



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Kurt S. Browning
Secretary of State
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

May 14, 2008

Ms. Tracy Whirls
Moore Haven Main Street
P.O. Box 1003
Moore Haven, Florida 33471

Dear Tracy,

Thank you for organizing the Florida Main Street Assessment meeting during my visit to Moore Haven last week. I was pleased to meet Valerie Guenther, and I am grateful to you and Mrs. Geake for taking the time to discuss Main Street Moore Haven committee activities that include:

Organization

- There are no standing Main Street committees. The board serves as members of all committees, and this limits the number of projects that can be undertaken.
- Membership has dwindled during the past year from 60 to 30 members.
- The Glades County Economic Development Council publishes a monthly newsletter that includes information about Main Street Moore Haven.

2008 Goals:

- Recruit new members.
- Increase volunteer base
- Increase revenue

Recommendation:

- *Increase the number of active board members.*

500 S. Bronough Street • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250 • <http://www.flheritage.com>

Director's Office
(850) 245-6300 • FAX: 245-6436

Archaeological Research
(850) 245-6444 • FAX: 245-6452

Historic Preservation
(850) 245-6333 • FAX: 245-6437

Historical Museums
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Southeast Regional Office
(954) 467-4990 • FAX: 467-4991

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(904) 825-5045 • FAX: 825-5044

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(813) 272-3843 • FAX: 272-2340

- *Obtain board liability insurance.*
- *Develop an ongoing membership campaign.*
- *Attend Florida Main Street quarterly meetings and annual state and national conferences.*
- *Diversify program funding – seek donations from banks, public utilities, and businesses - consider the sale of a MSMH calendar, poster, art work- (birding, wildlife, eco, lake, Seminole), cookbook.*
- *Enhance fundraising opportunities during scheduled events- raffle, silent auction, sale of merchandise.*

Design

- Main Street Moore Haven is working to preserve the Arcade and other historic commercial buildings in the Main Street district.
- The city built a new “splash pool” in the park, but did not improve the streetscape in the historic district adjacent to the park.

2008 Goal:

Work with city to develop design guidelines.

Recommendation:

- *The board should carefully consider the acquisition and rehabilitation proposal for the historic bank building using a National Trust loan. The building can be used as a pharmacy and dental office, and may create the catalyst necessary to spur further rehabilitation and development.*
- *Work with the city to improve the sidewalks and streetscaping in the historic district to encourage redevelopment.*

Promotion

- Main Street Moore Haven will continue sponsoring or assist with the following events:
 Cooking on the Caloosahatchee – October
 Christmas in the Park – December

2008 Goals:

- Enhance the Christmas event by adding a boat parade
- Sponsor a wine and cheese event
- Work with a FMS consultant to develop a MSMH web page.

Recommendation:

- *Work with the FMS web page consultant to develop a logo and identity (tag line) for Main Street Moore Haven.*

Economic Restructuring

- The slow economy and the loss of the power plant has stalled commercial development in the county.
- The city marina is being renovated with a Florida Fish and Wildlife grant.
- An Economic Feasibility Study has been provided by a Florida Main Street consultant. The results of this study should be shared with the city commission during a regular or workshop meeting.
- Main Street Moore Haven will continue to coordinate efforts with the Economic Development Council and other community partners.

Recommendations:

- *Develop a business and building inventory.*
- *Work with the city and county to adopt a Historic Preservation Property Tax Exception ordinance and other financial incentives that encourage commercial development.*
- *Work with local banks to develop a low-interest loan pool.*

Main Street Moore Haven has not been able to achieve many new goals and objectives this past year. This is not the fault of the board or program manager, but more a reflection on our current state economy and the lack of local financial incentives to encourage new development. There seems to be a desire on the part of some people in Moore Haven to raze the arcade and other historic buildings in the downtown area. They feel that the vacant land might attract new development. I do not believe that vacant land will act as an incentive to developers, but I do strongly believe that the rehabilitation and reuse of this historic building stock can act as a catalyst to attract commercial development, and will also serve to preserve the culture and character of the community. Without these buildings, Moore Haven becomes “anywhere” Florida.

Thank you again for your assistance. I look forward to seeing you at the annual conference in September.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Jefferson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Joan Jefferson
Florida Main Street Coordinator

cc: Ellen Hawk Geake