

**Item #10:**  
**Village Trustee Marshall**  
LGBCP Board Meeting – March 15, 2011

LONG GROVE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
5:15 PM at Village Hall

AGENDA

- 1) Call To Order
- 2) Welcome and Introductions
- 3) Review Past Meeting Minutes (Feb, 2011 attached)
- 4) Treasurer's Report
- 5) Executive Committee Report
- 6) Directors Report
- 7) Village of Long Grove Report  
Lake County DOT Old McHenry Road Traffic Study – (Village Resolution attached)
- 8) Design Committee Report
- 9) Economic Development Committee Report
- 10) Organization Committee Report
- 11) Marketing Committee Report
- 12) Promotions Committee Report  
Ice Meltin' Blues  
2011 Draft Calendar - Special Event Applications

Electronics Recycling Event	April 9, 2011	Village of Long Grove
Fire Dept. Pancake Breakfast	April 16, 2011	Lake Cty CERT, LG Firefighters Assn.
Beans & Leaves Outdoor Music	April 28-October	Beans & Leaves Coffee & Tea Cafe
Chocolate Fest	April 29-May 1	LGBCP / Star Events
Strawberry Fest	June 24-26	LGBCP / Star Events
Apple Fest	Sept. 30, Oct 1-2	LGBCP / Star Events
LG Heritage Run 5K Run & Walk	Sept. 10, 2011	Rotary Club of Long Grove
Village Tavern Sunday Farmers Market	June 12- Oct 16	Village Tavern
Village Tavern Veterans Event	July 24	
Village Tavern Outdoor Dining at Events	StrawberryFest, World Tour, Apple Fest weekends	
Village Tavern OktoberFest	Sept. 24-Oct 16	
Sunday Concert Series	July 3- Aug 28 (no8/21)	LG Arts & Music Council
- 13) New Business
- 14) Adjourn

*Next Board of Directors Meeting: Tuesday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – 5:15 Pm @ Village Hall*

**LONG GROVE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**Balance Sheet**

As of February 28, 2011

	<u>Feb 28, 11</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Checking/Savings</b>	
1010 · Cash in bank - operating	3,486.83
1040 · Petty cash	
1040.01 · Visitors Center Petty Cash	<u>129.40</u>
<b>Total 1040 · Petty cash</b>	129.40
1050 · PNC_National City Money Market	<u>1,049.18</u>
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	4,665.41
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	
1200 · Accounts receivable	<u>13.00</u>
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	<u>13.00</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	4,678.41
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
1670 · Program equipment	6,000.00
1690 · Furniture & fixtures	4,000.00
1680 · Office equipment	8,301.13
1799 · Accumulated depreciation	<u>-11,199.23</u>
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<u>7,101.90</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>11,780.31</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	
2000 · Accounts payable	<u>41,358.20</u>
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	41,358.20
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
2160 · Accrued penalties	6,220.00
2100 · Federal Withholding Tax Payable	1,278.77
2110 · Illinois Withholding Payable	268.45
2120 · SUTA Payable	77.63
2301 · Retirement Plan Withholding Pay	281.52
2820 · Line of Credit First Merit	<u>37,935.00</u>
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<u>46,061.37</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>87,419.57</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	87,419.57
<b>Equity</b>	
3010 · Fund Balance	-34,388.36
Net Income	<u>-41,250.90</u>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<u>-75,639.26</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<u><u>11,780.31</u></u>

3:40 PM  
 03/15/11  
 Accrual Basis

**LONG GROVE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS**  
**Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual**  
 January through February 2011

	Jan - Feb 11	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
4001 · SSA (B1 district)	0.00	165,400.00	-165,400.00	0.0%
4002 · Village of Long Grove Grant	10,000.00	40,000.00	-30,000.00	25.0%
4004 · General fundraising	1,500.00			
4006 · Gift Certificate Sales	-315.00			
4200 · Membership (Org). Income	0.00	5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.0%
4200-1 · Organization Committee Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
4300 · Marketing Committee Income	4,500.00	50,000.00	-45,500.00	9.0%
4500 · Promotions Committee Income	795.00	290,000.00	-289,205.00	0.3%
4600 · Economic Development Income	0.00	400.00	-400.00	0.0%
Special event income	21.00			
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,501.00</b>	<b>550,800.00</b>	<b>-534,299.00</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
6200 · Admin/Operating Expenses	18,532.47	146,985.00	-128,452.53	12.6%
6100 · Organization committee	0.00	5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.0%
6300 · Marketing committee	28,824.60	115,000.00	-86,175.40	25.1%
6500 · Design committee	0.00	12,000.00	-12,000.00	0.0%
6600 · Economic Development committee	0.00	7,000.00	-7,000.00	0.0%
7000 · Promotions committee	10,395.00	247,600.00	-237,205.00	4.2%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>57,752.07</b>	<b>533,585.00</b>	<b>-475,832.93</b>	<b>10.8%</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>-41,251.07</b>	<b>17,215.00</b>	<b>-58,466.07</b>	<b>-239.6%</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Other Income</b>				
8010 · Interest Income N C Money Mkt	0.17			
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>0.17</b>			
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>0.17</b>			
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-41,250.90</b>	<b>17,215.00</b>	<b>-58,465.90</b>	<b>-239.6%</b>

**Long Grove Business & Community Partners  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 15, 2011**

Call to order 5:15

Board Members in attendance: Rachel Perkal, Tobin Fraley, Sal Guadangna, Jody Hutch, Peg Ball, Claire Ball, Karen Krahn, Bob Stoll, Tim Almy, Maryann Ullrich, John Kopecky, Steve Douglass, John Marshall.

Absent: Bill Hristakos, Jacquie Longeway.

Village Rep.: Dave Lothspeich

Staff: John Maguire

Guests: Bob Haddon (RMA), Paul Neumann

Welcome & Introductions: Rachel stated her reason for becoming President was her big belief in Long Grove as a Village & a downtown commercial district.

Review Past Minutes: Bob Stoll motioned, Tobin Fraley 2<sup>nd</sup> to accept the November 15, 2010 minutes. PASSED. Jody Hutch motioned, John Kopecky 2<sup>nd</sup> to accept the January 18, 2011 minutes. PASSED

Treasurer's Report: Sal reviewed the P&L and Balance Sheets, then reviewed end of year 2010 statement. John Marshall motioned, Tobin Fraley 2<sup>nd</sup> to accept the Treasurer's Report. PASSED

Reviewed the Jan. motion on the Line of Credit: The LGBCP Board of Directors authorizes application for the existing Line of Credit loan at First Merit Bank to be extended up to \$65,000 (from the current \$40,000), USING THE Long Grove Downtown Special Service Area SSA revenues as backing, with the intention to repay funds borrowed by end of the calendar year, and to have Treasurer Sal Guadagna and Director John Maguire named on documents to administer transactions. Bob Stoll made the motion, seconded by Claire Ball, unanimous vote by the BOD, so moved.

Presented the Feb. motion with terms: The LGBCP Board of Directors approves the terms proposed by First Merit Bank to extend the existing line of credit limit from \$40,000 to \$65,000, upon completion of all application materials. Loan would remain at the current 6% interest rate. Claire Ball motioned, John Kopecky 2<sup>nd</sup> to accept motion. Roll call vote of those present, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Executive Report: Rachel brought Board up to date on meeting with Robin Malpass & Assoc. to discuss immediate needs & funding.

