

Chattahoochee Main Street – Monthly Meeting
February 23, 2015
6:30 pm

Executive Director’s Report

1. January 20 – Beth Kirkland, CEcD, consultant to the Gadsden County Development Council (GCDC) gave a presentation to the City Council to provide information on the GCDC’s strategic plan for 2015 and program of work.

Ms. Kirkland spoke about the county’s significant transportation assets, the New Markets Tax Credit Program, the dynamic process of creating a comprehensive economic development strategy, the GCDC’s Business Retention & Expansion program, development of a comprehensive workforce development strategy, establishment of an Industrial Development Advisory Council, the opening of the Port of Port St. Joe, etc. These are all positive strides that will have positive impacts for our area.

2. January 21 – Pam Medley and Ben Chandler met with David Gardner (Executive Director, Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce) and Robert Nixon (BRE Consultant to the GCDC) to follow-up on the network planning efforts between Chattahoochee Main Street and the Chamber of Commerce that were discussed at our January 12 meeting with the Chamber. We will plan to host the next Go-Gadsden Chamber event later in the spring. Also, we will co-host the celebratory showcase event of George Floyd’s paddlewheel boat when it arrives at the River Landing. More details to follow as they develop.
3. January 23 – First deliverable under the technical assistance grant was submitted to DEO. This deliverable consists of the public participation summary, a synthesis of all input received, and the strategic planning themes and overall goals. This is a 60+ page report documenting the process the community has participated in and includes information from the Florida Main Street Resource Team Visit. The report is available in digital format to anyone wanting a copy.

The next deliverable will be an initial draft strategic plan that will be submitted by mid-March to DEO for review and comment. Once DEO comments are received, a presentation will be requested to be made before the City Council in a public workshop.

4. January 26-27 – The Florida Main Street Quarterly Meeting was held in New Port Richey. The focus on this quarterly meeting was promotions, fundraising, and sponsorships. Terry Liggett and Mary Garcier attended representing Chattahoochee Main Street.
5. January 28 – Upon request of the Gadsden County Development Council, Mr. Chandler participated in the first meeting as a member of the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Consortium of the GCDC. This group is led by Mr. Robert Nixon and is comprised of key economic development stakeholders in Gadsden County with the focus being on business retention and expansion. Each municipality is represented. This program is designed to target existing businesses/business owners to meet with and interview to help understand their critical

needs and to help respond and identify resources needed to help resolve their critical issues. This effort is underway in our community.

6. January 30 – Mr. Chandler participated in a tele-conference with Enterprise Florida officials and members of the newly formed Industrial Development Advisory Council (IADC). Led by Beth Kirkland, the IADC serves to support the GCDC in identifying candidate properties for industrial development. Mr. Chandler has been appointed as a member of the IADC due to his certification as a professional planner.

Enterprise Florida has commissioned McCallum-Sweeney, a professional industrial site-location consulting firm, to conduct a study over a 23 county area in Florida to identify sites of 100-499 acres and sites over 500 acres that have access to rail, four-lane highways, interstates, and navigable waters. These sites range in terms of their state of preparedness for development. Some candidate sites are undeveloped tracts, some are ready for occupancy, and the rest are somewhere in between.

The outcome of this study found 119 sites in 19 counties (4 counties rendered no sites meeting the criteria). Of the 119 sites, 20 are located in Gadsden County. This report is anticipated to be officially released by Enterprise Florida in March or April. At that time we will be able to match up these potential sites with the sites already identified by the GCDC.

7. February 2 – CMS was notified by the Florida Main Street office that we were one of eighteen Florida Main Street communities so far (out of a total of 43 Florida Main Street communities) that has met the requirements for both state and national accreditation for 2015. We have received accreditation for each year of our existence.
8. February 2 – Mr. Chandler attended the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council (TDC) workshop. The TDC's consultant, Chisano Marketing Group, provided a presentation of the proposed strategic plan they prepared for the TDC. Among the issues they addressed included the concern of inadequate or non-existent signage throughout the county to help visitors find the downtown areas of each municipality as well as the locations of historic markers and places. These are issues that our community has concerns over as well. Going forward, this will be an issue that will require coordination between the county and the city.
9. February 3 – Mr. Robert Nixon, BRE Consultant to the Gadsden County Development Council (GCDC) gave a brief introduction and presentation to the City Council regarding the Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program and how these efforts will help provide immediate results and resources to local businesses. Future economic development will not succeed without improving the health of the local business community.

