



Revitalizing Springfield's Downtown!

Report to the Town - November 2014

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 a 501c3 and one of the state's twenty-four 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 program benefits 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, 100 River Street Redevelopment, and the Masonic Building redevelopment completed within the last few years. Since SOM's enrollment in the downtown program in year 2000, tax credits alone have amounted to almost \$1 Million in downtown investment.

Springfield Farmers Market – The Springfield Farmers Market completed its fifth season with growth in vendor sales and market offerings. 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 on Labor Day weekend, joined the Apple Festival in October and will be hosting holiday markets at the Methodist Church in November and December. Last year, the farmer's market increased its visibility with added signage at the corner of Route 11W/Chester Road, and at the bottom of South Street. The market accepts EBT and debit card transactions. New Farmer's Market banners were added this Summer (funded by corporate donation). SOM formed a Market Steering committee to oversee the Downtown Farmer's Market, guided by representation of market vendors and SOM Board members.



Downtown Economic Development – Regular technical assistance continues to downtown businesses, property owners and prospects. Areas of assistance include business recruitment, location assistance, financing, permitting, planning, parking, building improvements and tax credits. Much of this work is in answering questions and needs, and making referrals to other programs as appropriate. Much of our work is with established downtown businesses, additionally important priorities are to fill all downtown vacancies and more fully utilize the Odd Fellows building, the building at One Main Street, and the Woolson Block building. The downtown economic development committee meets monthly to guide strategy and action items related to encouraging business growth, business retention and new business recruitment. The committee oversaw completion this Summer of a Downtown Business Survey to answer the question "What do our current businesses need?". We coordinated tours of available downtown space and organized a Creative Economy presentation by Lars Torres of the State Office of the Creative Economy (February 2014) - the presentation

highlighted the opportunities in this sector. The committee is finalizing marketing materials that encourage Downtown Springfield as a place to visit and as a place to do business (brochure is draft). SOM initiated a grant with the town to update the Downtown Master Plan which was last done in 1996. The grant was awarded and SOM now serves on the steering committee with the town, the RPC and the chamber. The Master Plan process will engage the community for input on what changes are needed and desired for downtown. Completion of this project is expected next Summer. The town and SOM collaborated and was awarded a grant through ACCD and ANR to establish an electric car charging station (dual port) within downtown. The project has been delayed due to a site boundary issue, resolution is expected for next Spring/Summer.

Downtown Building Façade Improvement Program – SOM’s Design Committee launched this program in 2010-2011 by completing 24 architect designs for downtown buildings. The committee has been busy working with property owners to implement design changes. The Odd Fellows building at 15-17 Main Street was painted over 20 years ago, and was painted again last year - our largest project to date (pictured below). SOM has been working with the property owner and brokers involved to market the property to prospective tenants or potential property buyers. Completion of the Odd Fellows building improvement project makes eight project to date. This Summer, the committee provided a small donation to support two additional building projects – the First Congregational Church and the One Main Street building. We are planning a façade project with SEVCA/The Good Buy Store for Springtime next year. SOM fundraised to make permanent the Springfield mural on the Furman’s Bldg. Special thanks to the mural artists (left to right): Rayven Hersey, Juli Wardwell, Angela Kelley, and Mona Frye.



Parking Management Plan – The parking committee led by Mark Blanchard (SOM), was joined by the town and chamber representatives and 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. A parking map has been developed and steps will be taken to distribute. Signage that highlights the approved parking changes is planned.

Downtown Promotions – The SOM Promotion’s Committee continues two promotional initiatives: The Holiday Program is a collaboration with the chamber of commerce. SOM’s role includes storefront holiday displays, wreaths for downtown businesses, and the Santa’s Workshop “sticker map”. Each year, 200 children and 20 businesses participate making a very happy start to the holiday program. The Market Madness Street Fair completed its “third annual” event in August. The street fair aims to leverage the downtown farmer’s market and connect downtown businesses. The event pays homage to the Moonlight Madness event from years past. The street fair continues to grow each year, in participation, foot traffic and offerings to the event visitor. Live music at five locations, classic cars and antique tractors, an expanded kid’s corner with clown, bouncy house, face-painting, and youth vendors were all included 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. Thank you for supporting Springfield on the Move and Downtown Springfield!



Figure 1 Odd Fellows Building - BEFORE