Directors Report: John M. attended Lake County CVB Member Forum. They reported that hotel stays up slightly in '10 but daily rates reduced. The LCCVB will be hosting a Tourism Expo. May 13 at Gurnee Mills, we should take part.

March 15 IL. Bureau of Tourism Conf. John M. will attend and see what grants are available. RMA is entering our Holiday Campaign in 4 categories to try and win the IL. Governor's Tourism Award.

New Property owners Studio & Coffee shop properties.

Sunset Foods, CVS, & new owners of Hillcrest CC are very interested in working with us.

Need to discuss store hours of operation before we print new directory on agenda in March.

Village of Long Grove Report: John M. reported on workshop meeting & the feeling that whole Board is behind downtown. Village draft budgets are in the works.

Marketing Report: Bob Haddon introduced ad & banner ad concepts using new branding. New website takes people to our website for now. New budget proposal soon on web redo. Survey closed and results out soon to all.

Promotion Report: The committee is committed to bring more chocolate to Fest with Demo Tent, tasting tickets at \$5 for 7-10 tastings, raffle ticket for your \$2 gate donation.

Design Report: Know the signs are down once the snow melts we will find them & repair them. The gazebo is in the works.

Economic Deve. Report: Need to form a committee with more tenants & customers #1 priority. Will be looking into getting more cooperation on leasing signs, & store signs consistency. Working on a Long Grove Mobil Phone Ap.

Organization Report: Putting together our packet of what we can offer Assoc. members. Looking into holding an event at the Apple Haus and inviting potential Assoc. members to attend.

Met with Bob Stoll on cleaning up wording in the Conflict of Interest & Compensation Policy doc. and will bring it back to the March meeting.

New Business: None

Adjourned 6:29 Motion Sal Guadagna, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Kopecky PASSED

# LONG GROVE - 2011 MASTER PROMOTIONS CALENDAR

(Draft, subject to approvals & adjustments)

\* Long Grove Partners Events in BOLD

<u>Event</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Host/Organization</u>
St Paddy's Day Run	March 13	All Community Events (private business) Heron Creek F.P.
Ice Meltin' Blues	March 26-27	Restaurants & Shops Coop
LG Electronics Recycling	April 9	Village of Long Grove @ Archer Parking Lot
4 <sup>th</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast	April 16	LG Fire Dept/ CERT Team/ Firefighters Assn.
<b>Chocolate Festival</b>	<b>April 29-30, May 1</b>	<b>Long Grove Partners / Star Events</b>
Porsche Club Concours	Sunday, June 19 (Father's Day)	Porsche Club of Northern Illinois
Farmers Market	Sundays, June 12-October	At Towner Green/Village Tavern Sponsor
<b>Strawberry Festival</b>	<b>June 24-25-26</b>	<b>Long Grove Partners / Star Events</b>
Outdoor Concert Series	Sundays, July- Aug (TBD)	Long Grove Arts & Music Council
Veterans Recognition (TBA)	July 24	Village Tavern
<b>Fine Art &amp; Wine Festival</b>	<b>August 20-21</b>	<b>LG Partners/Kildeer Countryside PTO/Star Events</b>
Long Grove World Tour	Sept. 3-4-5(Labor Day Weekend)	Restaurants & Shops Coop (TBD)
Heritage Run 5k Run & Walk	Sept. 10	Rotary Club of Long Grove
<b>Apple Festival</b>	<b>Sept.30, Oct. 1-2</b>	<b>Long Grove Partners / Star Events</b>
<b>OktoberFest</b>	<b>October 15-16</b>	<b>Long Grove Partners + Businesses &amp; Community</b>
<b>Holiday Preview</b>	<b>Nov 12-13</b>	<b>Long Grove Partners, businesses</b> Wine Tasting, demos, entertainment
<b>Holiday Festivities</b>	<b>Nov 19 – Holidays</b>	<b>Long Grove Partners, businesses</b> Tree Lighting 11/19 – Every weekend entertainment, Santa, carolers, carriage rides, shop & dining events
Long Grove Turkey Trot	Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving Day)	All Community Events (private business) Downtown

# LONG GROVE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

History - Partnership since 2005 involves 3 active participants with similar and overlapping interests...

- 1) Village of Long Grove - Concerned with community image, sales tax revenue, residential property values
- 2) Commercial Property Owners - Investment protection & return, an environment for business to succeed
- 3) Business Owners – Retail/restaurant vitality, profitability, cohesive approach to marketing and image

\* Always intended to be an ongoing partnership – LGBCP mission defined as promotion, historic preservation and to “Relieve the burden of government”, by providing services, staffing, education and programming.

\* **501(c) 3 Not-for-profit public charity** – This IRS designation is granted to us because our efforts are directed to the entire community’s benefit. Allowing public, private and personal contributions keeps all segments involved.

\* Benefits include frontline staff, business advocacy & services, Visitors Information Center, commercial cohesion, communications, calendar coordination

## 2011 Status

- After steadily growing operations for 5 years, economy forces tough choices in priorities and operations
- Recognize everyone’s sacrifices – Eliminated one staff position, cut back event support, rely more on coop advertising
- “Circle The Wagons” mentality – all together to weather economic shift, while staying active in promoting L.G.
- Engaged professional guidance of Robin Malpass & Associates to re-brand Long Grove’s image, upgrade materials, technology & resources to remain competitive in a changing retail environment.
- Experts preach taking an aggressive approach in tough economic times to retain market share.
- Marketing work to incorporate all Village commercial areas who participate
- Working with partners like Sunset Foods, expanding retail core – (Gazebo project to benefit whole community)

## LGBCP 2011 Projected Budget

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expense</u>	
Village Grant	40,000	Economic Development	7,000
		Design	12,000
		Organization	5,000
Downtown SSA	165,000	Admin/Operations	146,000
Associate Members	5,000		
Cooperative Ad Sales	50,000	Marketing	115,000
Promotional Events	<u>290,000</u>	Promotions	<u>247,000</u>
	550,000		532,000

## Scope of work breakdown:

**Economic Development** – Business outreach, materials & resources, association memberships & participation

**Design** – Banners, kiosks, maintenance, landscaping, signs, physical amenities

**Organization** –Resident communications, Associate Members, social opportunities, volunteers, continuity

**Admin/Operations** – Director & Staff (1FT,5PT), Visitors Center, utilities, insurance, professional fees, accounting

**Marketing** – Branding, website, publications, media/ad placement, public relations, social networking

**Promotions** – Festivals, Holiday programming, community events, retail promotion

## 2011 Economic Development Emphasis

Promotional sales materials, website links to property mgmt., common leasing signs, inventory of all districts

Village-wide business opportunities, commercial realtor’s network

New Property Owners/Space Opportunities - working with us to find appropriate tenants

Assist promoting the Archer Lot Building Pads in business/development recruiting efforts

***Downtown is the “Welcome Mat” to the community, for residents and visitors alike !***

**“THANK YOU” to Village leadership...**

**For being the forward-thinking partner this community has needed for the past 5-7 years.**

Core LGBCP funding mix between public & private partners:

		<u>Base</u>	<u>Member Addt'l Coop</u>
Pre 2006 ratio was 2-1,	50K Property owners, 50K Business owners, 50 Village	150	8
2006 3-1,	150 SSA + 50 Village	200	12
2007	165 SSA + 50 Village	215	15
2008	169 SSA + 50 Village	219	20
2009	165 SSA + 50 Village	215	30
2010	165 SSA + 40 Village	205	52
2011	165 SSA + ___Village	—	

***Working together, the accomplishments are many...***

Establishment of the Downtown SSA

Incorporation of the Long Grove Business & Community Partners

Board of Directors representation from all sectors (Village/Property/Business)

Market Analysis to guide decisions

Downtown Comprehensive Plan as a selling tool

Design Guidelines to protect our character while enhancing business

Archer Road and Parking Lot addition, Coffin Road improvements

Funding strategies for long-term improvements that will pay off for years

Addition of banner program, Archer Road amenities (sound, gazebo/stage)

Additional Marketing/PR staffing, then move towards contractor

Able to outsource & professionalize event management, marketing and PR

Welcoming higher quality tenants to our mix (still room for more!)

Raised the quality, theme elements and attraction of events and festivals

New property owners willing to invest, raise standards and attract better business to the mix

The Sunset Grove and adjacent developments that will strengthen our core

Allowing our organization to play a more active, substantial role in business issues

While the timing and economy has slowed recognition of all this work, the planning and strategizing we've done will pay off in the long run.

***Remarkable progress in spite of recession that would look a lot better of economy hadn't changed. Our approach moving forward should be very positive and aggressive. The LGBCP is here to help lead the charge!***

# Long Grove Illinois



- Route 22
- Village Hall
- Kildeer-Countryside School
- Heron Creek Forest Preserve
- Reed-Turner Nature Woodlands

Buffalo Creek Park

Long Grove Community Church

- Route 53
- Montessori School

Covered Bridge

Due to the historic nature of our village, some buildings may not be stroller or wheelchair accessible. Public rest rooms are available for all buildings - just ask for directions.

Yesterday's Charm.  
Today's Lifestyles.

Map details include:

- Green Buildings (1-7):** Townner Green, Country Lane.
- Blue Buildings (8-23):** Mill Wheel, Fountain Square.
- Red Buildings (24-47):** Historical Lane.
- Landmarks:** Mill Pond, Fountain Square, Information Center, Fire House, Long Grove Community Church, Montessori School, Buffalo Creek Park, Tavern Lot, Stempel Lot.
- ATMs:** Locations 8, 16, and 19.
- Directions:**
  - Route 22: North
  - Route 53 & 83: South
  - Route 83: East

# MAIN STREET NOW

The Journal of The National Trust Main Street Center

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

## FILLING VACANT BUILDINGS

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New Take  
on Pop-Ups



By Doug Loescher,  
Director, NTMSC



## FROM STUBBORN VACANCY... TO OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

All it takes are a few dark storefronts to give your street a bad rap. You can have a hundred occupancies filling 98 percent of your downtown buildings, but just a few empty windows on a key downtown corner can send a subtle yet powerfully negative message to the public: STAY AWAY.

In some downtowns, vacancies are sporadic and short-lived – a product of a stubborn recession that has been tough on older small businesses, but short on new entrepreneurs. In other city centers, vacant storefronts are just the first floor of entirely empty *buildings* that, so far, have been too large or too difficult to redevelop. These “white elephants” stall the momentum of progress in otherwise successful districts. Yet years of redevelopment strategies have proven that there is no one magic bullet to wipe our downtowns clean of vacancies, and given the nation’s tough economic times, “problem real estate” has become even more pervasive.

This issue of *Main Street NOW* explores a variety of tools and creative approaches to change the perception – if not reality – of vacant properties, with tried-and-true preservation tools and new insights from the field. In our lead article, Wisconsin Main Street architect Joe Lawniczak explores the economic drivers of vacant commercial properties, offering a rationale for preservation, along with a menu of “carrots and sticks” for property owners that can create a climate for occupancy and redevelopment.

And speaking of “sticks,” small-town Main Streets have too often gotten the short end of one, when it comes to the federal historic tax credit. As one of the biggest “carrots” out there for

building rehabs, this otherwise powerful economic engine for preservation and revitalization in larger cities and urban areas has too often bypassed our rural commercial districts. In an article by National Trust staffer Erica Stewart, we look at how Main Street organizations, armed with better information and innovative strategies, are making tax credits a key tool in their campaign against vacant buildings.

Even more “sticks” can be found in a new publication by the National Trust on successful regulatory approaches to “demolition by neglect.” See our excerpt from this valuable publication on page 31. And if regulations and redevelopment aren’t realistic ways to rid your district of vacant storefronts this year, you may find inspiration in “A New Take On Pop-Up Storefronts” by Cambridge, Maryland, Main Street Manager Jim Duffy. This year, a creative contest called the Holiday Pop Up Project gave would-be entrepreneurs a chance to try out new retail concepts in empty buildings *rent-free* during the 2010 holiday season!

So while vacancies may be no stranger to Main Street in the past several years, we hope that these articles illustrate how we can change this dynamic and create new momentum, with big projects that may be years in the making, and small success stories that can “pop-up” overnight.



# MAINSTREETNOW

Main Street Now is published 6 times a year as a benefit of membership in the National Main Street Network, an organizational membership program of the National Trust Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. TEL: 202.588.6219

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## NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is the only national, private organization chartered by Congress to encourage public participation in the preservation of sites, buildings, and objects significant in American history. The National Trust Main Street Center provides technical assistance in downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization to communities throughout the nation.

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

**Dealing With Vacant Storefronts | 4** Given the nation's tough economic times, vacant, neglected and run-down properties have become increasingly widespread. Wisconsin Main Street Design Specialist Joe Lawniczak offers a variety of approaches for dealing with "problem real estate."

**The New Deal for Main Street's Historic Tax Credit Projects | 14** The federal historic tax credit is a powerful economic engine. See how legislative changes have created new hope for the small deal — tax credit projects of less than a million dollars.

**Turning Vacancies into Places to Call Home | 22** See how a group of citizens in Goldsboro, North Carolina, devised a plan to reduce residential vacancies in three downtown neighborhoods.

**A New Take on Pop-Ups | 26** To reduce storefront vacancies, the Main Street program in Cambridge, Maryland, created the Holiday Pop-Up

Project, which gave two entrepreneurs the chance to test out their retail concepts rent-free for two months.



