



CHERRYVILLE

SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

July 1 - September 30, 2014

Small Town Main Street is a nationwide program under the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program was founded 34 years ago with the goal of revitalizing downtowns across America. North Carolina currently has 110 cities, both large and small, participating in the program. In order to qualify for the Small Town Main Street program, a town must have a population of less than 7500 people. Cherryville was selected as a pilot community in 2012. In July 2014, the Cherryville STMS became a fully self-supporting program with over 30 volunteers from the Cherryville Community.

The Cherryville STMS committee is dedicated to creating a vibrant downtown of unique, eclectic businesses thriving in a friendly, entrepreneurial environment and celebrating our rich heritage. Our mission is to use our Master Work Plan to restore and preserve the historic downtown area and attract visitors and businesses. The plan encompasses comprehensive strategies to organize and build consensus and cooperation among groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization of downtown Cherryville. Strategies include enhancing the physical appearance of the downtown business district, rehabilitating historic buildings and finding ways to strengthen and expand the downtown economy. The Cherryville STMS is divided into

four teams: Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring. There are specific objectives and tasks for each team. Monthly meetings are held and progress is reported to the STMS Steering Committee.

The kickoff meeting for the new fiscal year was held on July 8, 2014 in the new STMS Committee room located on the second floor of City Hall. This room is has been reserved for STMS meetings and is open to the public. **Mayor H. L. Beam** welcomed members of the community and STMS committee and pledged the City's support for the program. City Council members also are highly supportive of the committee's efforts. Mayor Beam gratefully accepted a check for \$15,000.00, which was generously donated by Cherryville Federal Bank and presented by CFB President **Stan Allen**. This money was used to fund the upcoming Cherryville imaging and marketing plan for the downtown district. Chairman **Andy West** proceeded with a program to explain the mission, goals, and plans for the new fiscal year.

Design Team News

As an introduction to the STMS Design Committee, our purpose is: *"to encourage physical improvements in Cherryville's Downtown Business District, educate property owners and merchants about preservation methods and plan for future growth downtown."*

To that end, the Design team has made great strides over the last three months. Led by **Jean Skibo**, our team is comprised of 14 local citizens and merchants.

Our major accomplishment this quarter has been to successfully collaborate with the City's Public Works department, led by **Brandon Abernathy** and City Manager **Ben Blackburn** to

develop a list of 'cleanup' tasks specific to Downtown, focusing on items that can be completed prior to the Christmas Holiday Shopping Season. Over 50 items have been identified and prioritized by the City and our sub team, comprised of volunteers **Sandra Beam** of "Victoria Cole", citizens **Mandy Stroupe Harrill, Jason Beam, Gail Jenkins and Jill Parker-Puett**. Moreover the City has agreed with our formal recommendation that "*cleaning and maintenance of the public surfaces in Downtown, including sidewalks, streets and parking lots, will be the responsibility of the City Public Works.*" For example, the city street sweeper will pass along Main and Mountain streets each Sunday afternoon, so as to not disrupt parking for shoppers. A big thank you to **Ben and Brandon** for their support and efforts to "Keep our Downtown Clean"!

Sherry D. Bingham, Gary Freeman and Blair Beam, all well-known local artists and volunteers with the Design Committee, are researching public art for Downtown. The venue along Main & Mountain streets provides significant opportunities for public art --- specifically exterior wall murals of various shapes, sizes and medium. Within the next couple of months, these three volunteers will formally present several mural proposals to the STMS Steering Committee for consideration. The team, along with **Jean Skibo**, has also formally approached Coca Cola Inc. about restoring two old, faded "Coke" murals ... one along the south side of West Main and another at the corner of East Main and Oak Streets.

Cherryville is very fortunate among small towns in North Carolina to still possess substantial, historic commercial buildings in the downtown district, many still bearing original, elaborate architectural detail. In the coming months,

Doug Blackburn, Sid Stroupe, Paula Deese and Warren Beam will begin a formal project, documenting each commercial structure, including "date built", architect, history of merchants and businesses that have occupied, building dimensions, etc. This information will be used for future promotion / advertising of our Downtown as well as supporting information to our application for inclusion in the National Historic Registry. If you have information on our downtown buildings or old photos of them, please contact us.

Lastly, just in time for the 2014 Christmas Shopping Season, the Design Team and the City Public Works department will 'spruce up' Main and Mountain streets with some sorely needed landscaping, mulching, flowers and other eye-catching public displays. Stay Tuned!

Promotion Team News

The first quarter of the new fiscal year has been very exciting for the Promotion Team! We have completed the tasks that were set for our committee for the first quarter and now work on 2nd quarter tasks is underway.

Roger and Sue Hollifield organized and set up the Committee Room on the second floor of City Hall. **Richard Randall** provided many old photos of Cherryville to decorate the walls. Modern Printing donated enlarged prints of the Vision and Mission statements for the room. **Andy and Karen West** helped to arrange and mount the pictures. The bulletin board is continually being updated with news articles and other information of interest to the community. The room has been the site of numerous meetings during the first quarter. The Committee Room is open during regular business hours to anyone who would like to visit.

