visits - May 15, 2003.**

On May 15, 2003 the subcommittee traveled to Darlington and Platteville to meet with local representatives and observe revitalization projects in their downtowns. Participating in these visits were Rex A. Ewald, Dr. David Riese, Nancy Maliszewski and Monroe 10th Ward Alderperson, Kate Maresch.

In Darlington, the subcommittee met for about 45 minutes with Patrick Whalen, Tim McGettigan and Beverly Anderson. All spoke highly of the positive impact their Main Street program has had on Darlington's downtown. They also shared insights into problems they have encountered, most of which are related to the funding of their program. They stated that the City of Darlington did not follow through fully with economic commitments that had been made when the program was first started 7 years ago. Despite the problems encountered, all felt the Main Street program had made a positive difference in Darlington's downtown.

The meeting with Mr. Whalen, Mr. McGettigan and Ms. Anderson was followed by a tour of businesses including Antiques & Accents, owned by Marilyn Hill and A Barber Shop Inn-Hotel owned by Laura M. Jenkins. Ms. Hill and Ms. Jenkins each reported that Darlington's Main Street Program was valuable for the Darlington downtown.

From Darlington the subcommittee traveled on to Platteville for a meeting with Cheryl Zmina, Main Street Manager for Platteville. Ms. Zmina was joined by Nancy Kies, past Main Street Board President, Mark Ihm, current Main Street Board President, and Ed Bible, an economic planner with the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and also a Platteville Main Street volunteer. The group met in the downtown at Badger Brothers Coffee shop, one of several new businesses recruited to the downtown as a direct result of the Main Street Program.

Platteville is a relatively new Main Street program, having been designated a Main Street community in 1999. Much of the focus of the Platteville Main Street Program seemed to be centered on development of brochures and the organizing of downtown activities. The organization is also beginning a mural program aimed at educating the community and raising awareness of Platteville's history and historic preservation.

The organizational and promotional focus of the Platteville Main Street Program is perhaps due to the program's short history and a limited annual budget of \$45,000. With respect to the budget, the group expressed frustration with what they regard as poor support from the Platteville City Council. Despite these frustrations, there was a clear sense of pride in the accomplishments of the Main Street program.

### **Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – June 9, 2003.**

At its meeting on June 9, 2003 the Main Street subcommittee discussed budget information obtained from Wisconsin Main Street communities, Pewaukee, Sheboygan Falls, Marshfield, Antigo and Chippewa Falls. The budget summaries are attached as Exhibit E.

The subcommittee began discussing its Subcommittee Report. The discussion included a review of the spectrum of options available, including applying Main Street principles without applying for designation as a Main Street community. A consensus emerged that Main Street

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 12

represents a good model for revitalization. Concern was expressed about the amount of work necessary to develop and present a Main Street application. Subcommittee member Doyle and visiting City Council member Maresch expressed the view that Monroe has many elements of a Main Street approach already in place that, if properly utilized, could accomplish much of what a Main Street program will accomplish. A discussion ensued about developing a cooperative venture with the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and Industry whereby a staff position could be created, the responsibilities of which would be similar to the responsibilities of a Main Street Manager. The objective would be to operate in this manner for a year or two with the goal of then applying for Main Street designation. Subcommittee member Doyle stated that if the city would be willing to match BID funding at say a \$20,000 level there would be sufficient money to hire a person who could then provide much needed service to the downtown while simultaneously laying an organizational foundation for a Main Street program. Monroe Chamber of Commerce and Industry Executive Director, Matt Urban stated that MCCI would be receptive to such an arrangement. Rex Ewald added that he believes that the subcommittee investigation has confirmed the value of pursuing designation as a Main Street community but acknowledged that large amounts of volunteer time will be necessary to prepare and present the Main Street application. He stated that he believes the timing of a Main Street application is less important than the commitment to apply Main Street principles. He added that without the Main Street designation, Monroe will not be eligible for the valuable in-kind services, training and supervision provided by the Wisconsin Main Street staff. The meeting was adjourned with a commitment to continue the discussion at the subcommittee's next meeting on June 16.

### **Main Street Subcommittee Meeting – June 16, 2003.**

Using a computer screen projector, Rex Ewald reviewed with the subcommittee the over 90 pages of exhibits to the draft subcommittee report.

Following the presentation by Rex Ewald the subcommittee continued the discussion of its Subcommittee Report started on June 9. Much of the discussion focused on immediate actions that can be undertaken that might lead to submitting an application for designation as a Main Street community. Dr. Riese commented that he has strongly supported pursuing designation as a Main Street community from the outset of the investigation but has concerns of maintaining both the donations and volunteers necessary for the programs. Mike Doyle suggested that staff support could be hired for BID's activities without attempting to quickly launch into a Main Street application. He observed that a staff position could be created at MCCI if the City would be willing to contribute funding and MCCI would be willing to allow use of office space and equipment. The person hired could then begin setting the groundwork for a Main Street application by gathering information for the application and beginning to build a management structure around the Main Street principles. Matt Urban stated that he continues to believe that his board will be supportive of such an arrangement and the position could be structured to focus on just the downtown. He added that the position should have an oversight committee to provide guidance. Mayor Ross stated that he is prepared to provide the leadership necessary to stimulate community support for a major initiative in the downtown, but that he believes it is critical to include the community at large in the program. Rex Ewald stated that he believes that fundraising beyond BID and the City will not be as

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 13

difficult as some believe and he feels the funding goal should be aggressive. He suggested \$75,000 with 1/3 to come from BID, 1/3 from the City and 1/3 from the City at large. The discussion then moved to how an oversight committee should be structured. All members agreed that the oversight committee should have representation from the funding sources. Following a discussion among subcommittee members a consensus evolved that the oversight committee should consist of 7 individuals appointed by the Mayor with 2 individuals representing City government, 2 individuals representing BID, 2 individuals from the community at large and 1 individual from MCCI.

