

Borough of Dormont Regular Council Meeting
March 3, 2008

**Dormont Community Development Corporation
And
The Main Street Program**

Report and Update

Good Evening Members of Council, Mayor, Solicitor and Manager:

My name is George Pitcher and I reside at 1011 Peermont Avenue in Dormont. I am here speaking to you this evening as a spokesperson for the Dormont Community Development Corporation (DCDC) and the work being undertaken by the DCDC relevant to the “Main Street Program”. Main Street is a comprehensive, community-based revitalization approach, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Board of Directors wants to state publically who we are and what the program can do for the Borough of Dormont’s business district.

A little history of how this program got started in Dormont might be in order: During the summer and fall of 2006, two (2) general informational meetings were conducted as a community outreach to explain the Main Street Program and its primary goal of improving the downtown commercial-business district in Dormont (Potomac and West Liberty Avenues). Please see our website at www.dormontmaintreet.org to learn more specifics about the program. Representatives from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (a non-profit organization supporting the Main Street Program) were at these meetings to provide input about the program and to generate interest from the business community and the residents of Dormont to pursue Downtown Revitalization. Interested volunteers were asked to register at these meetings to serve in various ways to implement this program. From this list of volunteers, a Steering Committee was formed to conduct further detailed discussions and to make certain decisions regarding the Program as defined by the National Main Street Center’s “Four Point Approach”.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held during the month of February, 2007. Since that time the Steering Committee, and then the DCDC, has met on an average monthly basis to continue with the efforts of the Main Street Program.

SO WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

Our first objective was to thoroughly read and comprehend a package of literature, booklets and manuals provided by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. From those meetings, the committee has established well thought out Program Goals and have

developed a Mission Statement. The committee has conducted several Fund Raising Events to provide seed money to cover general operating expenses.

One of the major tasks of the Steering Committee was to establish a HOME (a sponsor organization for the Main Street Program). We followed the Guidelines provide by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center which strongly recommended an “independent, private non-profit organization whose express purpose is downtown revitalization – with no other conflicting agenda”. The Steering Committee contemplated starting a new non-profit organization. We also had several discussions with the old Dormont Community Development Corporation which was formed over 25 years ago for the same purpose of revitalizing the Dormont downtown area. As you may recall, they were responsible for the improvements made to Potomac Avenue in the early 80’s. The committee decided that the DCDC, as it had the same general goals, would be the logical choice to be the anchor organization of the Main Street Program. The original leadership/directors worked with the steering committee to enable the DCDC’s “re-activation”. A new Board of Directors was formally established which consists of local business representatives and citizens of Dormont. There are thirteen (13) volunteer Directors and several of them are here this evening. The new and upgraded DCDC has now been in operation for four (4) months.

As the DCDC had been basically non-functioning for twenty (20) years, there were a number of house keeping chores that were required to bring the organization back to life. Several of those items included revising the Articles of Incorporation, updating the Corporation By-laws to meet present day and program standards, applying for a new Federal Employee Identification Number, developing a Conflict of Interest statement, starting new bank accounts, etc. Even though the DCDC was formed as a non-profit organization, it did not have a 501c3 status. An application has been prepared seeking this status as required by the Main Street Program. The Corporations 501c3 status is pending.

We have joined the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center to stay in tune with the Main Street Program. We have contacted these organizations on several occasions seeking their assistance and interpretation of various aspects of the program.

As you can see, the DCDC and the Main Street Steering Committee have been quite busy working behind the scenes, and now we see the start of the “real work” at hand to make this program work for the Borough of Dormont.

SO WHAT ARE THE UP COMING PLANS FOR THE DCDC AND MAIN STREET?

In the next couple of months we will be undertaking the following tasks:

1. Conducting an informational meeting with the Business Community to explain the Main Street Program and what it could mean to their business. This meeting has been scheduled for 7:00 PM on March 27th at Jamie's Restaurant. The DCDC would also like to extend an invitation to Council to attend this meeting.
2. After speaking to the merchants and businessmen, a Public Information Meeting will be scheduled to bring the public at large up to date on the progress of the Main Street Program. A meeting site, date and time have not been formally set as of this date.
3. From the list of previously generated volunteers, and any new volunteers who have not yet expressed interest, the Four (4) Standing Committees of Promotion, Design, Economic Restructuring and Organization will be formed. Again we encourage use of our website to review these committee responsibilities, goals and objectives. The Standing Committees, as recommended by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, will be chaired by a DCDC Director who will make committee reports to the entire DCDC Board of Directors. We have begun the process of committee assignments and would expect to generate other interest in the program from the public meeting. It is noted that there are several of you on Council that have volunteered to serve at some capacity, and we look forward to working with you.
4. Complete the paper work required to be designated as an "official" Main Street Community and secure funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.
5. Develop a specific program and schedule of undertakings based on the Standing Committee recommendations.
6. Continue Fund Raising to support the activities and general operating expenses of the DCDC and the Main Street Program.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to address council this evening concerning this very worthwhile endeavor. We will be updating you and the public on the progress of the program on a periodic basis now that much of the necessary administrative hurdles have been overcome.

George Pitcher, President
Dormont Community Development Corporation.