

DFP Recap – April thru June 2016

Strategic Goal – To Maximize the Utilization of Downtown Fond du Lac Properties

Objective 1: Lower the vacancy rate of Downtown Fond du Lac properties with strong businesses

- **The Tiny Yarn Shoppe** opened on April 6 at 19 S. Main St.
- **The Knitting Room** re-opened on March 19 at 28 N. Main St.
- **Ubuntu Art Space** at 52 E. Division is having their grand opening on April 15 & 16.
- **The BBS Agency** is expanding from City Center to 21 E. Second St. on April 15.
- **Norcino Deli & Charcuterie** is open at 57 N. Macy St.
- **Carousel Vintage Media** is a new resale/antique shop at 46 N. Main St.
- **UnTamed Life** opened inside Victoria's Pet Nutrition Center on April 23 at 42 N. Main St.
- **Trinkets n Treasures** is maintained open hours while they await completion of the sale of their property.
- **Zimmerman Apartments** at 131 S. Main Street are now available for lease. One floor is still being completed. The building now has 19 apartment units. Previously used as office space.
- **1848** closed on June 5.
- **Studio 40 Hair Salon** has opened at 40 4th Street
- **Armada Media Corporation, AMC Escanaba and Radio Plus Bay Cities** have opened at 258 S. Main.
- **Jackson Kahl Insurance** has moved out of 39 S. Marr. They will be constructing a new building on Pioneer Road. The State of Wisconsin will be leasing the building from the Kahl's for office use.
- **Thrive Church** has purchased St. Joseph's Church.
- The **Retlaw Plaza Hotel** has been purchased by Frantz Community Investors.
- The **Building Improvement Grants** have been awarded to 8 property owners totaling \$75,000 for assistance in exterior property renovations.
 - Four grant applications were received in April with a total project value of \$68,849. Grant requests totaled \$28,962. Grants totaling \$15,700.
 - The grant pool of \$75,000 is therefore exhausted for 2016.
- **Façade Design Grants** have been awarded to two property owners. The grant pool is exhausted until further notice.
- **Market Analysis Report** – Errin Welty from Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation provided an overview of the Executive summary of the Downtown Market Analysis. The full report will be completed in approximately the next month. The steering committee has recommended an additional survey related to the specific wants/needs of restaurant and specialty shops be completed. This survey will serve as an appendix to the overall market analysis, and will not slow down the completion process of the initial report.
 - Overall there were three main opportunities identified:
 - 1. Improve overall downtown aesthetics, increasing nighttime visibility and introducing greening/color into the downtown experience.
 - 2. Working with businesses to meet current gaps in market demand and increase profitability.
 - 3. Work to retain, grow and recruit quality downtown businesses which meet market demands.Other general highlights included:
 - 80% of businesses interviewed expect to increase operations in the next three years. This presents an opportunity/challenge to ensure these businesses have space to grow within the downtown district, and not look to relocate outside of the downtown district.
 - Downtown residents compared to downtown workers- Residents spend more money in the district and are more familiar with downtown offerings. Workers are less familiar with downtown businesses and spend less. Herein lies an opportunity for awareness.
 - Restaurants are the business category with the highest demand. Quick, food on the go (but not fast food) options are highly desired. There is high demand for snacks and general merchandise related businesses. People want an overall stronger selection of merchandise.
 - Also in high demand are kid focused businesses and activities.
 - Art and entertainment related business are also in demand.
 - Young professionals are looking for options to live in the downtown district. Empty nesters would consider downtown living, but at the same time are concerned about real estate value retention.
 - Personal service related businesses ranked as a positive.
 - Along with the national trend, there is a high demand to increase outdoor dining options.
 - **"Idea Session" Planning** – The July Board of Directors meeting was formatted in an open forum discussion to generate new ideas to potentially be included in the 2016 Work Plan and Budget.

