



Fredericktown Community Development Foundation, Monthly Meeting – Minutes for Thursday, April 7, 2016, 7:30 a.m., Fredericktown Local Schools Board Room.

Trustees in attendance were: Matthew Crispin, Jeffrey Harris, James Hobson, and Joan Stout.

The monthly meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

Mr. Hobson welcomed those in attendance and began with a quote by Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Mr. Hobson opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes of the Foundation’s Monthly Meeting of March 3, 2016. Jim Wagner moved to approve the minutes and Chief Rick Lanuzza seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hobson turned the floor over to the attendees for community resource updates.

Bruce Snell noted the Village is focused on downtown revitalization. To that end, Fredericktown has recently acquired a parking lot on West First Street, next to Options Plus Furniture. This parking lot is in addition to similar parking available at College and Sandusky Streets. Further, the façade of a building downtown is being improved by Larry and Marsha Moore, in which they are making the building’s exterior appear as in its original state.

Police Chief Roger Brown stated that 134 calls for service had been received thus far in 2016, with five arrests in March. His department obtained funds to replace their meeting room furniture, and they used the recently donated neighborhood watch funding for training expenses. Upcoming events include the April 30 annual spring drug round-up at the police department and the National Night Out to occur this summer. Chief Brown then turned over the floor to Lt. Kyle Johnson, who advised the National Night Out has existed since 1984, and this year’s event, on August 2, will be its first in Fredericktown. As it is the first, Lt. Johnson noted they are still kicking around programming ideas, such as a car show, a DJ or live music, food vendors, first-responder equipment on display, and a dunking tank. For purposes of the event programming, Lt. Johnson noted they need volunteers to form committees; persons interested should let him know.

Rep. Ruhl noted the Ohio General Assembly is on hiatus. She has received two constituent requests for help recently. First, a local daycare lacks required certification and may have to reduce its number of children to six or less. Second, Rep. Ruhl has received a number of comments regarding the recently released State Report Card for schools districts in Knox County. Further, she has been told by the Centerburg Local Schools that the Report Card data are misleading.

Chief Lanuzza noted the EMS department is experiencing a decrease in runs, 56 in March. On June 11, the department will hold a community event, from 10am to 2pm, at Community Park; they also are looking at using a dunk tank, with proceeds to Interchurch Fredericktown. The Chief continued, noting the department received \$19,000 in donations to obtain heavy lift gurneys, which can handle up to 700 pounds.

Carol Grubaugh asked that individuals let the Knox County Chamber know of available commercial space, or to accept visits from Chamber staff members. Ms. Grubaugh noted that she often gets questions regarding space available in the community for businesses interested in the area. She further noted how important it is for space that is available to be properly advertised, with appropriate signage and contact information.

Katie Frazier noted that March 2016 was quiet for her group, too. Ten families had been served with financial aid via Interchurch-Fredericktown. She had 38 families receiving items from the food pantry. Ms. Frazier suggested the earned income tax credit may be helping families during this early part of the year, with activity to pick-up once those refunds are spent. Ms. Frazier further noted that a tree fell on their facility in the previous week, and it took out their phone and internet service. No further damage to the building was experienced.

From April to June, on the first Wednesday of each month, Ms. Frazier will be working with the Opportunity Knox mobile unit. Further, she has a job opening for a truck driver to obtain food from Mid-Ohio Food Bank on the south-side of Columbus; the job would be up to 25 hours per week, paying minimum wage, and would involve some heavy lifting.

Mr. Crispin provided a report on the Fredericktown Local Schools. He stated his bewilderment with the State Report Card data, particularly that of tracking students' growth. Mr. Crispin was involved with the Battelle for Kids data project for tracking student metrics, but he had reservations at that early stage with mathematically calculating students' directions. Because students do not grow uniformly. He stated the growth of students is important, but testing and comparing schools and teachers is problematic. To that point, testing starts in the following week for Fredericktown Local Schools. Graduation of the 2016 class occurs on May 20.

Mr. Wagner asked for a status on the availability of all-day kindergarten. Mr. Crispin noted the program is on-schedule, with the intended space to be inspected in July. Dan Humphrey asked if Mr. Crispin was suggesting that standardized testing, writ large, should be abandoned. Mr. Crispin replied that testing is good, but it is not helpful to have front-page newspaper coverage showing "F" grades to local schools. He noted the schools' need for social workers to assist with special needs, but he knows other social service agencies are strapped for resources, too.

Mr. Snell noted that after sending his children to school districts in southwestern Ohio, Fredericktown Local Schools are much better managed and produce better educational results. Rep. Ruhl stated that historically, school districts' grades were not widely distributed. But now they are made public and featured in media reports. Mr. Crispin stated that tracking student growth is important, but the "value-add" measurement is flawed; Worthington schools, his former district known for good education, also recorded "F" grades.

