

It's time to talk financial investment

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It is budget season and time for the borough to decide about their "financial investment" in Main Street Gettysburg (MSG), a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission has successfully improved the vitality of the town through economic revitalization and historic preservation initiatives since 1979. Its revitalization projects have attracted more than \$50 million in private and grant investments, increased municipal revenues annually in entertainment and pillow taxes and reduced borough expenses in infrastructure repairs such as ADA curb ramps, sidewalks, additional lighting, and underground repairs. In the same ten years, the borough invested a total of \$360,000 in MSG with a \$138 return for each dollar spent. This calculation only includes specific revitalization project amounts, not MSG's wide variety of community improvement initiatives and services. Many hours of staff and volunteer time is necessary for community events, Fa ade Improvement Grant and Zero Interest Loan administration, business support projects and recruiting, town-specific marketing, events, social media, PR materials (all created to promote the town) and services such as "From the Ground Up." These initiatives preserve the town's historic integrity and uplift the quality of life for the community and tourists alike.

As a gatherer of both community commitment and money for the borough, MSG creates and facilitates plans such as the Interpretive Plan, Steinwehr Avenue Revitalization Plan, 150th Anniversary Plan, and now the Pathways to Success-Ten Year Revitalization and Business Recruitment Plan, all at minimal cost to the borough. Most plans of this nature cost tens of thousands of dollars each for the plan alone, some six figures. MSG is proficient in the complicated process for finding state and federal grants and soliciting private contributions to lower the cost for the municipality both in planning and execution, something the borough could not do without a 501(c)3. The new Baltimore Street Historic Pathway Revitalization Project is well on its way and an example of an important project to the community.

It takes special skills to work with groups with diverse perspectives and turn their ideas into effective revitalization projects, events, or business recruitment plans, as well as, create the grass roots interest and community commitment to execute and fund these initiatives. MSG currently supports two non-profit organizations, MSG and Steinwehr Business Improvement District and both require specific knowledge necessary to run these two different types of non-profits. Hundreds of hours are spent by MSG staff each year on a wide variety of projects for both organizations ranging from creating small events like "Steppin' Out In Lincoln's Footsteps" or the upcoming Victorian Christmas at Steinwehr, to developing a ten-year revitalization plan that will improve the infrastructure, safety and attractiveness of all of the major arteries throughout the town. The hours spent connecting people in the community, such as engineers, design experts, grant sources, vendors, elected officials and government staff is never-ending. Extensive experience in non-profit leadership, project

management, technical and social media skills, fundraising and grant writing skills are important. It has taken years to achieve MSG's exceptional credibility with funders and its national recognition from MSG's peers for revitalization projects and the 150th Commemoration.

So in conclusion, whether you are a business, household or municipality, you must invest in the future to survive and grow. Main Street Gettysburg is the borough's wise investment to minimize taxes and increase revenues.

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