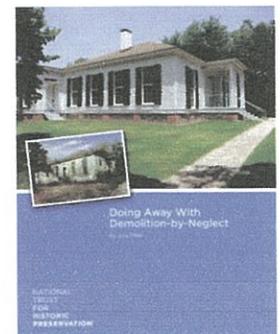
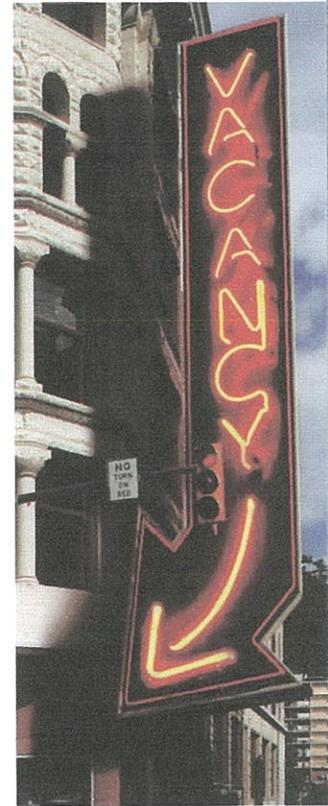
**Shop Talk: Resolve to Maximize Profitability in 2011 | 28** Find out what retailers must do in 2011 to embrace the challenges of change and jumpstart their businesses as the economy rebounds.



**Network Notes | 30** Failed developments are being transformed into public spaces and people living in walkable communities are taking back our streets. Check out innovative projects in San Francisco and Seattle. Also, find out why social media is an economic boon for small businesses as well as large.

**Doing Away with Demolition-by-Neglect | 31** Find out what can be done to ensure that our historic buildings withstand the test of time in this new National Trust publication.

**My Main Street | Back cover** This month we showcase the wonder of the holiday season in Kilgore, Texas.





# DEALING WITH VACANT STOREFRONTS

BY JOE LAWNICZAK, DESIGN SPECIALIST, WISCONSIN MAIN STREET

Anyone who has traveled beyond his or her front door has seen examples of vacant, neglected, and run-down properties. There is no true or consistent definition of a vacant property or an abandoned building, yet we know them when we see them. The National Vacant Property Campaign states that vacant properties can include abandoned, boarded-up buildings; lots with trash and debris; greyfields (vacant or underperforming commercial properties); and brownfields (neglected industrial properties with environmental contamination). Often, these structures have been unoccupied for at least a year, need repair, and may pose a threat to public safety.

Given the nation's tough economic times, "problem real estate" has become even more widespread. It doesn't take a real estate or revitalization expert to imagine the

negative impact these properties can have on a district, but it runs deeper than most of us realize. Donovan Rypkema of Place Economics says that problem real estate directly affects not only the property owner, but also the municipality, adjacent property and business owners, current or potential tenants, and overall downtown revitalization efforts. To use a residential example, a study of Philadelphia's neighborhoods by Temple University suggests that abandoned housing on a block can reduce the value of the surrounding properties by an average of \$6,715. This not only affects each property owner's assets; it also reduces property tax revenue for municipalities.

And beyond that, says Rypkema, it creates problems for emergency responders, mortgage lenders, insurance agencies, and industrial recruiters, among others. As

an example, the U.S. Fire Administration reported that more than 12,000 fires in vacant structures are reported each year, resulting in \$73 million in annual property damage. A study in Austin, Texas, found that police intervention was required more often on blocks where there were vacant buildings.

There are a number of reasons why properties are vacant or neglected. Some people don't have the money or know-how to take care of their buildings, or they don't want the "hassle" of going through the permit process. Perhaps the property is in foreclosure. Or, maybe the owner thinks it is fine to use ground-floor space for storage or housing. Plenty of us on Main Street have seen owners sit on properties while they wait for market conditions to change so they can make more money on higher sales prices.

*The run-down appearance, lack of maintenance, papered-over windows, and large for-sale signs not only make this building unattractive to potential tenants and buyers but also harm the appearance of the entire district.*



© Joe Lawniczak

In one West Virginia community, a few “old-money” families held on to huge chunks of real estate with no plans for putting them back to use. Ironically, they were waiting until the district improved so they could demand higher prices, ignoring the fact that the district could never reach its potential as long as they were sitting on these buildings.

We also encounter situations where properties are part of an estate and the heirs have no interest in maintaining or marketing them. And then there are the absentee owners who have no idea what their buildings look like or what condition they are in. In some particularly bad situations, property owners simply neglect their buildings out of spite. Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

There are many approaches to dealing with problem properties. Sometimes there are solutions; sometimes there aren't. This article will share dozens of ideas, some that you may have tried and others that may be new to you. While complex steps and methods such as pro-formas, market analyses, receiverships, injunctions, land banks, and other strategies may be necessary and beneficial, this article will focus on simpler, less expensive, and locally achievable methods.

## ↳ WORDS OF CAUTION

Before discussing achievable solutions, let's talk about methods that can do more harm than good. The first is hastily resorting to demolition because buyers or tenants haven't stepped up to bring a new use to a vacant building. Difficulties in identifying a new occupant are usually temporary conditions. More often than not, patience pays off and eventually someone becomes interested in the space. Historic buildings are irreplaceable – most of them were built with quality materials and with an

## MOTHBALLING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

In a National Park Service Preservation Brief, Sharon C. Park, AIA, wrote that “when all means of finding a productive use for a historic building have been exhausted or when funds are not currently available to put a deteriorating structure into usable condition, it may be necessary to close up the building temporarily to protect it from the weather and secure it from vandalism.

This process, known as mothballing, can be an effective means of protecting a building while planning the property's future, or raising money for a preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration project. If a vacant property has been declared unsafe by building officials, stabilization and mothballing may be the only way to protect it from demolition.”

Park adds that it's important to keep in mind that a vacant building cannot survive indefinitely in a boarded-up condition. If a building is to be mothballed, necessary physical repairs, such as structural stabilization, pest control, and moisture proofing, must be made before securing the building. Adequate interior ventilation must be maintained, and utilities and mechanical systems must be secured or modified. If a building has always been heated, minimal electrical services may need to be retained to provide minimal heat in winter and fan exhaust in the summer.

Make sure that no weatherization efforts harm historic materials and that the weight of any reinforcing materials can be supported by the structure. Plywood is a common material used to secure windows and doors. It may be desirable to paint these panels so that they detract from the appearance of the building as little as possible. Painting them to look like windows or doors (trompe l'oeil) is common.

Mothballing a building is not necessarily inexpensive, especially if structural and mechanical repairs have to be made. In fact, mothballing may cost 10 percent or more of a modest rehabilitation budget. And convincing a building owner who already neglects his or her building to spend this type of money just to secure the property may be next to impossible. It is recommended that any local façade grants or building improvement incentives be used for such a project. After all, it is better to pay to protect a building than to have it demolished. Another option is to use any fees or fines collected from the owner. While the building is mothballed, be sure to keep looking for a new owner or use for the building so that it doesn't stay vacant long.



*Demolition of even the most neglected building should be the last resort, after all other methods have been tried.*

↳ CURB APPEAL

In discussions with owners about vacant storefronts, a debate that frequently arises is *when* to make improvements. Building owners will often claim they need to wait until they find a tenant before they can afford to make improvements. The problem is, in cases where the space and storefront are in dire need of repair and updating, it will be next to impossible to attract a good tenant to rent that space.

Therefore, curb appeal must be addressed; improvements need to be made *before* the owner seeks a tenant so the space is more attractive. The same is true of general building maintenance. If a building is in rough shape and outdated, a good tenant will see this as a sign of a neglectful owner and be leery of renting or leasing the property.