Mr. Harris gave updates on the Foundation's sister organization, the Area Development Foundation. First, the Ohio State University's Knowlton School of Architecture program featured 15 undergraduate students who focused on the health of Knox County's economy for their semester "studio" project. The students will present their findings in a final report to be delivered at the B&O Depot on April 25. [Editor's note: the final report, *Foundations for the Future*, has been published online at the following link: www.knoxadf.com/why-knox-county] Second, Mr. Harris continues to work with Siemens Energy given their announced elimination of 300 jobs at the complex in Mount Vernon. Third, Mr. Harris is helping coordinate the interest of a couple Knox County-based nonprofit organizations in a potential purchase of the Mount Vernon Academy's former boarding school property; he is reforming the county's Community Improvement Corporation, or CIC, to help in the endeavor.

Rep. Ruhl asked if Mr. Harris had spent any time on the Foote Foundry property in downtown Fredericktown. He responded that calls have been made to a brownfield expert in Ohio who focuses on locating former industrial properties for redevelopment.

Mr. Hobson initiated a discussion of a façade improvement-type program that could be employed by the Village for the downtown, central business district. Mr. Harris noted he was in receipt of an engagement letter from the Neighborhood Design Center, in the amount of \$10,000, to conduct a downtown assessment of the Village's central business district for purposes of the façade improvement initiative. That letter was made available to the attendees. Mr. Harris noted that AEP's "LEAP" program grant, up to \$10,000, could be helpful to cover that cost.

Mr. Hobson opened the floor to discussion. Mr. Wagner stated his opinion that this is a great idea, to improve the downtown of Fredericktown. He noted many owners are not motivated to invest in their buildings, as it stands today. Mr. Hobson responded, stating that downtown Fredericktown is not what the community wants it to be. The use of a grant and loan program, as Mr. Harris has described was used in Worthington, may be attractive enough to get buy-in from the building owners.

Mr. Wagner asked if any of the property owners downtown had been approached yet. Chief Brown noted that none of them were in attendance at this meeting. Mr. Hobson reiterated his desire to get downtown business and owners more involved in the community. Terry Divilbiss noted the success and popularity of Door 142 and Taste of Country, showing that new investments do help with employee recruitment and business volume.

Chief Lanuzza noted the Neighborhood Design Center's plan would be helpful to see how a revitalized downtown could look. Ms. Frazier agreed. Bruce Gregg noted the Neighborhood Design Center could help with the overall streetscapes plan, identifying those improvements that could be made by the Village, so that not all improvement responsibility lies on the backs of downtown building and business owners. Chief Brown noted it would be important for the Village to clean-up its own property, and make additional investments in the downtown. Mr. Hobson agreed, stating that building owners, when approached many years ago, saw the Village as not getting directly involved; it would be best if the owners saw cash being spent by the Village on the same project.

Aaron Veyon stated that a plan, with visuals, would be very helpful to the conversation with building owners and Village Council. Ms. Grubaugh noted that a good public relations campaign could be built from this effort, with events like Saturday Clean-Up Day to drive interest in the community. (Mr. Hobson noted that such a clean-up event in 2007 did not go as well as originally hoped.) Mr. Harris asked if there was enough interest to begin a fund-raising campaign to cover the cost of the Neighborhood Design Center; Mr. Hobson responded, yes, and he would begin coordinating communications on raising funds.

Mr. Hobson asked if there was interest in a series of Fredericktown Business Networking events. Chief Lanuzza noted it was a good idea. Mr. Hobson stated that businesses in the community may not have large marketing budgets; these events are a good way to cheaply build awareness. Ms. Grubaugh noted such events are great at getting unique, new visitors in to a business location. Perhaps, she asked, a quarterly business after-hours event could be attempted to gauge interest in the business community. Rep. Ruhl noted that Genoa Township has great success with these types of events, and perhaps even the FCDF's meetings could be moved around to different businesses.

Mr. Hobson asked for Officers' reports. Ms. Stout provided the attendees with two separate reports showing March financial activity for the Foundation; one report for the Foundation as a whole, and the other showing the Tourism Committee's activity. The Foundation holds a cash balance of \$2,324 and the Tourism Committee holds a balance of \$2,613, of which \$1,955 may be requested to help offset costs of the upcoming Quilt Show (including quilt racks, food and desserts, and \$300 in petty cash to have on-hand during the event).

Mr. Divelbiss moved to approve the release of \$1,955 to the Tourism Committee from its cash balance to assist with the Quilt Show. Rep. Ruhl seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wagner moved to accept the financial report as prepared. Chief Lanuzza seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Divelbiss noted that in 1976, the Fredericktown Bicentennial Quilt was well-received by the community. With the addition of new community assets, such as the gazebo, she will announce at the Quilt Show a new Fredericktown Quilt. This item will feature 30 blocks of 10 inch by 10 inch squares to celebrate Fredericktown.

There was a motion duly made to adjourn, which Mr. Hobson so did at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffry Harris
Secretary