

Building a voice that can be heard

"Main Street Gettysburg" with Deb Adamik | Posted: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 12:05 am

Elections are over. It is time to focus, roll up our sleeves and turn the talk into action with the voice of our community as our first priority. One of the most interesting comments made to me by a shop owner during this timeframe was the need for business owners in town to be heard. Often the business owners do not necessarily live in town and rarely have the opportunity to chat with the elected officials. They can't vote, yet the vital decisions made at the various government levels have significant implications on their business.

Main Street Gettysburg (MSG) focuses on engaging the business community in various ways and listens to what they see as priorities. Then, MSG becomes the initial leader that turns broadly supported ideas into action through its connections and relationship with the Borough and the rest of the community.

In October, MSG held a Corporate Luncheon, hosted by Pete Monahan at Federal Pointe Inn. It was a small group of corporate leaders discussing MSG's ten year revitalization vision (go to mainstreetgettysburg.org/future for a copy). This corporate group also discussed the Borough's budget challenges. The budget information presented at the Borough Council meeting clearly showed the decrease of property values, thus decreasing revenues. The revitalization work that MSG provides to the Borough has proven to incent businesses such as McDonalds, Gettysburg Heritage Center, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Appalachian Brewery, to name a few, to reinvest, and thus increase tax revenues on an annual basis going forward. MSG's revitalization plan is an opportunity for the Borough to continue to raise revenues instead of focusing on cutting expenses. This luncheon was the first of future luncheons that seeks to listen, learn and share the common voice of local businesses thus helping Borough leaders gain insight and provide additional support for the business community.

Community events are important to businesses too, especially during non-tourist season. On December 12th and 13th, the Steinwehr Avenue Business Improvement District is hosting its first "Victorian Christmas." Free carriage rides, children's activities and crafts, Victorian Family Photos, music and even a "Jolly Ole' Elf" may be wandering the neighborhood on this weekend. MSG supports the Steinwehr BID by coordinating events such as this and hopes the community marks their calendars to have a nice Christmas experience that weekend.

The "Main Street Minutes" e-blast helps to create a "business community with a voice." MSG staff visit businesses to listen to what is most pressing to them. Currently, parking is the most common grumble, and when asked, the issue ranges from not enough parking to customers who have to leave to fill their meters. MSG was happy to support the Borough staff November 6, walking the town and spreading the word about their new Passport Application that will allow people to extend their

parking time via their phones. More needs to be done about parking long term, but kudos to Charles Gable, Borough Manager, for seeking solutions to this most common business concern.

It is not easy to build unity and a "business voice" among the many businesses in town, but MSG is making progress and looks forward to keeping this progress moving forward.

Deb Adamik is the president and CEO of Main Street Gettysburg.