The same is true of owners who want to sell their vacant properties. Typically, they need to make improvements before they can find a buyer and/or get their asking prices. Improvements do not have to be expensive, and they should be generic so that any new occupant can easily remodel the space to fit the needs of his or her business. Logistically, too, it makes sense to make improvements to a vacant building, especially to the interior space because there won't be tenants or customers to work around. Good improvements to make while the building is empty include removing suspended ceilings; restoring tin ceilings and wood floors; opening up transom windows; upgrading electrical systems, lighting, restrooms, and HVAC equipment; painting; and plastering.

In addition, simple alterations can easily be made at this time to improve accessibility into and throughout the building for people with disabilities. Replacing door knobs with lever handles or widening doorways to 32 inches wherever possible allows easier access into spaces. Installing full-height mirrors and lowering paper towel dispensers in restrooms are extremely simple alterations to make. Putting in grab bars and replacing toilets with new 17 to 19-inch-high seated models require a bit more effort, but are

attention to detail that is too expensive to replicate today. Instead of demolishing these vital links to a community's past and future, they should be mothballed and protected until a suitable buyer can restore them to their former glory. Far too often, demolition is the first resort. This is especially true with today's ever-increasing stock of vacant and foreclosed housing. According to the National Vacant

restored, and today, both communities have vibrant economies based on heritage tourism – a lucrative industry that would never have been possible if it weren't for the historic structures the cities leveraged.\* Part of the waiting game for reusing an old building is resisting the urge to allow inappropriate uses. Do not let owners convert ground-floor commercial spaces into residential units or storage space. There are

**PART OF THE WAITING GAME FOR REUSING AN OLD BUILDING IS RESISTING THE URGE TO ALLOW INAPPROPRIATE USES.**

Properties Campaign, from 2000 to 2005, the City of St. Louis spent \$15.5 million to demolish vacant buildings. Detroit budgets approximately \$800,000 annually for demolition, and Philadelphia spends \$1.8 million cleaning vacant lots. But just look at Galena, Illinois, or Savannah, Georgia, to see the value of retaining historic structures for future use, even if they must sit vacant for a while. In both Galena and Savannah, countless historic buildings sat vacant for years, but were eventually

a few instances where ground-floor housing may be a viable option, but these occur mostly in larger cities like Chicago, where the building stock in some neighborhoods far outnumbers demand for commercial space. In small and mid-size cities, however, ground-floor housing can hinder revitalization efforts. Main Street districts rely on a series of storefronts lining the street (the "streetwall") to portray an image of a unified business district. Inserting residential units on the ground floor will disrupt that vital cohesion.

\*A 2009 study of U.S. cultural and heritage travel by Mandela Research shows that these tourists spend \$383 more per trip than other types of U.S. travelers.

easier to do when the building is vacant.

Construction is an opportune time to amplify interest in the building. Window signs that say “pardon our progress” or “this building isn’t empty, it’s full of opportunity” will put a positive spin on the work being done. Some building owners have even been known to gift wrap the entire building and put up a big sign that says “don’t open until [date].” These simple techniques are more effective in finding a new occupant than plastering an unattractive vacant storefront with for-sale or for-rent signs.

Another inexpensive tactic to improve the curb appeal and boost interest in an unoccupied building is to create temporary window displays. They not only add life to the vacant storefront and give the district more visual appeal; they can also show the true potential of the space. You can use before-and-after photos, renderings of the completed project, historical information about the district, information about the Main Street program, local artwork, seasonal displays, and even merchandise displays from nearby business owners.

Some communities have taken advantage

of a vacant space to create temporary, lifelike murals depicting storefronts, people, and activity over the vacant storefronts. It is important, however, to make sure the murals are designed and painted by a professional artist so they look as lifelike as possible and contribute to the high-quality image of the building and district.

Another strategy is to jump on the pop-up shops bandwagon and house a temporary business in a vacant space. This can be a great idea that puts a home-based or Internet business into a bricks-and-mortar space. Pop-up shops can create a buzz in your community with effective promotion and can ultimately turn into permanent downtown businesses. Read more about this strategy in “A New Take on Pop-ups” on pages 26-27.

## COMMUNICATION

Educating building owners, especially absentee landlords, about these simple techniques can prove difficult. Remember to be helpful and respectful when talking to owners about the reasons why the appearance and maintenance of their property are

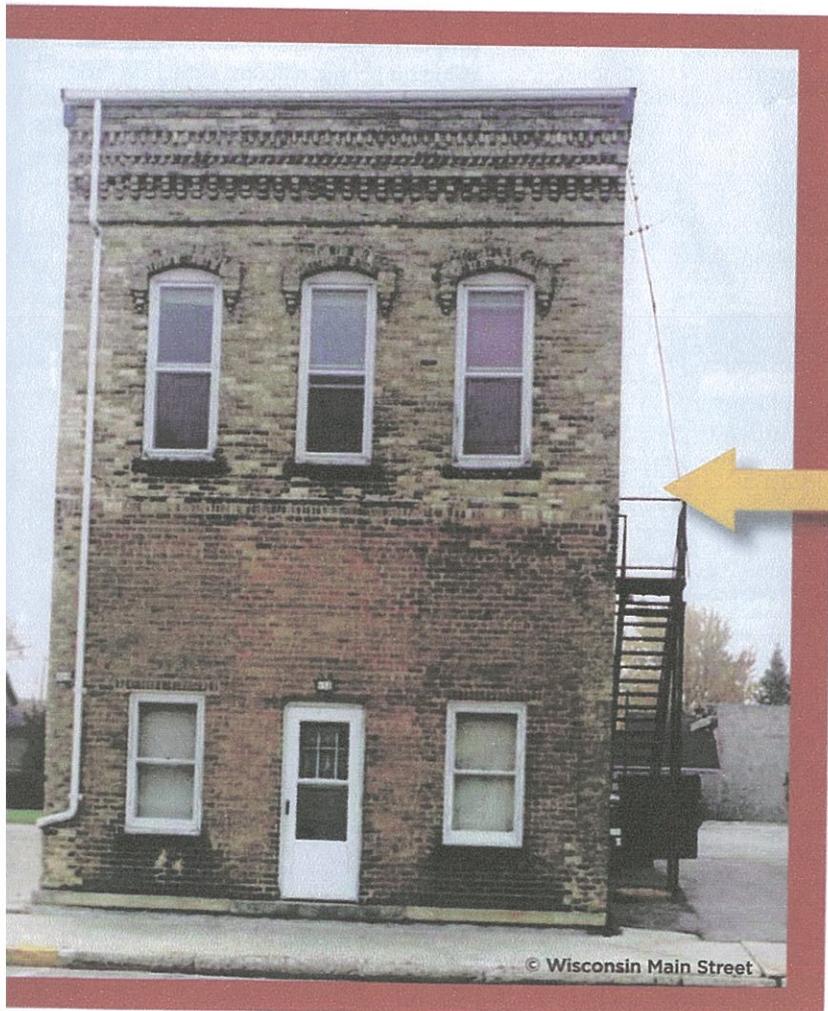
important. Never be condescending or tell neglectful owners that their buildings are ugly and need work. That will only make them defensive and turn them against the revitalization efforts.

Instead, compile information that building owners would need from the time they start thinking about making improvements to the time the work is completed. Include design guidelines; the design review process; pertinent ordinances; local, state, and federal financial incentives; available design assistance; a local preferred contractor list; and contact information for building inspectors and other pertinent individuals.

After you compile and put this information in an attractive packet (as well as online), create a block-captain system in which each member of the design committee is responsible for visiting or contacting assigned building owners, especially absentee or neglectful owners. Michael Gioulis, contract designer for West Virginia Main Street, also recommends that a “mentor” be included on each visit. This mentor could be a local building owner who has been through a successful rehabilitation project and can “talk the talk” with fellow property owners.

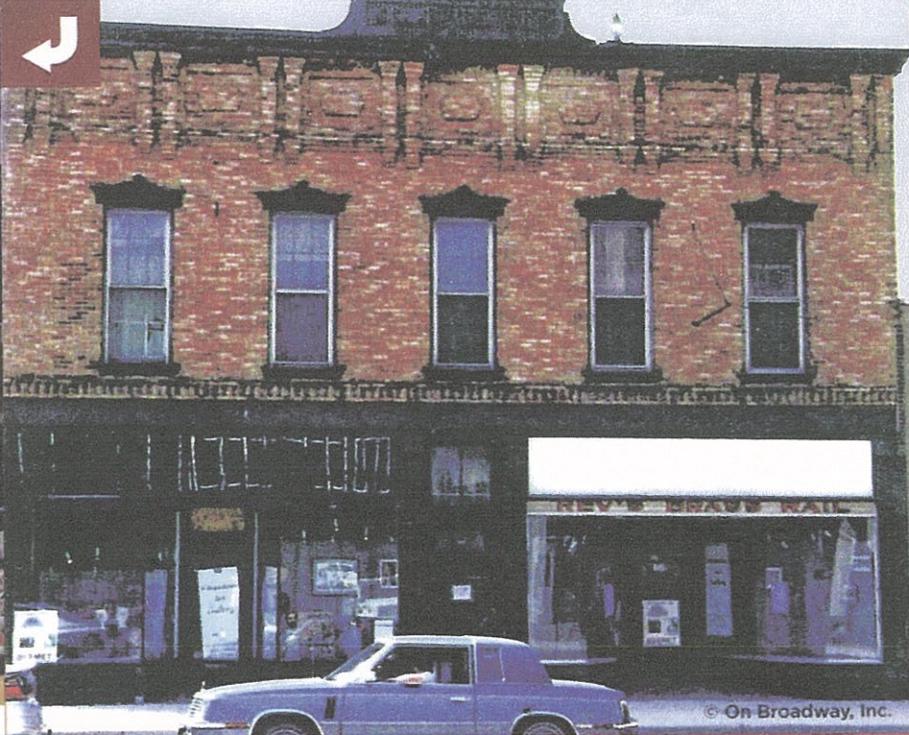
These visits can be quick and simple: just go through the information packet and describe what is available to each property owner. If you approach every building owner, no one will feel singled out. Leon Steele, designer for Louisiana Main Street, also recommends including a photo of the building in its current state. A picture not only helps initiate discussion, but also offsets the fact that many neglectful or absentee owners have no idea what their buildings actually look like or what condition they are in.

Another strategy is to get a Main Street design specialist to provide contractor and



© Wisconsin Main Street

*The ground floors of historic commercial buildings should not be converted to residential use just because a tenant or buyer is hard to find. These spaces should remain commercial, even if it takes a couple of years to find an acceptable tenant.*



building owner training. Invite all building and business owners within the district as well as local contractors, carpenters, sign manufacturers, and other trades people. The training should focus on such topics as the importance of preservation, proper maintenance and restoration techniques, things to avoid, and even proper design of signs and awnings.

In conjunction with the contractor training, create a checklist of specific activities often required for building restorations – brick repair and cleaning, window repair, sign design, etc. Ask trades people to check off the areas in which they have experience and provide photos and references for each item they check off to verify their experience in that area. All trades people who attend could be added to your local “preferred contractor list” — a resource building owners can use to select qualified people.

Since a picture says more than a thousand words, ask a Main Street design specialist to create a schematic drawing that shows what the building could look like if restored. (This can also be quickly done using Google SketchUp.) Seeing the difference between the building’s current appearance and its potential transformation can truly change someone’s mind. The rendering can also illustrate proper restoration techniques and serve as a marketing tool for the property. Take caution when using this tactic on people who are sitting on their dilapidated properties and asking exorbitant sales prices. A rendering that illustrates the building’s potential may only cause them to demand more money for the property.

Convincing some people may indeed be a hopeless endeavor. There may be a point when you need to shift your focus to people willing to listen. Often, if you can get enough property owners on board, the resistant ones may come around out of peer pressure, or simply because their buildings will stand out like a sore thumb.

### ↳ THE CARROT APPROACH (INCENTIVES)

Most building owners in Main Street districts want to do the right thing, but often they lack the financial capability to make improvements. Given the fact that few bricks-and-mortar grants are available at the national or even state level, establishing local incentives is important. Financial incentives can encourage improvements while offsetting the added costs of doing a proper restoration as opposed to a quick fix. When tied to design guidelines and design review, they can ensure that the work is done right. More importantly, when it comes to vacant or neglected buildings, incentives can minimize the financial burden building owners face when they’re

*Taking care of maintenance issues BEFORE searching for a quality tenant is the best way to attract good prospects.*

forced by an ordinance to improve their buildings. Incentives such as façade grants, sign grants, low-interest loan pools, and revolving loan funds have been used effectively by countless communities.

Cuyahoga County, Ohio, which includes Cleveland, created a \$13 million commercial redevelopment loan fund to assist communities with abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties. The maximum loan per project is \$800,000 and is available to municipalities, nonprofits, private developers, and businesses. More often than not, however, local incentives are created on a much smaller scale, often with the help of local Main Street programs.

But, why would you provide incentives, or rewards, for building owners who knowingly neglect their properties? What if your city tied financial incentives into a minimum maintenance ordinance? Then the owner would not be eligible for any incentives until the building meets all minimum maintenance standards. This would eliminate any rewards for neglect, and just as importantly, none of the incentive's limited funds would be spent on maintenance issues that the owner should have already addressed.

While limited in quantity, but not necessarily in quality, some resources are available at the national and state levels. Ronceverte, West Virginia, used U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rural and community development funds to renovate several long-vacant properties, then sold or leased them once the improvements were completed.

In many cities, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been used to finance brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, building acquisition, historic

structure reports, and design services. And, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits as well as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs, such as HOME Rental Rehabilitation, exist to fund projects such as affordable housing in the upper stories of commercial buildings.

## ↳ THE STICK APPROACH (REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES)

Sometimes all the incentives in the world won't be enough to convince an owner to make even basic repairs and improvements.

# FINANCIAL INCENTIVES CAN ENCOURAGE IMPROVEMENTS WHILE OFFSETTING THE ADDED COSTS OF DOING A PROPER RESTORATION INSTEAD OF A QUICK FIX.

Federal and state rehabilitation tax credits provide tax incentives for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings (for more information on Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, see "The New Deal for Main Street's Historic Tax Credit Projects," pg. 14.)

Periodically check the "Find Funding" page under resources on [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org). The National Trust for Historic Preservation frequently updates this page with new grant announcements and other financial resources.

