

## STAR (Super Town of Albion Revitalization) Team January 27, 2011 Committee Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Jessica Schafer, Mary Ann Troutner, Orland and Judith Leitch, Beth Shellman, John Bry, Kelly Tieman, Steve Hook, Max Weber, Joy Lecount, Vickie Jellison, Phyllis Herendeen, Morris and Judi Carpenter, Chris Magnuson, and Paul Truelove.

The meeting started around 6 p.m. in the lower level of the Albion Library, with Mary Ann taking the lead. Those in attendance were asked to introduce themselves and those in attendance for the first time were welcomed. A motion for approval of the December 1, 2010 meeting minutes was made and the motion passed.

Discussion focused attention on the five outstanding items found on the December 1, 2010 meeting minutes. These items could not initially be discussed since these topics were to be reported on by John Bry. As the committee waited for John's appearance, the committee moved on to sub-committee discussion.

Mary Ann asked each subcommittee whether or not they have met with John Bry to find out their subcommittee's responsibilities. It was noted that all subcommittees met with John, but not every subcommittee has received the Main Street guide which would provide further instruction.

A question was presented to the Organizational Subcommittee with respect to the need for the S.T.A.R. Team to write articles for the newspapers. One suggestion was made to have each business write about their history and have these stories submitted monthly.

Projects/Design Subcommittee Report—Max Weber reported on their progress with the inventory list and associated pictures of the downtown square buildings.

Max also reported on a phone conversation with Tom Farney with Grinsfelder & Associates, an architectural firm. Mr. Farney was asked about the possibility of the Projects/Design subcommittee working with those IPFW students in the architectural technology program. Mr. Farney said that this was not an option since the students do not currently have a lab necessary for this type of activity. Max reported on the opportunity of having Grinsfelder & Associates providing the S.T.A.R. Team with artist renderings of Albion buildings at a fee of \$300 each. It was suggested that Max make a similar inquiry to Jim Furkis, architect, who is currently working with John Bry and being paid by the Noble County Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

*ACTION ITEM:* It was suggested that the S.T.A.R. Team check with shop owners to see what they would like to do for façade modifications. One shop owner reported on her experience with working on a façade project and how expensive this endeavor can be when an architect is involved.

It was mentioned that the S.T.A.R. Team needs to work with both businesses and the Town of Albion to apply for RDC façade reimbursement grants.

The Projects/Design team has prepared sheets for local businesses to be filled in by the Economic Restructuring Subcommittee. The sheets will be filled in with building information from the Assessor's Office and the county's GIS. Steve Hook said he would help with this project.

*ACTION ITEM:* Mary Ann volunteered to check with the Four County Vocational to see if their architectural program would like to assist the Projects/Design Subcommittee.

The S.T.A.R. Team discussed their desire to have Albion's building facades restored to their historic look.

*ACTION ITEM:* To assist with this, it was suggested that local artisans such as Dan Gagen, Abby Mault and Darlene Bender be contacted to see if they would assist with façade renderings.

Organizational Sub-committee Report—Mary Ann reported on Melea Alexander's decision to step down from the Co-chair position and to reduce involvement with the Organizational Subcommittee. The S.T.A.R. Team suggested Beth Shellman fill the role as Co-chair. A motion was made and passed.

Steve Hook briefly reviewed the three Organizational Subcommittee 2011 projects: Logo Contest, S.T.A.R. web design, and the Dinner Fundraiser. Suggestions were made about the Logo Contest: have the option stated in the Logo Contest rules that the S.T.A.R. Team shall have the option of modifying the submitted logo design; have the Logo Contest Open to everyone; possibly consider having two age categories—kids and adults.

Orland asked if the Logo Contest would have a prize. It was suggested that a prize would be necessary as to encourage participation and that a prize package could include gift cards from local businesses.

*ACTION ITEM:* Finally, discussion focused on where contest entry forms could be submitted. Suggestions were made including having entry forms be collected by both the Albion Town Hall and the Albion Library. Mary Ann volunteered to contact Mindy Patterson with the Albion Library.

*ACTION ITEM:* Discussion moved to the planning of the Dinner Meeting. Mary Ann stated that she would contact Dave Hettler with the Four County Vocational Center to see if they would help cater the dinner.

Promotion Sub-committee Report—Phyllis Herendeen presented a handout including information on the Chain 'O Lakes 2007 report, Albion Chamber Study, and an IPFW Market

Analysis. Discussion focused on the specifics of the reports and then moved on to the review of the three Promotion Sub-committee 2011 Projects: Market Analysis, Business Plan Contest, and to Develop Initial Retention Program (meet with business owners).

Promotion Sub-committee Report –Mary Ann discussed the need for additional subcommittee members, checked into the First Friday event date of May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and the suggestion of moving the Farmer’s Market from Saturdays to Fridays. It was proposed that the Farmer’s Market hours of operation be from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The topic of downtown parking was discussed. Concerns were mentioned that events held downtown during normal business hours can have a negative impact on the amount of available parking. This sentiment was shared by Jessica of the Sun Tanning shop. The S.T.A.R. committee discussed the various parking lots that surround the downtown area and how these areas could be used for First Friday event parking.

*ACTION ITEM:* The need to reach out to business owners and determining the ways to communicate with them was mentioned. John Bry stated that all S.T.A.R. Sub-committee share this responsibility; however, the Organizational Sub-committee was pointed out as the subcommittee responsible for assisting the entire team with this task.

John Bry revisited and addressed the outstanding items listed on December’s meeting minutes. John talked with Shae about the need for a certified grants administrator to oversee grants applied for by the S.T.A.R. Team. One may be required if the S.T.A.R. Team pursues Community Development Block grants. John mentioned that State Enhancement grants of \$5,000.00 are available for improvement projects and studies, but why not focus on the \$15,000.00 façade grants available through Albion.

John reported that Manchester College was in favor of providing interns to the S.T.A.R. Team. Interns would be available sometime this summer to assist the S.T.A.R. Team Committee with Organizational Management for a limited 3-month period. Several students are reportedly interested in the internship. There would be a local cost of \$2,000.00 with a \$2,000.00 match by the college.

John also reported on his plans for the creation of a blanket Main Street application covering Albion, Avilla, Kendallville, Ligonier, and Rome City. This would limit the need of applying on behalf of every community individually.

John finally reported on a conversation he had with Jim Furkis, architect, about Jim’s assistance with technical questions raised by all of the individual Revitalization teams with regard to historical buildings.

A question was asked whether business owners will contribute to façade grant opportunities. It was proposed businesses contribute one-quarter, the S.T.A.R. Team contribute one-quarter, and the RDC contribute one-half.

Other discussion focused on planning for the Dinner Fundraiser and the importance of reaching out to local businesses. Both Joy LeCount and Vickie Jellison volunteered to assist the Organizational Subcommittee in Dinner planning. A possible name for the dinner event was suggested—“STARs of Albion.”

*ACTION ITEM:* It was suggested that the S.T.A.R. Team find ways to increase communication with local business owners. Steve Hook suggested and volunteered to create a flyer to be passed out to businesses. Orland Leitch also volunteered to help pass these flyers out to business owners.

#### OUTSTANDING ITEMS:

- Update Farmer’s Market street signs if event moved from Saturdays to Fridays.
- Check with Chain ‘O Lakes Correctional facility for help with First Friday and Dinner Fundraiser events.
- Check with Community Service and other Non-profit organizations for assistance.
- Create Information Flyer to be distributed to local businesses.

The STAR Team adjourned around 7:30 p.m. The next S.T.A.R. Team meeting was set for Wednesday, February 23, at the Albion Library, lower level.