



Revitalizing Springfield's Downtown!

A Year in Review – November 2013

OUR MISSION – Springfield on the Move (SOM) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to work with property owners, businesses, citizens and town government to enhance Springfield's downtown as an attractive, desirable and economically viable destination for residents and visitors. Its members include local business owners, community leaders, local government and residents who want to help revitalize Springfield's downtown and the surrounding areas.

SOM is one of the state's twenty-three designated downtown organizations. This designation means that projects within Springfield's Designated Downtown District can benefit from tax credits, grants, technical assistance from Springfield on the Move and other development related advantages. Please visit the state's website for a complete listing of the benefits of the Downtown Program

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/revitalization/downtown This designation is an important tool for attracting needed investment for projects like the Springfield Movie Theatre and the 100 River Street Redevelopment Projects completed in the last few years, and the Masonic Building redevelopment completed earlier this year.

The Town of Springfield graciously provides funding to assist with our operations. Project funds are raised through membership drives, fundraising and grant writing. SOM has one paid employee, a half time Executive Director; all others are volunteers. Community support is critical to carrying our mission in identifying the work to be done, in raising funds for the work projects and in how the work is completed. None of this is possible without the support of community members, the Town of Springfield and our other partners.

- ❖ **Springfield Community Market** – The Springfield Community Market just completed its fourth season with significant growth in vendor sales continuing at more than 20%. Again this year, the market enjoyed offerings of fresh produce, baked goods, crafts and local music. The market was a central partner for Downtown's new "Market Madness" Event in September, joined the Apple Festival in October and will be hosting holiday markets at the Methodist Church for the middle of November and December. This year, the farmer's market increased its visibility with added semi-permanent signage at the corner of Route 11W and Chester Road, and now accepts EBT and debit card transactions.
- ❖ **Downtown Economic Development** – Regular technical assistance continues to downtown businesses, property owners and prospects. Areas of assistance include location assistance, financing, permitting, planning, parking, building improvements and tax credits etc. Much of this work is in answering questions and needs where we can, and making referrals to other programs as needed. Important priorities are to fill vacancies at the Odd Fellows building, One Main Street, the Woolson Block and the Masonic Building. To that end, the Downtown Economic Development Committee is reconvening to develop strategies for recruitment while supporting already established businesses. Among the activities being planned are to determine the needs of existing businesses, to determine complementary businesses that can be targeted for recruitment and to establish marketing materials that highlight and promote Downtown as a place to visit and to do business.
- ❖ **Downtown Building Façade Improvement Program** – In the last year, the Design Committee has organized the "Take a Seat" Fundraiser to fund needed improvements to the Odd Fellows building, 15-17 Main Street. The building was last painted over 20 years ago. The inside space is nice but possible tenants or prospective owners

(the building is for sale) had not been able to get past the worn out looking exterior. SOM raised the necessary funds, contracted with Department of Corrections to paint the building, rented lift equipment and facilitated needed permits. Altogether, the project cost if done commercially would have amounted to \$30-50K, clearly not affordable for the current owners. This painting project is now complete and looks great. SOM will work with the property owner to market the property to prospective tenants or potential property buyers. Completion of the Odd Fellows building improvement project adds to the six building projects completed last year. The SOM Design Committee is currently considering other building improvement projects for downtown for next year.

- ❖ **Parking Management Plan** – The parking committee led by Mark Blanchard of SOM, was joined by the town and chamber representatives have received final approvals for changes to Downtown parking. The changes approved generally increase the availability of downtown parking. This was done in several ways - by highlighting available parking at the Upper Valley Street Lot (lot has now been relined), adding free all-day business parking along the hedgerow at People’s Bank Parking Lot, and by shifting four hour to eight hour parking on Mineral and Factory Streets. It is expected that parking resources will be highlighted in a brochure and placed on websites so that parking availability can be known and better understood.
- ❖ **Downtown Promotions** – The SOM Promotion’s Committee continues two promotional initiatives: The Holiday Program which includes storefront holiday displays, wreaths for downtown businesses, and the Santa’s Workshop and holiday program for the kids. Last year, over 160 children/families participated in this program, representing more than a 75% increase in participation. Plans for this year aim to increase participation to 225 children and families. 19 Businesses participated in the holiday map program last year, it’s expected that this participation will increase as well. The promotions committee also created “Market Madness” Annual Street Fair for Downtown. The street fair seeks to leverage the community market and connect downtown businesses, and the event pays homage to the Moonlight Madness from years past. The street fair was a success from all perspectives. More than fifty vendors participated all along Main Street, and the fair drew tremendous car and foot traffic, both local and from out of town/out of state. Live music, classic cars and antique tractors were highlighted, and a kid’s korner with clown, face-painting, youth vendors were added this year.
- ❖ **Committee Volunteers:** Promotions, Organization, Economic Development and Design - These are SOM’s four main committees (all required for a designated downtown program). Volunteers are how our mission gets carried out! Please consider joining as a member and/or becoming a volunteer.

Please forward your comments and questions: Carol Lighthall at Springfield on the Move –
Tel. 885-1527 or som@vermontel.net

We very much appreciate your support!