In such cases, you need to pull out the big guns. This is where the aforementioned minimum maintenance ordinance comes in handy because it holds property owners accountable for keeping their buildings up to basic code requirements and life safety measures. This measure is not meant to create hardship, but rather to make the community's building stock safe and sanitary, and maintain the district's attractiveness and historic character.

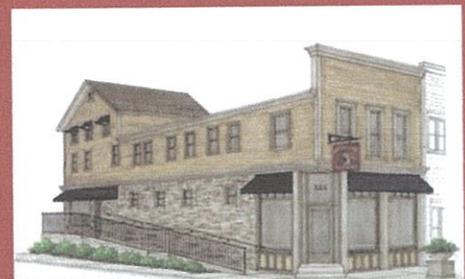
*Creative, attractive window signs can take a negative and turn it into a positive.*

This Building is Not Empty.

It is Full of Opportunity

For more information on business opportunities, go to [www.mainstreetportwashington.com](http://www.mainstreetportwashington.com)

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MAIN STREET

Pardon Our Progress

Estimated Completion Date- Jan. 2010  
This project is being completed with the help of a façade grant from Port Washington Main Street. For more information on grant opportunities, go to [www.mainstreetportwashington.com](http://www.mainstreetportwashington.com)

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Cities such as North Bend, Washington, and Texarkana, Arkansas, among others, have enacted minimum maintenance ordinances that focus specifically on their historic commercial districts. In North Bend, the ordinance applies to designated historic buildings, as well as sheds, signs, alleys, parking areas, and vacant lots. The local building inspector formally inspects each building yearly and looks for violations such as dilapidated foundations, flooring, walls, ceilings, roofs, chimneys, stairs, and ornamentation. To enhance the ordinance, the city treasury created a revolving fund to help the city recoup costs and expenses incurred in connection with the repair, alteration, or preservation of any standard building, public way, or property.

In Texarkana, the ordinance applies to any building within the historic district, whether it is designated a local historic landmark or not. The ordinance also has an important section on demolition by neglect, which states that building owners are not allowed to let their property fall into such disrepair that it warrants demolition. In Texarkana, the local historic district commission is an integral part of the review process.

Other communities impose hefty fines to prevent neglect and abandonment. Providence, Rhode Island, for example, has considered fining owners of vacant buildings up to 10 percent of the assessed property value. Garland, Texas, requires owners of abandoned and neglected properties to post a \$2,500 bond that the city can use to maintain the property. Minneapolis has proposed a registration fee of up to \$6,000 on vacant commercial buildings to prompt owners to rehabilitate them. Owners can get the fee waived if they rehabilitate their properties.

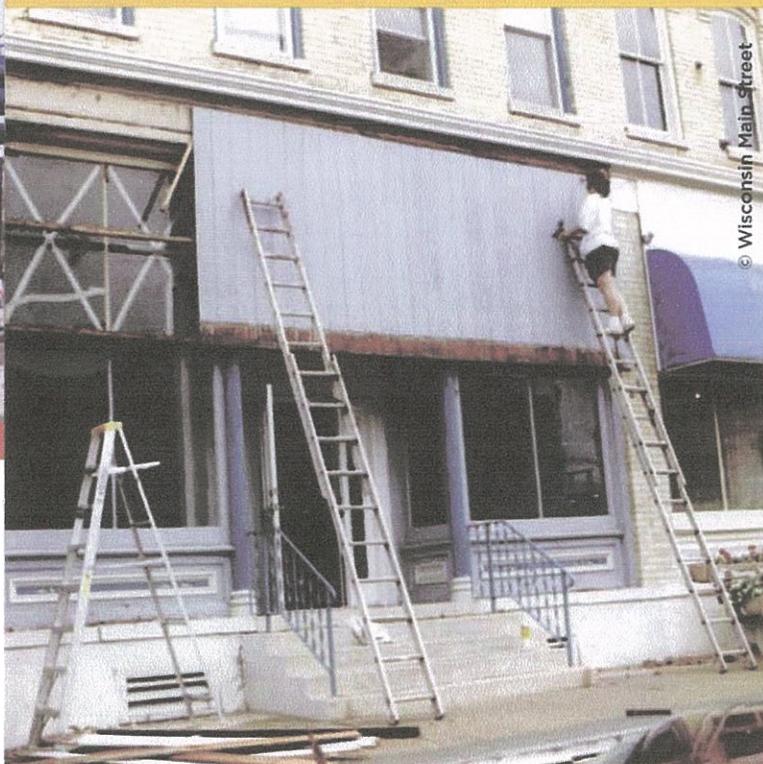
In an effort aimed specifically at vacant buildings, Nebraska City, Nebraska, developed a vacant building ordinance, which requires owners register a building within 30 days of its becoming vacant. The definition of a vacant building is one that is unoccupied and either dangerous, condemned, has code violations, or is illegally occupied. Owners are required to pay a \$40 registration fee, which covers an initial inspection by the building inspector. If a building is not registered within 30 days, the fee increases to \$250. In addition, there is an annual fee for each year the building sits vacant. That fee is \$1,000 per year for the first three

years, and \$3,000 per year for each year thereafter. Upon registration, the building owner must include a plan for continued upkeep that meets code, as well as a timeline for returning the building to an appropriate use.

The ordinance also states that the owner must keep the building secure and safe until the rehabilitation is completed. If any code violations are noted during the initial inspection, the owner must pay a \$50 fee for each subsequent inspection, and a \$250 fee if code violations are not corrected within the approved timeline. Buildings are exempt if the owner is making a concerted effort to sell or lease the space at a reasonable rate, based on comparable real estate in the district.

If your community enacts a vacant building ordinance, make sure it doesn't force or encourage the building owner to accept any commercial tenant just to avoid the fines. The same holds true for residential tenants. The local Main Street program or neighborhood association should use any and all market data to find a tenant that is a good fit for the building and for the community. And for residential tenants, encourage owners to perform comprehensive

*Opening up transom windows (below left) or removing suspended ceilings (below right) is a lot easier when there are no tenants in the space.*



background checks before renting or leasing their units out.

The main risk in implementing a maintenance ordinance is that the owner may choose to demolish the building rather than pay the continued fines or perform the needed improvements. It is recommended that any maintenance or vacant building ordinance provide some protections against demolition. One way to do so may be for the municipality to waive any fines or liens if the owner is willing to sell the property at a reasonable price (market rate or lower).

Another way would be to require an owner to provide detailed proof that the building is beyond repair, or infeasible to repair, and thus needs to be demolished. Keep in mind however, that people can have widely differing definitions of “beyond repair.” It is recommended that the owner be required to get written documentation from two or three professional developers or contractors with expertise in working with historic buildings, and that the local building inspector and preservation commission be consulted as well before a demolition permit is issued. And similar to the Texarkana, Arkansas, ordinance, be sure to include a section that prevents demolition by neglect.

## THE ROLE MAIN STREET CAN PLAY

In response to several fires in vacant buildings, the townsfolk of Richmond, Virginia, created a website called [www.VacantRichmond.com](http://www.VacantRichmond.com) that listed the many vacant properties on the city’s “blight” list and allowed citizens to track and comment on them. It permitted citizens to find out who owned these properties and report trouble to the police and city council. The site is no longer in use, but it served its purpose while it was active and put pressure on building owners to keep up their properties.

