



Tuesday, March 8th, 2022, 7:30 – 8:30 am
Design & Placemaking Committee Meeting
Location: Partnership Office, 110 W. Main Street

Committee Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Design & Placemaking Committee is to lead projects and initiatives that will elevate the quality of public space throughout the communities of Stephenson County. The goal of the committee's effort is to 1) create inviting public spaces that are inclusive and attractive to all ages and abilities, 2) acknowledge and incorporate our shared history in placemaking and beautification efforts, 3) galvanize business, building owner and volunteer efforts to engage more locals, increase community pride, and maintain downtown assets.

Present:

Rhonda Becker
Erik Zuberbuhler
Hannah Mcwhirter
Devin Mielke
Cal Wescott
Rob Boyer
Katie Gentz
Wayne Duckmann
Jon Palmer
Aubra Palermo
Jannelle Nelson
Andrea Schultz Winter

Absent:

Brooke Wagner
Steve Schlamp
Bruce Cubberley
Dennis Rinkenberger
AmyJo Beightol

Meeting Summary

Update from City of Freeport

- Chicago Avenue Streetscape Project: Rob Boyer discussed Chicago Avenue Project went to bid. Bids will be open mid-April. Once bids are received, the construction timeline will be more defined, and information will be communicated to downtown business and building owners.
- The City also received CDBG grant to redo intersections with ADA accessible ramps. More information about timing and location of construction will be forthcoming.

- The Facade Grant Program is accepting applications. Applications are due April 15th. There will be \$20,000 for this year's projects. Application is available on the City's website: <https://cityoffreeport.org/documents/facade-improvement-grant-program-application-packet/>
- The city has started sweeping the downtown streets and asked if business owners could push any debris they have onto the streets, on Thursday nights.
 - The Partnership was asked to communicate to business owners that the city needs vehicles off the street those nights so they can efficiently pick up debris.

WORKPLAN UPDATE:

Engagement & Communication:

- Andrea asked if we knew of any new members that would like to join our committee if so, you can reach out to Andrea, Katie, or Erik and we would be happy to talk with them about the committee.
- The Partnership will try to post information in the Stewart Center to better communicate with businesses located in the building.
- The Partnership will investigate utilizing the app to push out notifications about downtown meetings.

Main Street Accreditation: Andrea is working on the application. She is in the process of meeting with building owners to record building data to start to understand occupancy rates, number of upper floor residential units, etc. The application must be turned in by the middle of May. More to come and Andrea will keep the group updated on progress.

Placemaking:

- Seasonal Plantings, Fundraising event: Back Country Roads Concert is set for Saturday, April 9th, the money raised from this event will go to seasonal plantings and downtown promotional activities.
- Public Art Commission- The Partnership would like to work with the City of Freeport to explore what a public arts commission/council could look like in Freeport. This would help establish a framework for public art---murals, sculpture, etc.
- Pocket Park update- Andrea and the City will be working with the owners of Jet Beauty, about installing a hose bib within the pocket park. The City is also talking with adjacent property owners
- Wayfinding Signage update-Andrea is working with Sally Peterson for the route of all the signs.
- Banners – Currently, Elliot Graphix is repairing damaged banners/making new banners.

Historic Tour: next meeting, Tuesday, March 29th, 7:30 am.

Clean-ups: Countywide Clean-up April 10-17. We have lots of groups already signed up for this event. Please continue to share the event on Facebook.

- Ongoing help via the Probation Department- Katie is working with the Probation Department, they will be helping us find people to help keep the downtown/Freeport clean throughout the summer months. They are hoping we can have someone/s dedicated up to 8 to 10 hours a week.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 12th, 2022, 7:30 am – Downtown Walk Around. Meet at Partnership Offices at 7:30 am.