Objective 2: Positively market Downtown Fond du Lac

- **Saturday Farmers Market**, 8-Noon, May 14 & ongoing
 - Table during Healthy Kids Day
 - Weekly ads in the Action; Billboards begin in June
 - Veggie Prescription program has been funded via United Healthcare and implemented in a pilot program with Cancer Center patients at Agnesian and a small group at Aurora.
 - May activities: Open House, Composting education, Companion Gardening
 - Visitor count on May 28 indicated an attendance of 1800 people. Anecdotal data from businesses suggest it is a welcome boost for business every Saturday.
 - Successful Community Resource Fair with 21 agencies on June 25
- **Summer Event Kickoff** was held on May 18 at THELMA
 - Showcased summer special events happening community wide. Fifteen organizations participated. The overall goal of the event was to showcase that there are tons of fun things to do in our community. 65 people attended.
- **Wednesday Farmers Market**, 11-3, June 1 & ongoing
 - This market is completely full.
 - Late freezes are impacting vendor attendance, but foot traffic was higher than expected based on the limited number of vendors.
- Creating restaurant rack cards
- **Downtown Open House** was held on Saturday, May 14, 10-5: Generally positive feedback. Slow, but steady in most locations. Snow had an impact. The state is planning to market the event again next year and has potential sponsorship dollars to assist. 7 different sites open to the public. This is an unsponsored event, so all marketing has been done via social media and in conjunction with the Farmers Market opening weekend. Event was featured in the Action on April 8.
- **Downtown Wine Walk** was held 5-9 p.m. on June 17. 333 out of 350 tickets were sold. 13% of attendees travelled more than an hour to the event. Total spending as part of the event included \$24,032 in direct spending downtown, and more than \$30,000 in total regional spending. A post-event survey of the attendees found that the average person visited 8 stores they have never been to before.
- **Shop Small in the Summer**, July 30: Marketing campaign will utilize existing "Shop Small" campaign materials and encourage shoppers to shop small on July 30. Businesses will be encouraged to offer outdoor sales or have a satellite location in the Farmers Market footprint to direct traffic to their store.
- **Meet Me Downtown Week**, August 1-5: Group photo August 2 at 8 a.m. Social gathering for downtown employees on August 3 at 4:30 p.m. at Downtown Deli to Go.
- **Downtown Business Owner Marketing Meetups** will be offered monthly with a rotation of topics: *Deep Dive* (specific training on one topic), *Event Advantages* (how to get the most out of an upcoming downtown event), *Guest Presenter* (experience from comparable communities), and *Tough Love* (exploring the marketing efforts of one downtown business who volunteers). Hosted and facilitated by BrownBoots. The first meetup was held on June 15 was attended by 12 business representatives and streamed live to the Business & Property Owners Facebook group.
- Fox Valley Savings Bank will serve as presenting sponsor for **Fondue Fest** on September 10. Event planning is well underway, and additional sponsors are still being sought.
- **Quarterly Meet Me Downtown Networking Social**, July 7, had 30 attendees and was co-sponsored by Gallery & Frame and Norcino Deli & Charcuterie.
- **Meet Me Downtown Week**, August 1-5: Group photo August 2 at 8 a.m. Social gathering for downtown employees on August 3 at 4:30 p.m. at Downtown Deli to Go.
- **Downtown Discount Cards** – are available for purchase or corporate donation. Businesses are encouraged to add to the list of discounts available. **Downtown Gift Certificates** are also available and make the perfect gift!
- Continuation of the downtown radio show "Get Downtown!" on KFIZ.
- Created an **Instagram** Account: @downtownfdl
- Creating dining rack cards to serve as a reminder of all the dining options in downtown.
- DFP Facebook page has 3,569 > 3,688 likes; +119 since April
 - Facebook ads for businesses have been utilized by two downtown businesses with notable increase in traffic two both retailers during the ad runs. Both businesses have expressed shock at how successful the ads were.
 - Based on success of Trinkets n' Treasures ad, DFP will now offer Facebook ad service to downtown businesses for cost of ad, plus \$10 for staff time
- Farmers Market Facebook page has 1,822 > 2,214 likes; +392 since April

Objective 3: Improve the aesthetic/visual appeal of Downtown Fond du Lac

- The Design Committee is working with the Public Works Department to coordinate an “**Adopt a Park**” program. Volunteers will be solicited to adopt areas of downtown to plant additional flowers and foliage. Thanks go out to the employees of US Bank for adopting a pocket park and planting new foliage at 65 S. Main.
- The Design Committee will be conducting informal **property inspections** in May to notify the city of maintenance issues that need to be addressed.
- **Downtown Clean Up Day** was a successful event. 2 tons of bulky waste and 1 ton of electronic waste were collected from approximately 30 properties. 25 volunteers helped pick up litter. Planning to repeat annually.
- 47 planters have been “adopted” by downtown businesses through the “**Adopt a Planter**” program.
- The **America Saves** team conducted 17 on site visits with property owners to share ideas on how to improve energy efficiency on Tuesday, June 14.

Objective 4: Be a voice for the Downtown Fond du Lac community

- Sent out **Press releases** regarding Zimmerman Building Apartments, Wine Walk Success, Re-accreditation into National Main Street Program
- Meet Me Downtown, sponsored by Texture Salon, was held at Theo’s 24 on April 7.
 - 60 attendees, first 50/50 cash raffle
- Business owner surveys have been received from approximately 55 business owners. Results will be published with the Downtown Market Analysis.
- 77 businesses completed a survey regarding downtown parking. Results were shared with city council. The Design Committee created a list of action items related to the parking survey responses (in progress).
- Staff provided quarterly update to city council on March 23
- Staff gave a presentation and Q&A at the Fond du Lac Senior Center
- Amy Hansen, Lisa Pauly (FDL Convention & Visitors Bureau) and Sara Cujak (Cujak’s Wine Market) attended the National Main Streets Conference in Milwaukee. All received scholarships for registration costs.
- Amy Hansen attended a workshop on private fundraising, courtesy of the FDL Area Foundation.
- March contacts: 27 Inbound – 48 Outbound – 75 Total
 - 21 – general DFP organizational information, 9 – design, beautification, parking, safety, 21 – business marketing, 8 – special event information, 3 – remodeling projects, 12 – potential new businesses, 4 – other
- April contacts: 13 Inbound – 56 Outbound – 69 Total
 - 45 – general DFP organizational information, 0 – design, beautification, parking, safety, 12 – business marketing, 2 – special event information, 5 – remodeling projects, 2 – potential new businesses, 3 – other
- May contacts: 27 Inbound – 27 Outbound – 54 Total
 - 35 – general DFP organizational information, 4 – design, beautification, parking, safety, 5 – business marketing, 13 – special event information, 14 – new business
- June contacts: 23 Inbound – 31 Outbound – 54 Total
 - 5 – general DFP organizational information, 10 – design, beautification, parking, safety, 10 – business marketing, 13 – special event information, 7 – remodel, 8 – new business, 1 – other

Monthly Statistics:

Vacancy Rate (First-floor taxable commercial square footage available for lease or purchase)

NOV 2013 - 10.2% > APR 2016 - 8.46% > MAY 2016 - 8.69% > JULY 2016 - 7.6%