According to Opportunity Florida, 80% of new jobs are generated from existing businesses (in Gadsden County, approximately 90-95% of new jobs are created from existing businesses). In the economic development industry, it is repeatedly stated and emphasized that the best tool for business recruitment is a healthy and thriving business climate. The BRE Consortium helps open doors to resources to help existing business thrive.

Since its inception, Chattahoochee Main Street has continually provided information and updates at every monthly meeting and at each City Council meeting regarding the work being done throughout the county to promote economic development and how it will have direct positive impacts to Chattahoochee. Mr. Nixon's presentation to the City Council provided the details of how that work will be accomplished. The magnitude of the efforts currently underway on both a local and county-wide level have never before been initiated. The pathway to success is formidable and demands patience. These efforts will not succeed without full faith and support of the community and its civic leaders.

10. February 3 – CMS, in partnership with Laura Lee Corbett Consulting, was given the notice to proceed by the City of Chattahoochee to perform a Historic Resources Survey of pre-1970's structures through a grant the City received from the State of Florida's Bureau of Historic Preservation.

As was mentioned at the last meeting, Laura Lee Corbett is a historic preservation and downtown revitalization consultant. She is a Secretary of the Interior qualified Architectural Historian with 17 years of professional experience. She has successfully fulfilled the grant requirements associated with the type of historic structures survey that we will be conducting.

Chattahoochee Main Street is fortunate to have Ms. Corbett on our team. She is a great friend to our program and as a former Florida Main Street Coordinator, Ms. Corbett provided invaluable support to the City of Chattahoochee by speaking on our behalf during the presentation to the state for our application to receive the Florida Main Street designation.

She will be conducting a presentation and workshop at our next monthly meeting on March 23 to go into more detail about this historical survey.

Having a baseline historic structures survey will pave the way for our City to apply to become a Certified Local Government (CLG). Through the National Park Service (NPS) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Community certification opens doors to funding, technical assistance, and other preservation successes.

- **Funding:** States receive annual appropriations from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund. States are required to give at least 10% of their funding to CLGs as subgrants. These grants can fund a wide variety of projects including: surveys, National Register nominations, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies, etc.
- **Technical Assistance:** As a CLG, communities have direct access to SHPO staff for assistance with their commission, building assessments, surveys and nominations, and general preservation assistance. State staff and NPS offer regular training for CLGs as well, an added benefit of the partnership. Each SHPO has a designated CLG Coordinator (Florida's coordinator is Michael Zimney).
- **Sustainability:** Historic preservation has proven economic, environmental, and social benefits. Studies show that historic districts maintain higher property values, less population decline, more walkability and greater sense of community. All efforts must

have the community's long-term health as a priority. Quick fixes are not the answer and may be detrimental to the process.

Being a CLG demonstrates a community's commitment to saving what is important from the past for future generations. As a certified community it becomes easy to demonstrate a readiness to take on successful preservation projects, making our community able to compete for new opportunities.

11. February 4 – Mr. Chandler and Laura Lee Corbett met with officials at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to work on revising and specifying the scope of work for the historic structures survey to match the funding granted by the state to complete the survey. The original intent of the study was to survey all structures within the City Limits that pre-date 1970. However, there are significantly more structures within the City Limits that pre-date 1970 than the state anticipated, so it was agreed that the scope needed to be narrowed. It was agreed that up to 500 structures would be surveyed under the current agreement. In addition, state officials encouraged Chattahoochee to apply for additional grants to cover the remainder of the structures within the city, including Florida State Hospital.
12. February 4 – Karen Marsh and Mr. Chandler represented Chattahoochee Main Street in attendance at the Chamber of Commerce's most recent Go-Gadsden event held at Tri-Eagle Sales Distribution Center in Midway. This regularly scheduled meeting always serves as a very important county-wide networking opportunity for our community. State, county and local public officials are commonly present. It is vitally important for each municipality to be represented, as it is noticeable when there is no representation. As mentioned the next Go-Gadsden event will be held in Chattahoochee. Details will be provided once the event is planned.
13. February 6 – Mr. Chandler met with the County Property Appraiser (Clay VanLandingham and his staff) to obtain maps depicting Chattahoochee's City Limits to begin to delineate the area of focus for the historic structures survey. Up to 500 structures (excluding FSH properties) will be surveyed under the grant awarded to the city.
14. February 10 – Mr. Chandler attended and participated in the monthly GCDC business meeting representing Chattahoochee Main Street (CMS is formally recognized as an active stakeholder in the mission of the GCDC). A presentation was given by Tallahassee Community College to provide advertisement for the GCDC on new planned billboards on their property along the I-10 corridor. A variance or amendment to the county's ordinances will need to be granted as billboards are not currently allowed in the unincorporated areas of the county. This opportunity is going to be further explored by county planning staff.
15. February 10 – The first official meeting of the Industrial Development Advisory Council (IADC) was held and Mr. Chandler was present as an appointed member. The Council discussed the initial industrial sites that had been identified by the GCDC. We will be working with Enterprise Florida once the McCallum-Sweeney report is released to assist in providing the information needed to advance these sites for potential development. Any success of this effort will have a positive impact on the economic development efforts of our community. The long-term economic success of Chattahoochee is dependent upon the economic success of the region.

