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## Notes from “Organization 101” - part 1 (of 4) of the “Main Street Approach” Series

Presented by: Jackie Swihart, Program Officer, Main Street America (j.swihart@savingplaces.org)  
Offered by: Nancy Williams, Coordinator, Tennessee Main Street

Most important component of our success =  
our grassroots organization and how we function at our local level

What is “Main Street”?	It’s a philosophy AND a program!
What are the components of the Main Street Framework?	Framework has 4 components required to help drive fundamental and foundational change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organization - build leadership and strong organizational capacity; ensure broad community engagement; forge partnerships across sectors</li><li>• Design - create an inviting, inclusive atmosphere; celebrate historic character; foster accessible, people-centered public spaces</li><li>• Promotion - market the district’s defining assets; communicate the unique features through storytelling; support the “buy local” experience</li><li>• Economic Vitality - build a diverse economic base; catalyze smart new investments; cultivate a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem</li></ul> Community Transformation is at the center of all 4 points!
We are on a Continuous Cyclical Journey	We need to continuously work through and in/out of these steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Vision</li><li>• Market Understanding</li><li>• Transformation Strategies</li><li>• Work Plan Implementation</li><li>• Measurable Outcomes</li></ul>
National Main Street Center Resources are available!	Guardians of the Gap have joined the National Main Street organization and have access to the free resources available on the site as well as to the resources available only to paid members
There are 8 Main Street Guiding Principles	Our effort needs to be.... <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Comprehensive</li><li>2. Incremental</li><li>3. Community Driven</li><li>4. Public &amp; Private efforts</li><li>5. Built on existing assets</li><li>6. Quality (over quantity)</li><li>7. Changing/Adaptive</li><li>8. Implementation-oriented</li></ol>

<p>We are making a “Two-Fold Commitment”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What we want to achieve = a sustainable downtown district</li> <li>2. How we make it happen = revitalization program</li> </ol>
<p>What is “organization” in our TN Downtowns project context?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Having strong bones - high functioning people who will help us get the work done (all types of personalities needed!)</li> <li>2. Incentivizing creative partnerships - to build sustainable capacity</li> <li>3. Listening - to understand experience and current environment</li> <li>4. Describing - the dream and the result! - build a story through vision, mission, planning, and work planning</li> <li>5. Organization Committee - “selling” the Main Street philosophy, building relationships, etc.</li> <li>6. Strengthening from the ground up - sometimes less is more!</li> </ol>
<p>What does a Main Street Organizational Structure look like?</p>	<p>All working together in a venn diagram format must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Executive Director / staff</li> <li>● Board of Directors</li> <li>● Committees or Teams</li> </ul>
<p>What are Key Components of Team Culture</p>	<p>Needs to be defined from within</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leadership roles &amp; responsibilities are clear</li> <li>● Onboarding &amp; clear job descriptions for volunteers</li> <li>● Organizational flexibility</li> </ul>
<p>How do we evaluate our Leadership Base?</p>	<p>Need to evaluate our base &amp; compare it to local demographics. Look for gaps to fill, opportunities to leverage, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who are our leaders currently?</li> <li>● What’s their background and demographics?</li> <li>● What’s their interest/intent?</li> <li>● How are they currently contributing?</li> <li>● What do we need to change; who do we need to target, etc.?</li> </ul>
<p>How can we staff our activities?</p>	<p>Need at least 1 permanent part-time staff member Partners can also donate \$\$ and people’s time! Consider asking them to donate their staff’s time too.</p>
<p>Empower People to Lead in areas that interest them, like...</p>	<p>Organization Design Economic Vitality Financial Management Communications IT</p>
<p>Building Relationships is multifaceted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Within our district (e.g., newsletter)</li> <li>● Within our organization</li> <li>● With our partners</li> </ul>
<p>Work With Business Owners to...</p>	<p>Learn about their products, their needs, market reach, etc. Educate them about opportunities Advocate for market presence, partnerships, etc. Bring them together to collaborate</p>

Work With Property Owners to...	Learn about their vision for their structure Educate (e.g., market trends) Advocate (e.g., growth and sustainability needs for the town) Bring Together (communicate & collaborate)
Economic Development Tools  (beyond business incentives & grants)	<i>“We must stop allowing absentee / neglectful property owners from holding our downtowns hostage”</i> - Don Rypkema, Place Economics  Ways to address unused and/or neglected properties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dilapidated structures ordinance</li> <li>• Vacancy Tax – create and levy on unused properties, dilapidated properties, etc. (incremental to dilapidated structure actions that might be taken)</li> <li>• Require transparency (no boarded/covered windows)</li> <li>• Ensure they are fully insured</li> <li>• Require that Health &amp; Safety Codes be enforced</li> </ul>
The Public Sector must contribute...	Work with them to improve and maintain the space, assemble resources, educate, explore options/new ideas, etc.
School Partnerships are great...	Might want to engage the next generations in “Junior Main Street Committees” Internships! (unpaid and/or paid stipends)
Community Outreach Options to consider include...	Group Meetings (city, civic, corporate, specific stakeholders, businesses) Public Relations (social media, brochure, newsletter, annual report, poster, “get in touch” options, etc.)
Set Very Clear Internal Team Expectations	Confirm expectations early on Meet with purpose Communicate Regularly
Evaluate Our Funding Structure***	Balance public vs. private sector support Ensure funding sources are diversified (e.g., have 3 different sources of predictable revenue) Budget for operations and programming (aligned with our work plans) Strategic fund development Appropriate financial management/practices  *** <i>Individual donations (vs. foundations, bequest, corporations) are the biggest component of giving per historical giving metrics</i>
Main Ingredients for Our Success...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build sense of ownership</li> <li>2. Build organizational culture that fosters and rewards community engagement</li> <li>3. Build a program that is valuable &amp; worth giving to (time, money, resources)</li> </ol>

As always, contact [guardiansofthegap@gmail.com](mailto:guardiansofthegap@gmail.com) if you have questions or want to contribute!