Sometimes just getting properties out of the hands of neglectful owners will be your biggest first step. Some municipalities use controversial eminent domain methods, and others acquire them when a property is seriously tax delinquent. Unfortunately, in many cases, these properties are then sold at auction to the highest bidder, with no regard to who the buyer is or what plans he or she has for the property. Some states have enacted land bank authorities that acquire tax-delinquent properties from local municipalities and sell them to developers committed to rehabilitating them. This ensures that the new owners will make necessary improvements.

Fortunately, local Main Street programs are perfectly suited to play a vital role in solving some vacancy problems. Actions as simple as working with building owners and real estate agents to post available properties or commercial spaces online; using market analysis data to help owners determine what types of businesses the district can support and helping them recruit these potential tenants; providing design assistance, design review, and guidelines to facilitate appropriate building improvements; and providing financial incentives such as low-interest loans and facade/sign grants are all activities Main Street programs can carry out.

So, while there are global and national economic factors beyond our control, we, as Main Street staff and volunteers, can still make a difference in each of our communities.



© Musco Lighting, Inc.

*Creating interest in a building during its renovation, such as this eye-catching gift wrapping of an Oskaloosa, Iowa, building, is a great way to attract potential tenants or buyers.*



*The murals in this vacant storefront are a creative and effective way to make the district look lively and less empty while the owner seeks to sell or rent the space.*

## RESOURCES

### **National Vacant Properties Campaign**

<http://www.vacantproperties.org/index.html>

### **Preserving America: A guide to using Community Development Block Grant funds for historic preservation and heritage tourism in your communities**

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/library/historicpreservation/historicpreservationlow.pdf>

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation, Information Sheet #2, How to Preserve A Historic Building**

<http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/faq/information-sheets/Historic-Buildings.pdf>

### **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Rural and Community Development Program**

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/!ut/p/c4/04\\_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os\\_gAC9-wMJ8QYOMDpxBDA09nXw9DFxcXQ-cAA\\_2CbEdFAEU0joE!/?navid=RURAL\\_DEVELOPMENT&navtype=SU](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os_gAC9-wMJ8QYOMDpxBDA09nXw9DFxcXQ-cAA_2CbEdFAEU0joE!/?navid=RURAL_DEVELOPMENT&navtype=SU)

### **North Bend, Washington - Historic District Minimum Maintenance Ordinance**

<http://www.codepublishing.com/WA/NorthBend/nobend19/nobend1924.html>

### **Texarkana, Arkansas - Historic District Minimum Maintenance & Demolition by Neglect ordinances**

[http://search.municode.com/html/10535/level3/COOR\\_CH19PL\\_ARTIII\\_HIDICOHD.html](http://search.municode.com/html/10535/level3/COOR_CH19PL_ARTIII_HIDICOHD.html)

### **Nebraska City, Nebraska - Vacant Building Ordinance**

[http://library.municode.com/HTML/10745/level3/CODE\\_C9\\_AV.html](http://library.municode.com/HTML/10745/level3/CODE_C9_AV.html)

### **National Trust Main Street Center, *Revitalizing Main Streets: A practitioner's guide to comprehensive commercial district revitalization***

[www.preservationbooks.org](http://www.preservationbooks.org)

**Joe Lawniczak** is the design specialist for Wisconsin Main Street. For over nine years he has worked with more than 700 property owners, helping them restore their historic buildings. He has also worked in many states, from South Carolina to Oregon, providing design expertise and education. He has written several articles for publications in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and for the National Trust Main Street Center, including the November 2005 *Main Street News* article, "Inappropriate Building Materials on Main Street," and three chapters in the National Trust publication, *Revitalizing Main Street*.

# LOWERING THE VACANCY RATE IN CANAL WINCHESTER, OHIO

BY ANDREA L. DONO



© Bruce Jarvis

*This former grocery in downtown Canal Winchester now serves coffee and sells health products.*

When economic development professionals in the Village of Canal Winchester, Ohio, were thinking of ways to fill their vacancies downtown, they developed a simple tool that would soon become part of their solution: a business and building inventory.

Taking a no-cost approach, the local Main Street program proposed its idea to the Old Town Committee, which serves as the interface between Main Street Canal Winchester and the town council. Main Street proposed using data from the county auditor to get parcel descriptions for all vacant or underused buildings and sites in the downtown, and then starting a dialog with the village's economic development director about the best and highest uses for these properties.

The inventory turned into a valuable tool for both active and passive business development. Property owners appreciated the inventory because it showed that the Village wanted to work in partnership with them to lease their buildings or develop their sites.

"With this document, we are able to approach developers with our visions and give them a specific idea of the type of development we expect on given parcels. This information makes it a lot easier for them to run their pro formas to determine if the project is feasible," says Chris Strayer, the Village's economic development director and primary user of the inventory. "If a developer or property owner comes to us about a specific project we can show them the preferred alternatives for the site. Essentially it takes a lot of the guesswork out of a project for a developer or property owner."

The inventory strategy has had an impact. The downtown, which is four square blocks, has been running a vacancy rate between 0 and 5 percent in the last few years. However, Bruce Jarvis, executive director of Main Street Canal Winchester points out that there were periods of time when there were long vacancies, "which isn't to say that tumbleweeds were rolling down the street. But with this inventory we were able to reduce the number of available parcels in the inventory by a third." Although, says Jarvis, "that didn't happen overnight."

The Main Street program, economic development office, and Old Town Committee meet once a year to revise the inventory and vision for the available properties. While they don't use a formal market analysis, the group uses trends and their experience with managing the downtown to determine the types of businesses and developments that will work best.

The inventory helped the group rethink how the old lumberyard downtown could be redeveloped. Originally the team thought retail was the best reuse, but on such a large site, that use alone wasn't feasible. They decided to add height and density to the plan and turn it into a mixed-use development – thereby bringing the costs down and responding more effectively to the marketplace.

The inventory has had uses beyond business recruitment. It was used to bring attention to a problematic brownfield site. An abandoned gas station had proved difficult to redevelop, but after it was added to the inventory it got the county's attention. The

county cleaned up the site and demolished the building to make future development easier.

Another situation involved an absentee landlord. "We had a maintenance issue with a particular property even though we have a minimum maintenance code on the books," says Jarvis. "The exterior appearance of this building was a problem. Discussing the inventory and our goals for the downtown with the owner allowed us to bring up this issue. He decided to sell the building, and fortunately it ended up in the hands of a preservation-minded person who did the right thing."

The inventory has had some other unexpected results. First, as a bonus, one of the entrepreneurs brought into the downtown ultimately became a Main Street board member. Second, it shone a light on the Village's suburban-style zoning, which makes some projects incompatible with the downtown environment. Applicants must apply for variances to achieve a density that fits the commercial district even if their projects meet the Village's vision. The inventory, says Jarvis, helped put zoning complications on their radar screen and enabled them recognize that there was a problem they needed to address.

"Overall this tool has been extremely useful. It has helped us figure out the best case scenario for the parcels in the inventory," says Strayer. "The property owners and the Village can work together to complete a project that is mutually agreeable. I have found that most developers like it when a community knows what it wants and can facilitate a better process because of it."