Greater Freeport Partnership Downtown Meeting  
Minutes from April 21, 2021

Meeting Goal: Personal conversations to help downtown business and building owners stay informed about upcoming projects and promotions to support the growth and revitalization of Downtown Freeport.

1. Introductions - Thank you to Kelly at Flair for hosting, coffee and snacks!
2. Updates from City of Freeport – Kirstin Hinds
   1. Abet/Waves demo continues and has closed parking on the north side of Stephenson St on that block as well as traffic through the alley. There are plans to install a pocket park in that lot until further development presents itself. The Partnership has already submitted grant applications to fund the project. The pocket park will be greenspace and public seating.
   2. Chicago Ave. Streetscape Communication Plan   
      Chicago Avenue project not many updates on engineering plans yet. Those immediately affected by the project from Clark to Main Street will be invited to a meeting on May 5 at 7:30 am to talk about the project plans. Other businesses and building owners from Jackson to Main Street will be invited to a meeting on May 12. After that, all downtown businesses who are interested in hearing about details will be invited to a meeting following those dates. There are certain details of the project that are up for discussion and others that area already set. The City will be sending more information individually.
3. Bird City USA – Juliet Moderow
   1. Northwest Illinois Audubon is working on Bird City in Freeport and across the state. Freeport is one of the first places going through the process! Migratory Bird Day is May 8 and is being planned to help promote the efforts for Bird City. Juliet asked for any participating from downtown businesses with any birdie promotions or window displays on that weekend. More information at <https://www.freeportartmuseum.com/new-events>
4. Beautification
   1. Clean-up Week – More than 100 volunteers from business, community groups and student organizations participated in the clean-up week for miles of downtown, throughout Freeport and rural areas.
   2. Demo timeline, plan for pocket park - covered during City’s report.
   3. Planting in before Winefest - Most of funding secured but we are looking for donations for the last $1,000 to cover the cost of spring planting and maintenance. All donations can be sent to the Partnership.
5. 2021 Marketing Timeline
   1. Thank you to all of the businesses who allowed Nicole and Will to come into your store or business and take photos! They will be used in our digital campaign which begins May 1-September 30. Photos and video will also be used as promotion through the summer.
6. Events
   1. Festival District Dates (April 24, May 22, June 4, August 28, October 14, November 21) subject to change
   2. Pretzel Fest, Winefest and Music on Chicago updates - Winefest tickets now on sale and will be using Festival District locations to pour wine. Katie and Nicole will be around to talk to everyone about ideas for the day. June Music on Chicago will take place in the art plaza. Waiting for a liquor license from the state to see if beverages will be sold on premises or if only purchase from festival district locations.
   3. Sidewalk Sale Dates 1st Weekends – (May 6-9, June 3-6, July 1-4) - Nicole and Katie will come up with a name to promote that better describes event since not all stores use the sidewalk.
   4. Tracking return – During events, please take note of additional customers, foot traffic and other anecdotes so we can monitor progress and success of events.
   5. Restaurant Week –April 23-May 1
7. Web page - For meeting minutes and other information <https://greaterfreeport.com/development/downtown-freeport/dt-freeport-business/>
8. Business Education
   1. Lunch n’ Learn Series
      1. April 22 SEM/SEO - [Recording](https://greaterfreeport.com/development/small-business/)
      2. National Main Street conference - [Recordings](https://now2021.us2.pathable.com/agenda#/?limit=20&scroll=date-heading%2C2021-04-12T00%3A00%3A00-05%3A00%2CmEbgBZz4gGSrhZGQP%2C0%2C0&sortByFields[0]=startsAt&sortByOrders[0]=1&uid=AFgmuJ3Tg5X4gQLom)
9. Main Street accreditation: Partnership staff is outlining responses and will begin application when it is made available.
10. Share Best Practices
    1. Block Captains - If anyone is interested in signing up to be a block captain, we would appreciate the help! Role of a block captain is to help deliver information to business owners and collect feedback. We have already had three people step forward. Thank you volunteers!
11. Adjourned at 8:20 am

Handouts all found on the web site:

* April Downtown Newsletter
* Restaurant Guides
* Festival District signs (please pick up at Partnership office or call to request)
* Migratory Bird Day

Next Meeting: June 16, 2021 – Deininger Floral 7:30 am