The largest and most important task for the first quarter was to write and release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit bids from branding companies. The branding company will help determine the new image for downtown Cherryville. Branding includes creating a logo, color palette, motto or tag line and images that can be used in advertising the downtown business district. The firm of **Arnett and Muldrow**, a nationally renowned branding and marketing firm, was chosen for this very important step in the re-imaging of Cherryville. They will be conducting community and individual sessions with residents to determine the best direction in which to steer our efforts. This effort will be funded by the generous donation from Cherryville Federal Bank.

We now have a website for STMS! **John Rudasill** created the new website for STMS. A tab for STMS has been added to the Cherryville web page (www.cityofcherryville.com) and to the Chamber of Commerce webpage (www.cherryvillechamber.com).

Mary Beth Tackett, Cindy Clemmer and Sid Stroupe created a great Facebook page (www.facebook.com/cherryvillestms) for STMS. We have had over 2000 “likes” to the page and have received numerous positive comments. The Facebook page is a good way to keep up with what is happening with the program.

We are keeping the public advised of progress in newspaper articles published in the *Eagle* and *Gaston Gazette*. These articles are on the bulletin board in the STMS meeting room. **Cindy Clemmer, Mary Beth Tackett and Sue Hollifield** also wrote and published an interim brochure to hand out at public meetings and the Farmer’s Market until the new brochure is printed. This will be done after the branding study is complete.

The committee is looking forward to pursuing the myriad tasks and initiatives in the coming months.

Economic Restructuring Team

The 1st Quarter was a productive time for the STMS Economic Restructuring Team. Our focus for the quarter was to hold an information session for Cherryville downtown merchants and property owners. One of the main purposes of the STMS initiative is to help merchants and business owners to be successful. To that end, we held our first semi-annual Merchants and Property Owners Information Session on September 16th at the STMS Committee Room in City Hall. The session was well attended by nearly 40 people.

Mayor H. L. Beam welcomed everyone and voiced his and the Council’s full support for the program. STMS Chairman, **Andy West**, provided a program overview to the attendees explaining the organization, the vision and mission, the accomplishments to date, and initiatives for fiscal year 2015. **Dave Kiser** enlisted the support of the Small Business Center (SBC) at Gaston College. **Brad Rivers**, the SBC Director, briefed the group on SBC offerings, including free business counseling and “how to” courses for Cherryville business people. Course offerings range from tax advice and payroll management to marketing and technology. Course schedules and offerings can be found on the web site at <http://startabiz.gaston.edu>. His contact info is:

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Additionally, in preparation for the session, **Richard Randall** conducted a survey of merchants and property owners. He briefed attendees on the survey results and analysis from over 40 respondents.

During 1st Quarter, the Economic Restructuring also worked on a task to improve the quality of businesses in the downtown business district. **Richard Elam** (Design Team) and **Roger Hollifield** worked on a new ordinance that the city adopted to restrict the use of the downtown business district to businesses that appeal to the general public. Thus, Tattoo Parlors, Tanning Salons, Laundry Mats and other similar types of businesses are no longer permitted to open in the downtown business district. This type of restriction is widely used throughout the state.

Working with **Richard Elam** on the Design Team, **Roger Hollifield** assisted the team in establishing guidelines for refurbishing buildings facades and interiors in the downtown. Additionally, a charter was drafted to establish a downtown business district Architectural Review Board (ARB). The architectural guidelines and the ARB charter were provided to all attendees.

Lastly, **Andrew Thomas** and **Stephanie Dohlmo** worked with **Richard Randall** to draft a plan for the FY2015 City Grant Program. This program will provide business owners with matching grants up to \$3,000 per store front for façade improvements. In turn, the City has allocated \$15,000 to this program so that at least 5 businesses can take advantage of this offering. Details on the grant program, the application process and the Architectural Review Board will be published soon.

For 2nd Quarter, the focus of the Economic Restructuring Team is to analyze the marketing data and determine the optimal business mix for the downtown. Additionally, we want to get the Grant Program launched and find businesses willing to invest in their facades.

Closing Comments

The Small Town Main Street Program offers Cherryville its best opportunity to revitalize the downtown business district. Since the closing of Carolina Freight Carriers in 1995, Cherryville has been in decline. It's time to reverse this and revitalize our community.

During the 1st Quarter of fiscal year 2015, the 33 STMS Committee volunteers gave over 760 hours of their personal time in support of this program and the City of Cherryville. Over 20 tasks from the Master Work Plan were completed and progress is underway on many other tasks.

This is a long-term program, so don't expect dramatic results over night. Indeed, it will take years to yield the results most residents want to see. Working together and making incremental improvements, we will succeed.

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