

THE REPORTER

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The Downtown Brandon Alliance (DBA) recently hosted a Public Forum as a way to introduce itself to the Town of Brandon. As the headline proclaimed in the November 16, 2011 edition of The Reporter "it was a community success." There was a lot of information to cover that evening so not all of the efforts received a fair and balanced introduction. Over the next few months the DBA will publish short articles introducing each of the committees and what their plans are hoping to accomplish in the months and years ahead. This article introduces the basic concepts behind the "Designated Downtown."

The DBA committee structure is patterned after the National Main Streets Four-Point approach. As a unique economic development tool, the Main Street Four-Point Approach is the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride. The four points of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort. To accomplish this goal four committees have been established and staffed by volunteers: Organizational, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring.

The Design Committee. Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors. It takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in a commercial district by directing attention to all of its physical elements: what makes Brandon, Brandon. An appealing atmosphere, created through attention to all of these visual elements, conveys a positive message about the commercial district and what it has to offer.

The Promotion Committee. Promotion takes many forms, but the goal of this group is to create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in your commercial district. The Promotion Committee will focus its efforts to help sell the image of Brandon, not only to its residents but through out the region. Promotions communicate our commercial district's unique characteristics, business establishments, and activities to shoppers, investors, potential business and property owners, and visitors.

The Organization Committee. This committee's aim is to establish consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district. The Organizational Committee is currently the resurrected Board of Directors of 24 Center Street, the official 501c3 organization that lead to the formation of the DBA. By getting everyone working toward the same goals, the Organizational Committee provides effective, ongoing management and advocacy for downtown Brandon. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

The Economic Restructuring Committee. This group works toward strengthening the Town of Brandon's existing economic assets by building on its current strengths while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. The overall goal is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers.

The DBA meets the second Thursday of each month at 9:00 AM in the Bandon Library meeting room. We are always looking for volunteers to get more involved with specific projects. If you read something here about DBA that is of interest please contact Steve Beck, Economic Development Officer for the town with your questions. He can be reached at 247.5721 or downtownbrandonalliance@gmail.com