A motion was then made by Dr. Riese and seconded by Mike Doyle and passed unanimously that the Main Street Subcommittee report include the following recommendations:

- that a staff position be created and located in the offices of MCCI with a mandate to focus efforts on only the downtown.
- that the duties and responsibilities of the position be modeled after the duties and responsibilities of a Main Street Manager
- that an oversight committee be formed consisting of 7 individuals appointed by the Mayor with 2 individuals representing City government, 2 individuals representing BID, 2 individuals from the community at large and 1 individual from MCCI
- that the oversight board be given authority to direct the general activities of the downtown coordinator position, and
- that a community fundraising effort be started with an objective of securing commitments for at least \$25,000 per year to match funding from the City and BID in the same amount.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Main Street Subcommittee has pursued all avenues that it believes are necessary to thoroughly evaluate the Main Street Program and how it might benefit Monroe. The investigation included two public meetings, the first of which consisted of presentations by James Engle, Director of the Bureau of Downtown Development at the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, and Main Street managers Amy Charles [Darlington] and Sherrie Avery-King [Watertown], and the second of which consisted of a public discussion facilitated by Sarah Burgert, Community Resource Development Educator with the UW Extension office in Green County, where the pros and cons of pursuing a Main Street program for Monroe were discussed. The investigation also included visits to two Wisconsin Main Street communities [Darlington and Platteville] where subcommittee members met with local leaders and toured the respective downtowns, and a visit to Fort Atkinson, a community pursuing downtown revitalization outside the Main Street Program, where subcommittee members again met with local leaders and toured the downtown. A group of Monroe representatives [Rex A. Ewald, Sharon M. Ewald, mayor William M. Ross, Jr. and Matthew J. Urban] also attended the annual Wisconsin Main Street Awards dinner and program in Chippewa Falls and participated the following day in a tour of award-winning revitalization projects in

## MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### Report of Main Street Subcommittee

June 30, 2003

Page 14

downtown Chippewa Falls. Finally, the subcommittee reviewed literature and documentation related to the Main Street program, including budgets from several Wisconsin Main Street Communities and descriptive materials from both the National Trust For Historic Preservation Main Street Center and the Wisconsin Bureau of Downtown Development.

The Main Street Subcommittee is confident that its investigation has been comprehensive and thorough. Based on its investigation the subcommittee finds:

- That the Main Street Program has a proven track record of success in the revitalization of traditional downtowns across the entire United States.
- That the success of Main Street is due to its commitment to an incremental approach to revitalization that focuses on the four principles of **Design** [enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning], **Organization** [building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process], **Promotion** [marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors] and **Economic Restructuring** [strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities -- and challenges from outlying development].
- That in Main Street communities visited by the subcommittee both leaders and business owners generally support Main Street and feel that it has a positive impact on the downtowns of their communities.
- That Main Street has a name recognition that will enhance the effort to gain community-wide support for downtown revitalization efforts.
- That programs and projects currently being sponsored by the Business Improvement District can continue to be sponsored under a Main Street program.
- That the City has committed that it will provide funding to a Main Street program on a matching basis with the Business Improvement District and with funds raised from the community at large.
- That with the City's commitment and community fundraising sufficient resources will be available to enable the hiring of staff support for downtown revitalization efforts.
- That increased funding levels for programs focusing on the downtown, coupled with substantial staff support and application of the Main Street revitalization model, offers Monroe the best opportunity for significant economic revitalization of its downtown.

For the reasons set forth in the foregoing subcommittee findings, it is the conclusion and recommendation of the Main Street Subcommittee that the following actions be taken:

- That a Monroe downtown coordinator staff position be created and located in the offices of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and Industry [MCCI] with a mandate to focus efforts on only the downtown.
- That, provided that the City of Monroe makes a matching commitment for funding, the Business Improvement District commit annual funding of at least \$25,000 beginning in

## **MONROE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

### **Report of Main Street Subcommittee**

June 30, 2003

Page 15

the 2004 budget year to be expended for the coordinator and activities under the coordinator's direction.

- That the duties and responsibilities of the coordinator be modeled after the duties and responsibilities of a Main Street Manager.
- That an oversight committee be formed consisting of 7 individuals appointed by the mayor with 2 individuals representing City government, 2 individuals representing the Business Improvement District, 2 individuals from the community at large and 1 individual from MCCI.
- That the oversight committee be charged with responsibility to create a job description for the coordinator and to thereafter direct the general activities of the coordinator.
- That the job description developed for the coordinator be subject to approval by both the BID Board and the City's Community Improvement Committee.
- That a community fundraising effort be started for downtown revitalization with an objective of securing commitments for at least \$25,000 per year.
- That all funds raised or supplied by the Business Improvement District or the City be managed under the general direction of the downtown coordinator and utilized exclusively for programs and activities designed to revitalize Monroe's downtown.
- That the duties of the coordinator include staff support for the Business Improvement District Board including preparation of agendas for all meetings of the board and its subcommittees, attendance at all meetings of the board and its subcommittees, and attendance at all meetings of the Monroe Common Council or any of its subcommittees where matters affecting the downtown will be discussed.
- That the downtown coordinator position be considered an interim position with the ultimate objective of pursuing an application for designation of Monroe as a Main Street community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Monroe Business Improvement District Main Street Subcommittee

Rex A. Ewald, Chair  
Dr. David Riese  
Michael Doyle  
Pam Lakowske  
Nancy Maliszewski