16. February 11 – Mr. Chandler met with Jason Johnson of Omega Technologies to review the structure of CMS's website and began the process of adding content. Once we have initial text content loaded, and Mr. Johnson's associates add the graphic features, we will officially launch the website. We anticipate launch in March.
17. February 12 – An invoice was submitted to Gadsden County to obtain the \$5,000.00 budget allocation to start the downtown Main Street banner program.
18. February 17 – Mr. Chandler met with two (2) prospects interested in opening a business in Chattahoochee. These meetings represent the first efforts of the BRE Consortium in Chattahoochee. To protect the confidential interests of these prospective businesses, information will be released as they allow.
19. February 17 – Mr. Chandler attended the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Workshop regarding the proposed ordinance establishing the Gadsden County Economic Development Grant Incentive Program Fund.

In the County's current budget, \$400,000.00 has been allocated for financial incentives to attract, retain, and encourage the expansion of select businesses which provide employment opportunities meeting certain thresholds. The proposed ordinance is designed to establish how prospective recipients qualify or are eligible for funding through the program. The BOCC will vote on this issue at a later date.

20. February 18 – Mr. Chandler, Robert Nixon (BRE Consultant to the GCDC), Joe Munroe (Quincy Main Street), and Regina Davis (Quincy Community Redevelopment Agency) met with representatives of Florida A&M's school of Construction Engineering & Technology about potential partnering with the university to help prepare graphic schemes and model renderings for downtown design. The potential of such a partnership will continue to be explored with Chattahoochee Main Street filtered through the GCDC.
21. February 18 – Laura Lee Corbett, Pam Medley, and Mr. Chandler conducted a "windshield survey" of Chattahoochee's City Limits to begin the process of delineating the boundaries of the historic structures inventory. As mentioned, the survey will consist of up to 500 structures under the current grant awarded to the City. We have been encouraged by the state to apply for additional grants through the Bureau of Historic Preservation to complete the remaining portions of the City Limits as well as the Florida State Hospital campus.
22. February 19 – Over 60 people were in attendance at the Arsenal for a book signing event to promote Dale Cox's new book, "Nicolls' Outpost." The CMS office will be receiving a new shipment of books and they will be available to the public for \$20 per copy.
23. February 19 – The Economic Restructuring Committee continues to meet in support of Chattahoochee Main Street and county-wide economic development efforts. The committee voted to have regularly scheduled meetings every 3rd Thursday of the month. Efforts are underway to formalize the Organization, Promotion and Design Committees as well.

24. February 20 – An invoice was submitted to the Department of Economic Opportunity to receive \$8,000.00 for the first scheduled deliverable consisting of the 3rd Community Visioning Workshop, held on December 8, and completion of the Strategic Community Visioning Summary document transmitted to DEO on January 23. The invoice was submitted after the deliverable was approved by DEO. CMS is now registered as a vendor with the State of Florida.
25. March 9-12 – The US Army Corps of Engineers, will be providing a tour of the Apalachicola/Chattahoochee/Flint River basin area for the new Commander of the South Atlantic Division, Brigadier General C. David Turner. The tour will start in Columbus, GA and visit Phenix City, AL; Eufaula, AL; Dothan, AL; Bainbridge, GA; Chattahoochee, FL; and Apalachicola, FL.
26. March 11 – The USACE tour is scheduled to be in Chattahoochee from 2:45-3:45 to tour the Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam before moving next to Apalachicola where they will have the opportunity to tour George Floyd's paddlewheel boat on March 12. This is a valuable opportunity for the City of Chattahoochee to participate.
27. March 23 – At the next CMS monthly meeting, CMS will be hosting a public workshop, led by Laura Lee Corbett, to provide information regarding the historic structures inventory that is currently underway.
28. March 30-April 2 – The 2015 National Main Street Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA.