

# Lancaster Downtowners Board Meeting

November 11, 2009

## Minutes

**Present:** Rod Houser, Bob Ibold, Del Seitz, Mary Lou Higgs, Joni Soost, Emily Booker, Ken Nissley, Jane Phillips

**Absent:** Mimi Shapiro, Nancy B. Rogers

*Meeting facilitated by Rod Houser*

1. **Treasurer Report**—Del reported a balance of \$4,049 in our checking account.
2. **Membership**—Del has received 19 membership renewals from the September-October renewal mailing.
3. **October Meeting Debriefings**—Mulberry Art Studio and the service they offer is an excellent venue for our annual program. We had positive feedback from persons who attended. Snack preparations were good. Bob Ibold offered that he could have done a better job on publicity but we agreed that turnout was good.  
  
Survey/Feedback forms from the evening suggested local history, craft classes, travel, legal advice as possible topics for informational programs. Field trips to museums and events in Baltimore, NYC and Philadelphia as well as forum on use of public and non-public transportation were also suggested. There is continued interest in social events such as our home gatherings. Bonita Reed indicated interest in public relations and membership committee, John O'Donnell in Program Committee, Ann Moore in the Just One Call volunteer project.
4. **Year End Contribution Letter**—Emily will forward last year's year end contribution letter to Bob Ibold who will review and update, assisted by Nancy B. Rogers, and return to Emily for final review. Rod will format and print addressed copies for everyone on database and come to next meeting with letters, mailing labels, envelopes, return envelopes and stamps. Rod will try to set up service providers on database and include mailing labels for them. Board members will add notes and mail at December board meeting.
5. **AARP Program Options**—AARP rep at general meeting suggested some program options including a paper shredding party and neighborhood safety program. We will consider options for partnerships with AARP or at least look at program templates that they offer.
6. **Exercise Program**—Downtowner Ann Moore may have interest in leading an exercise group. Emily will contact Ann to find out if she has interest. We also want to consider an alliance with YMCA for fitness program for our members. Mary Lou will contact YMCA to check out options.
7. **Senator Smucker Invitation**—State Senator Smucker has invited representatives of the board to meet with him to apprise him of what we are doing. Rod will suggest Monday mornings, anytime on Wednesday and Friday afternoon as possible times to meet. Rod will circulate date to board members and invite as many to attend as can.
8. **Home Gatherings**—Joni Soost has agreed to coordinate home gatherings. Rod will post an announcement on infoserve inviting people to host a gathering in their home.
9. **Life Long Learning**—Susan Leinberger and Bob Muth have interest in lifelong learning programs and could be resources for our involvement in such programs.
10. **Partnerships with Colleges**—Fall clean up day with F&M students was successful. We remain interested in nurturing partnerships with F&M and possibly Millersville University as opportunities arise.
11. **Report: Village to Village Network Conference in D.C.**

Nancy B. Rogers, Emily Booker and Jane Phillips attended the vTv conference in D.C. October 26. Emily and Jane reported:

- vTv will be launched January 2010 and will support fee paying members with information in such areas as how to organize, set up boards, consider liability issues, organize volunteers, identify criteria for members and providers and identify appropriate services for persons who chose to age in place. The vTv network would also provide online database services to participating organizations.
- About 200 people attended the conference from urban as well as non-urban areas throughout the U.S., brought together by common interest of wanting to age in place rather than retirement communities.
- Group represented four basic models: 1. Beacon Hill which is volunteer driven with staff, dues structure and strategic partnerships with home care agencies, hospitals and service providers, 2. D.C., similar to Beacon Hill with less staff, a different dues structure and dynamic executives, 3. Princeton, a subgroup of Jewish family and services that follows a case management model with less dependency on volunteers and 4. Western PA and Franklin County which is a self contained community, somewhat like Columbia MD with an intergenerational population supporting each other.

- Common ideas and challenges of developing and established communities include:
  - Strong boards
  - Paid staff persons
  - Substantial funding
  - Hope to be self-sustaining through membership fees (Note: Beacon Hill is still not self sustaining)
  - Reluctance of members to use services that are provided
  - Transportation as a major service
  - Provide assistance to members when making doctor visits—organize thoughts, record advice of doctor etc.
  - Organize volunteer and paid drivers
  - Provide limited meal services to members
  - Use internet almost exclusively for communication

**12. Discussion**—Board discussed umbrella issues that Lancaster Downtowners needs to address:

- Strategic Planning (Reference AARP study in D.C. See AARP website.)
- Dues increase, even if we don't have more services to offer
- Need a Strategic Plan that drives each of our board meetings
- Need clearly defined mission: where we are, where we want to be, how we want to get there—wasting our energy until we get this in place
- Need to increase membership—perhaps goal of doubling current membership to 200 people
- Need to make a concerted effort to raise the finances to support the vision that we have
- Project total finances we need; divide by number of members = dues needed from each member
- Need a common understanding of what we can do before we make a strategic plan
- Need a larger committed group—increase number of persons on the board
- We have a strong core on the board, but need more people

**13. Next Meeting, December 2**—Rod will bring addressed letters, envelopes, mailing labels, return addressed envelopes, and stamps to meeting for end of year mailing for contributions.

*Recorded by Rod Houser*