

# CEDAC shares what matters

"Main Street Gettysburg" with Deb Adamik | Posted: Tuesday, June 21, 2016 12:05 am

One of the guiding principles that Main Street Gettysburg (MSG) lives by is the importance of listening to the community it serves. We know priorities change and therefore spend a lot of time visiting businesses and interacting with people in the community to determine what really matters to them.

MSG has organized and facilitated free annual community retreats with approximately 80 people or more attending. Revitalization projects like Steinwehr and Baltimore Street include focus groups and community meetings to better understand community needs before planning for the revitalization improvement.

This year MSG has taken another important step by restructuring the organization based on the Ten-Year Economic Development Plan. A new Community Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC) was created to strengthen this community-wide perspective that is important for the strategic direction of MSG and the Borough of Gettysburg whom MSG serves. It will be an economic development group focused on sharing information and initiating new ideas that positively impact the economic health of the downtown Gettysburg community. The economic development goals for this group include increasing the number of new jobs, increasing the quality of jobs, supporting the success of existing businesses and improving the ability to attract new businesses to Gettysburg.

On April 20, the first MSG Community Advisory Committee the following questions: 1) What prevents businesses from growing and expanding in Gettysburg, 2) What prevents new businesses from opening in Gettysburg, and 3) What is within the control of the borough or MSG to improve upon in addressing these issues?

A group of 20 participants, with 12 business representatives, the Borough Manager and some economic development organizations developed the following initial list of priorities:

**Parking:** The need for better signage, better control of meters and ideas for additional parking areas were discussed.

**Permits and Zoning:** An overall review of zoning and the permitting process is needed. Some feel there are too many zones, and special requests such as mixed used parking facilities were mentioned as something to look into.

**Safety and Lighting:** The safety and lighting on Baltimore Street and in alleys was an important priority, along with improved infrastructure.

**Business Team:** The idea of more collaboration between the businesses as a team and the willingness for businesses to stay open late led to the discussion of better marketing of the businesses, more collaborative discount programs for locals and joint promotional packages.

**Restrooms:** The businesses would like to see more public restrooms in certain areas of town and more effective signage or communications about where the existing restrooms are located.

The Community Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting was positive, professional and

energetic. None of these priority topics are easy to resolve, but MSG will be looking into ways to break them down into actionable items. The committee will meet about three times a year with smaller action groups in-between. Due to the high interest from other businesses to participate, MSG hopes to expand the group for our next meeting July 26. An engaged community is important for economic health and MSG wants to thank committee participants who invested their time and talents to improve the economy of our town.

*Deb Adamik is the chair and chief executive officer of Main Street Gettysburg.*