

Lancaster Downtowners Steering Committee

February 11, 2008

Minutes

Present: Jim Kalish, Fred Pargeon, Carolyn Pargeon, Rod Houser, Charles Lane, Del Seitz (new member), Emily Booker (prospective member)

Absent: Michael Sprunger, Gene Aleci, Lois Good, Jane Phillips, Ken Nissley, Nancy B. Rogers

1. **Treasure Report**—Balance as of January 31, 2007: \$2040.60
2. **Welcome Del and Emily**—Del Seitz comes to the board of Lancaster Downtowners with a strong business background. He currently is CFO with Ten Thousand Villages. Prior experiences include developing a business education program at Eastern Mennonite College (now Eastern Mennonite University), and work with Weavers Poultry in New Holland and Westinghouse. Del and wife Mary live in the 200 block of Lancaster Avenue, next door neighbors to Lois Good.

Emily Booker (visiting board with our hopes that she will consider joining) brings a background in nursing and public administration. During the 80's and 90's she held an executive position with the Visiting Nurses Association. She has been involved in starting up Hospice programs. She recently returned to Lancaster and lives with her husband Harris on East Marion Street overlooking Musser Park.
3. **Jane Phillips**—Jane sends word (she had hoped to be here) of her recent marriage and plans to spend the next six months in Okinawa with her husband who will be teaching there. We need to find a replacement for Jane who has served as vice-president and a member of the Executive Committee. Board asked Rod to relay expressions of appreciation to Jane for her important work with Lancaster Downtowners.
4. **Feree Foundation**—Rod gave an encouraging report on a meeting he and Jane had with Phil Calhoun of the Feree Foundation. Rod and Jane briefly reviewed the history of Lancaster Downtowners and inquired about a possible grant. Phil indicated that the nature of our group and the amount of our request is very much within the possibility of grants that they make. Phil did suggest that we should also be applying to two or three other organizations—grantors are more likely to give awards if applicants are also working with other sources—and that we should up our proposed budget from \$30,000 to \$60,000. We should also include budget for a research component. He gave instructions for next steps and deadlines and gave hope that \$15,000 could be a reasonable for us to expect from Feree.
5. **Education/Social Committee**—Jim and Emily reviewed the following upcoming events:
 - Lois and Emily will meet Thursday, February 14, to make final plans on dinner events to be hosted by 3 households. A general invitation will be extended to all persons on our email list (members and non-members) plus others who may have interest in our organization that the hosts want to include. The purpose of these dinners will be to learn to know others within the organization and to share information about Downtowners with persons who have interest.
 - Celica Milovanovic is in conversation with a Professor Hill, psychology teacher at Millersville University, to address Downtowners on the topic of Intergenerational Dynamics of People Living in Retirement. Tentative dates are February 25 or March 3. The event would be free to members and open to others for a fee of \$5 and would be advertised by a notice on our mailing list, flyer and press release. Board members noted that new dates may need to be considered as time may be too short for adequate advertisement.
 - Sandy Asher will check out possibility of group discount to attend a production by Theatre of the Seventh Sister in May and organizing a group trip to the First Annual Book Frolic of the Literary Guild on the HACC campus
Board commended the committee for their excellent work.
6. **Service Provider Committee**—Rod presented two forms drafted by Ken Nissley who is asking for two persons to work with him to put together a list of service providers that we can make available to members. The two forms are 1. Memo of Understanding for Service Providers and 2. Description of Service Provider and Services Offered. Fred noted that no mention is made of insurance coverage and raised the issue of having the board adequately insured if we publish a list such as this. Board is asking Ken and his committee to research this and include appropriate provision in documents. Board commends Ken for an excellent start to this work. Rod is interested in working with Ken as a representative from Executive Committee. We still need an additional person.
7. **General Concerns**—The workload is heavy. We need more board members and persons to work on committees to reach our goals. What expectations can we make of board members given that many are still engaged in full time jobs and many other civic involvements? What is our timeline and strategy for fund raising? When can we realistically expect to hire a staff person? What should be the job description for that position? Discussion bogged down. We seem to be struggling for direction and tend to rehash same topics without clear resolution.

8. **Next Meeting**—We decided that we should meet in March, but Rod will be out of town March 10, which would be the regular time. Board chose Tuesday, March 18, as an alternate date.

NOTE: I, Rod, reflected on this decision following the meeting and took prerogative to cancel the March meeting for two reasons—we have tried to establish second Monday of the month as regular meeting time and I'm reluctant to change that for one meeting given the sporadic attendance we have had and the honest attempts that members have made to keep this date open. My second reason is that I want a bit of extra time to do some reflecting on my own to clarify how and at what pace we should proceed and review some of my thinking with the board. With advance notice of a meeting two months away, I'm also hoping that we can have better representation at the next meeting.

9. **Next Meeting**—Monday, April 14. I'm hoping that all board members will put this on calendars now and plan to attend. In anticipation of better attendance WE WILL MEET AT OUR FORMER MEETING PLACE, COMMUNITY MENNONITE CHURCH OF LANCASTER, 328 WEST ORANGE STREET. Parking lot adjoins the church on Concord Street. Any spaces along fence are available for our use. Spaces next to building are rented.

Recorded by Rod Houser

Personal Reflections: I've already admitted to the persons who attended Monday evening some discouragement I had at the conclusion of the meeting. Perhaps I can describe it as a feeling of plodding along and losing direction with not much to show for the evening and no clear sense of where we go from here.

But compiling these minutes has helped: We have a wonderful lineup of social, educational and cultural events thanks to the great work of the emerging Education and Social Committee—and I won't attempt to name these people for fear of missing some. Ken Nissley has drafted two great documents and as soon as we get one more volunteer to work with him we should have something else tangible to offer to the persons who have enrolled with payment

Phil Calhoun of the Feree Foundation was most interested and encouraging in what we are doing. Many new organizations and upstart 501(c)3's come to him to discuss possibility of grants. But he noted that we are unique which puts us in a good position for start up help. (*An anecdote here: Phil made mention of The Downtowners to his elderly mother, and she said, "Has that started up again?" Evidently in bygone years there was a group in Lancaster who met socially and called themselves Downtowners.*)

Yesterday my wife Mary Lou had a conversation with one of her friends who told of her conversation with someone who made reference to this wonderful new organization in Lancaster that she has become a part of—of course, it was Lancaster Downtowners.

At the invitation of Michael Sprunger, I attended the first Wednesday luncheon of the Hourglass Foundation this month. At the conclusion of the program, Jennifer Mundy, administrator of the foundation spoke with me and expressed their interest in our group presenting at one of their first Wednesday events.

And of course, response has been nothing but positive to the wonderful coverage Paula Wolf gave us in the Sunday News.

So I must realize that every startup has its ups and downs, its bumps and smooth rides, and what the real situation is at a given time is perhaps more related to perception than reality.

A passage from ancient Judeo-Christian tradition comes from the book of Deuteronomy. The wording is a bit strong for what I'm trying to express, but I think it's applicable:

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants."