

*Jerilee Hopkins*  
City Clerk



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**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**Monday, May 20, 2013**  
**MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Monday, May 20, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon, IL.

Mayor Mary Jane Chesley called the meeting to order.

The Invocation was given by Gene Tucker.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

City Clerk Jerilee Hopkins advised that she administered the Oath of Office to Council Member Dennis McEnaney in her office at City Hall on May 15, 2013. Council Member McEnaney was unable to attend the group swearing in held on May 6, 2013 during the Regular City Council Meeting.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call showed present: Council Members Ron Lash, Dennis McEnaney and Mayor Mary Jane Chesley. Council Members Todd Piper and David Wood were absent.

**PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS**

The Journals for the April 16, 2013 City Council Workshop Meeting, the April 29, 2013 Public Budget Hearing and City Council Workshop Meeting, the May 6, 2013 Regular City Council Meeting were presented to Council for any additions, deletions or corrections. **Council Member Lash made a motion to approve the Journal as presented. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED VOUCHERS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

The Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable were presented to Council for Approval. Council Member Dennis McEnaney asked City Manager Ron Neibert for an update on the following items: Item #7 Baxmeyer Construction - \$178,571.12 — Veterans/Davidson Roadway Extension. The project is expected to be complete not later than July. With good weather, it may be completed earlier. Mayor Chesley shared that she talked with the City Engineer and he noted that the roadway pavement is complete, the sidewalk construction is 80% complete, then they will work on landscaping and road striping. The contractor is hoping to have it completed in June. Item #14 Donald Hattendorf - \$1,590.00 — Reimbursement for Spillman Training Conference Registration for two people. Spillman is the internal police department software program. Item #21 Henry,

Meisenheimer & Gende - \$73,127.71 — 42<sup>nd</sup> Street road reconstruction (\$14,816.68) South 34<sup>th</sup> Street road reconstruction (Veterans-Harlan) (\$34,317.23) Lift Station 14 force main replacement (\$4,244.23) Water Distribution Modeling System (\$2,060.74) Veterans and Davidson roadway extension (\$16,299.84) North 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Old Union Road reconstruction (\$1,388.99). Neibert explained that 42<sup>nd</sup> Street is still under the design phase and construction is scheduled to start in the summer of 2014. South 34<sup>th</sup> Street is still under the design phase. Lift Station 14 force main replacement is still in the design phase. The water distribution modeling is complete. The Mayor reported on the Veterans and Davidson roadway extension. North 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Old Union Road reconstruction is in the design phase. Item #30 Moniger Excavating - \$281,819.57 — 34<sup>th</sup> Street South road reconstruction. The last phase of this project is being completed. According to the contract, the project should be complete in July. Item #38 Rollie Excavating - \$51,713.19 — Miscellaneous sidewalk repair in the City. This project should be complete by the end of July. Item #43 TEK Construction - \$43,589.10 — South 34<sup>th</sup> Street sewer project (Aquatic Facility). This is the sewer line extension from Harlan Road up to the Aquatic Center and is complete. Council Member Lash inquired about Item #19 FMG Architects - \$5,292.79 — Professional services on Aquatic Facility. Neibert noted that the Contractor is hoping for a July 4, 2013 opening. Item #23 Horner & Shifrin - \$2,085.00 — Reconstruction of Perkins Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The State of Illinois is currently working on land acquisition for this project.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$2,579,336.24. Seconded by Council Member Lash. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

#### BIDS & QUOTES

Nothing to present.

#### CITY MANAGER

City Manager Ron Neibert advised that this item is not on the agenda but he wanted to alert the public to a situation regarding the electrical aggregation program the City adopted. He asked the media to report that the public **will not** receive a phone call from the City's new supplier asking to sign up for their electrical aggregation services. Soon all Ameren customers will receive a letter in the mail informing customers of the aggregation process and telling customers what to do if they wish to "opt out" of the program and stay with Ameren. These customers have the right to go with any other electrical aggregation company of their choosing. Customers who wish to participate in the City aggregation program do nothing to partake. The new rates will go on the next billing cycle.

Council Member Lash inquired about how a customer opts into the program if they have already chosen an electrical aggregation program. If their contract has expired, they may contact Affordable Gas and Electric (AGE) to opt in. If their contract has not expired they should read their contract to make sure there is no penalty assessed if they choose to leave the contract early and go with another supplier.

#### CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney David Leggans presented for Council's consideration the first Reading on Ordinance Authorizing Amending Ordinance Regarding Number of Mt. Vernon Police Captains. Neibert explained because of the implementation of the 12 hour shifts in the patrol division this Ordinance will eliminate one captain position. Also, a captain recently retired and that vacancy will not be filled. The Department consists of 44 officers.

#### **FIRST READ**

City Attorney Howard presented for the Council's consideration a Resolution Approving an Agreement between the City of Mt. Vernon and the Mt. Vernon Festivals, Inc. Neibert explained with the recent acquisition of the old Illinois National Guard Amory, Festivals, Inc. desires to utilize the outside portion as a

location for Market Day events and other activities to be managed and operated by Festivals, Inc. Tourism Director Bonnie Jerdon and Carrie Lowery appeared before the Council.

Jerdon noted that applications for vendors to participate in the Market Day events are available at the Tourism Office and City Hall. A 12 x 12 ft. space rents for \$15.00 for each Saturday they participate. The events will begin on Saturday, June 8, 2013 and continue on the first Saturday of the month thereafter, running from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Jerdon noted that the not-for-profit group, Mt. Vernon Festivals, Inc., will purchase the liability insurance for the events.

Lowery stated that she represents the Mt. Vernon ongoing online rummage sale site that has over 4,000 members. She also started the Mt. Vernon online yard sale announcements page on Facebook. She stated that a few weeks ago she polled her membership as to whether they would participate in a monthly flea market at the Armory. She noted that 167 vendors advised they would participate in the market from time to time. The grass space in front of the Armory and the parking area immediately south of the Armory will be used as vendor space, consisting of approximately 100 booths. Lowery advised that DuQuoin holds a flea market on the first Sunday of every month. They reportedly attract between 40,000 and 60,000 people to their event so she is hoping to tap into that resource.

Jerdon also reminded the Council that many local artists have their wares available for sale at the Municipal West Building on Potomac Blvd. Recently the Downtown Mt. Vernon Development Corporation (DMDC) opened the Upstart Art Mart which contains the works of local artisans for sale. She also noted that the DMDC has an outdoor event downtown on the first Friday of the month highlighting local artists, musicians and vendors so that the Market Day will coincide with the DMDC event.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve the Resolution Approving the Agreement between the City of Mt. Vernon and Mt. Vernon Festivals, Inc. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

City Attorney Leggans presented for the Council's consideration a Resolution Approving Notice of Appointment of Authorized Agent Appointing Cheryl Conner, Director of Human Resources, as Authorized Agent for the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. This will allow Director Conner to act as the liaison between the City of Mt. Vernon and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund.

**Council Member Lash made a motion to approve the Resolution Approving Notice of Appointment of Authorized Agent Appointing Cheryl Conner, Director of Human Resources, as Authorized Agent for the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

City Attorney Leggans presented for the Council's consideration a Resolution Consenting to the Request of James J. Rozycki, Jr. to Grant a Mortgage to Texico Bank of his Lake Miller Leasehold Interest. He explained that the Rozycki's are refinancing their mortgage, and the Lake Miller lease requires the leaseholder to report this action to the City and to obtain the City's consent. The City Park Board approved this transaction. James Rozycki appeared before the Council to answer any questions.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve the Resolution Consenting to the Request of James J. Rozycki to Grant a Mortgage to Texico Bank of his Lake Miller Leasehold Interest. Seconded by Council Member Lash. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

City Attorney Leggans presented for the Council's consideration a Resolution Consenting to Assignment of Lake Jaycee Lease from Waqqas H. Khan to Christopher and Pamela Michel and Consent to Mortgage by Michel to Community First Bank of the Heartland. He explained that the Michel's are acquiring the Khan lease and financing the purchase of the mortgage from the Community First Bank of the Heartland. David Parker, a

broker with Caldwell Banker Realty, appeared before the Council. The City Park Board approved this transaction.

**Council Member Lash made a motion to approve a Resolution Consenting to the Assignment of Lake Jaycee Lease from Waqqas H. Khan to Christopher and Pamela Michel and Consent to Mortgage by Michel to Community First Bank of the Heartland. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

City Attorney Leggans presented for the Council's consideration a Resolution Establishing a Time and Place for a Public Hearing to Consider the 2013 Amendment to the Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment Plan and Project for the Industrial Park Conservation Area. City Manager Neibert noted that the Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment Plan does not include residential development. In light of the proposed residential development project by RJ3A in the Industrial Park Conservation Area TIF district, it is necessary for the City to amend the Redevelopment Plan to include certain properties in the TIF District. This Resolution will establish July 15, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, as the time and place for the Public Hearing to consider the proposed 2013 Amendment to the TIF Redevelopment Plan and project for the Industrial Park Conservation Area.

**Council Member Lash made a motion to approve a Resolution Establishing a Time and Place for a Public Hearing to Consider the 2013 Amendment to the Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment Plan and Project for the Industrial Park Conservation Area. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

City Attorney Leggans presented for the Council's consideration an Inducement Resolution with Russell Brown Regarding 114-116 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street (old B & B building) located within the Downtown TIF District.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve an Inducement Resolution with Russell Brown Regarding 114-116 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street located within the Downtown TIF District. Seconded by Council Member Lash. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

City Attorney Leggans presented for the Council's consideration an Inducement Resolution with Toni Federici Regarding 916 Main Street located within the Downtown TIF District. Ms. Federici plans to return the façade of the building back to its original historic appearance.

**Council Member Lash made a motion to approve an Inducement Resolution with Toni Federici Regarding 916 Main Street located within the Downtown TIF District. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

#### **MAYOR**

Mayor Mary Jane Chesley requested the Re-appointment of Glenda Eubanks and the appointment of Sheila Jolly-Scrivner (replacing Bill Short) and Mike Carbonaro (replacing Debbie Green) to the Mt. Vernon Tourism Advisory Board.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Glenda Eubanks and the appointment of Sheila Jolly-Scrivner and Mike Carbonaro to the Mt. Vernon Tourism Advisory Board. Seconded by Council Member Lash. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

Mayor requested the appointment of Joe Bob Pierce (replacing Galen Monk) to the Airport Authority Commission. Joe Bob Pierce previously served on the Airport Authority Commission representing Jefferson County.

**Council Member Lash made a motion to approve the appointment of Jo Bob Pierce to the Airport Authority Commission. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

Mayor Chesley requested the appointment of James Wood (replacing Wendell Yaegar) to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve the appointment of James Wood to the Mt. Vernon Planning & Zoning Commission. Seconded by Council Member Lash. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

Mayor Chesley requested the appointment of Paul Lynch (replacing Doug Hoffmann) to the TIF Joint Review Board. City Manager Neibert noted there is one TIF Advisory Committee but there are four TIF Joint Review Boards that represent each of four (4) districts. He asked that the motion be amended to read Boards. Neibert reported that the Joint Review Boards are statutorily required and include representatives from all the taxing districts impacted within the boundaries of a particular TIF District. Their function is to review proposed redevelopment plans and/or amendments to redevelopment plans and to make a recommendation to the Council whether or not it is consistent with the TIF Act. The Joint Review Board for this district will be meeting in a couple of months to review the Council's proposed amendment, and they will make a recommendation. The second function of the Joint Review Board is to annually review the activities of the TIF Districts and to report back to the Council on whether the TIF Districts are meeting their goals and objectives as outlined in the Redevelopment Plans.

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to approve the appointment of Paul Lynch to the TIF Joint Review Boards. Seconded by Council Member Lash. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

Mayor requested the Re-appointment of Teri Clark and Bernard Dickneite and the Appointment of Sandra Williams to the Park Board.

**Council Member Lash made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Teri Clark and Bernard Dickneite and the appointment of Sandra Williams to the Park Board. Seconded by Council Member McEnaney. Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

Council Member McEnaney thanked the Mayor for her diligence and careful consideration of each of the various board members she recruits.

Mayor Chesley informed the Council about second and third grade students at the Primary Center participating in a competition with eight City employees in the Race to Chicago, a walking program funded by the Safe Routes to School grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation. This is the third year for the \$3,000.00 grant which provides pedometers, tokens for motivation and a pizza party for the winning class. The two winning classes walked 260 miles during their physical education classes.

A new City certified summer youth program focusing on fitness entitled Stepping Out for Fitness is being funded with proceeds from the Video Gaming terminals installed in some local businesses. The dates are May 22 through June 22 at the Park Office for children from 7 to 12 years of age to walk during the summer. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and all miles walked must be walked in Veterans Park. Children will receive a pedometer to keep track of the miles walked and return the pedometer to the Park Office at the end of the day. Awards and prizes (various gift cards) will be given to all achieving the goal of 30 miles in 30 days. The boy and girl winning the contest will have a choice of one swimming scholarship or a one-day family pass at the Aquatic Zoo.

On June 24-July 23 another City certified summer youth program entitled Peddling for Fitness will be held for children 9 to 14 years of age. The goal is to bicycle 150 miles in 30 days. Registration is at the Park Office. Odometers will be used and each participant must sign a pledge that they are putting the miles on the bike and must be accompanied by an adult. Awards and prizes (various gift cards) will be given to all achieving the goal. The grand prize winning boy and girl will be awarded new bicycles. This program is also funded with proceeds from the Video Gaming Terminals in the City.

The new west pavilion is almost complete. The work is being performed by Parks and Recreation Staff. A ribbon cutting will be scheduled in the near future.

### **CITY COUNCIL**

No comments were made by Council Members.

### **VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

Cyndi Mitchell, Director of Downtown Mt. Vernon Development Corporation, made a presentation to the Council regarding the accomplishments DMDC has made in recent years. A copy of her report is attached to these minutes. Mayor Chesley, Council Member McEnaney and Council Member Lash thanked Cyndi and the DMDC Board for their work and dedication to downtown Mt. Vernon.

Jon and Sarah Henninger, of 512 N. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon, appeared before the Council to discuss the wall in front of their home on North 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. Jon noted that they previously met with Mayor Chesley and City Manager Neibert, and they stated that the City has no responsibility regarding the wall. After researching the issue, the Henninger's believe it is the City's sole responsibility. They have several other points to bring to the Council and Neibert. At the time the Henninger's purchased the home the leaning wall was listed on the home inspection. Gary Isle, an engineer, performed the home inspection and the leaning wall was a concern for him. He advised the Henninger's that the wall should be fixed and stated that it will be a problem in the future. At that time, the Henninger's met with their realtor and he contacted the broker, Dorothy Wood. She assured them that the wall was the City's responsibility after verifying that fact with City officials. As time passes, the wall is leaning more and the Henninger's believe the wall is a safety risk. They stated that at least 100 people a day walk passed their home and the leaning wall. It is a matter of time before the wall causes a much bigger problem than it is causing now. Obviously, the wall is a huge liability on somebody and should be taken care of before the worse-case scenario occurs.

Sarah Henninger noted that in April 2010 they had a water leak in their yard and she spoke to then City Engineer John Porter about the City's right-of-way. Porter assured her that the wall was the City's responsibility. He stated if the wall were to fall the City would be responsible for cleaning it up. She asked about the specific rights-of-way on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. Porter assured her that he didn't need to look at those. He knew where the wall falls and the wall is on the City's right-of-way. Mrs. Henninger noted that she previously worked in human resources and her job was proper documentation of dates, times and facts. She noted that she spoke with Porter in the afternoon at 4:30 p.m. in April, 2010.

Jon Henninger noted that there has been conversation about a water leak in their yard causing the wall to lean. They bought the house in 2009. The wall was already leaning. The water bills were fine for a year but in 2010 the water bills escalated to \$200, \$300, \$400 per month. A plumber was called in to repair a broken water pipe near the wall. He was afraid to put a backhoe near the wall for fear that it would fall and then the City would blame the plumber for the falling wall. Chris Ford fixed the leak and gave a professional opinion that the leaning wall caused their water pipe to break.

Sarah Henninger noted that the City Attorney produced a waiver that waives the City's responsibility to the wall. Realtor Dorothy Wood searched the original documentation on the home and did not find a waiver for

the original owners, the Stewarts. Dorothy Wood lived in this house in years' past and never received a waiver that the City is talking about. Neither did the previous owners of the home. She is willing to speak on the Henninger's behalf. There was a temporary construction easement waiver. The Henninger's spoke with two attorneys. One is a construction law specialist who says that a temporary construction easement waiver applies only to the City leaving ruts in your yard or knocking down a tree or something happening during the construction process. It does not exempt the City from responsibility, indefinitely, from a wall they built on their property with their money and resources. According to the attorneys should there be a waiver signed by the original homeowners that would apply to them and any successive homeowners that waiver would be filed by the City, entered as a disclosure and flagged in any title work, title insurance and follow the property for the rest of its' life. There is no documentation of that waiver following the house as a permanent exemption for the City.

Jon Henninger noted that the wall lies 23 feet off the center line and the City's right-of-way lies 25 feet off the center line. For many years, City employees have been monitoring the wall, measuring and documenting the wall's position. Why would the City use City money, time and employees to monitor something they don't own? Obviously, from information they have gathered, they believe the City-built wall built is the City's responsibility.

The Henninger's commented they don't want to be difficult, but they want the City to do something about the leaning wall.

City Attorney Leggans noted he received correspondence from the Henninger's attorney in October, 2010. Attorney Leggans responded to that correspondence. Mayor Chesley advised that the Henninger's met with the Mayor and City Manager Neibert on May 10, 2013 going over the issue point by point.

Sarah Henninger noted that City officials have been measuring the wall. Matt Fauss has been to their property to measure the wall. City Manager Neibert advised that the City monitors lots of things in the City that aren't necessarily the City's property, i.e. other dangerous structures in the City such as homes, walls, trees, because of the health and safety issues of the citizens. Mayor Chesley noted that it's not just the Henninger's wall that is being monitored by the City, but many other things throughout the City are monitored for the safety of our citizens. The Henninger's asked the Council to name another structure that is monitored by the City, built by the City, on the City's property, with City time and money that doesn't belong to the City. They also have statements from two engineers stating that the wall was not constructed properly. The Henninger's ask that the issue be resolved so no one gets hurt. They aren't difficult people. They asked the City Attorney to explain his comment about "the rest of the story." Attorney Leggans stated he didn't want to argue with the Henninger's. Mayor Chesley stated that the Henninger's presented their information and their side of the situation. The Henninger's asked for feedback from the Council. Council Member McEnaney commented that the Henninger's presented a lot of information tonight. He suggested they put the information on paper and submit it to the Council. Council Member McEnaney previously reviewed the City Attorney's file on the subject. He advised this meeting isn't the forum in which to resolve the issue. After the City receives the Henninger's summary then the City will officially respond to them. The Henninger's noted that the statute of limitations will expire soon. Council Member McEnaney drove by the location of the wall and acknowledged that it is leaning. McEnaney also wants to see any documentation in dealing with the City Engineer John Porter, and more facts on the situation. Mrs. Henninger will email their summary to all the members of the Council including the Mayor and City Manager.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No Executive Session was held.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Council Member McEnaney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Lash.  
Yeas: Lash, McEnaney and Chesley. Absent: Piper and Wood.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerilee Hopkins  
City Clerk

Attachment

New Chapter for DMDC  
Cyndy Mitchell, Executive Director DMDC

5/20/2013

As Downtown Mt Vernon Development Corporation closes a chapter as an advisory organization to Special Service Area #1 and embarks on a new chapter with the city, I would like to report to you and the community the accomplishments DMDC has made in recent years.

### Strategic Plan

I started working for DMDC in March, 2002 and was immediately impressed by the new board with their far-sighted vision and progressive views of revitalizing the downtown district. Their first action was to develop a strategic plan from which they created a mission statement: to revitalize and maintain the downtown district as a commercial and cultural center of the local and regional community. They then determined two major goals: to encourage the renovation and preservation of downtown buildings and to promote economic development and growth. They realized to attract the kind of businesses they wanted downtown the buildings needed to be improved upon.

Therefore, they established the Renovation and Assistance Program or RAP. It was an incentive program for renovation and facade improvements to downtown buildings and rental assistance. Between 2002 and 2007 thirteen buildings were totally renovated. Some examples were The Rex, Eight Ball Billiards Hall, 9<sup>th</sup> Street Apartments and Jefferson State Bank Building. The property owners who renovated these buildings received only \$5000 for spending \$25,000 or more on their projects. Some spent \$400,000- \$700,000 on renovation. During that time, three new buildings were constructed. They all believed in our mission to revitalize downtown. In that same time period, there were also 23 facade improvements which enhanced and preserved buildings through tuck-pointing, painting and roof repair to name a few. And the rental incentive attracted businesses downtown. Some stayed, some closed and some moved, but we always showed a gain every year.

When I began working for DMDC, the community's perception of downtown was that there was nothing to do and it was dying. At the same time, there were a group of people who came downtown once or twice a week and thought it was silly to even invest money in the district- that it would never improve. However, five years later that same group was impressed by all that had been accomplished and supported what DMDC was doing. We changed people's perception of downtown. They started looking at it more positively.

### We introduced events

#### Cruise In

In 2002 DMDC sponsored their first Cruise In to bring people downtown to see what was happening and to shop the stores.

### Downtown After 5

In 2006, DMDC sponsored the first Downtown After 5 event and tour to highlight the renovation of downtown buildings. Seven of the eight years of DA 5 events included tours of newly renovated buildings.

### Other events

In 2011 DMDC introduced the Downtown Lowdowns which was open to the community to inform them of what was happening downtown.

In 2012 they introduced First Fridays which is a festival of artists, musicians, etc. along the 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. In addition to bringing people downtown it celebrated the large artist community in Mt. Vernon and Jefferson County- A festival city and creativity Redefined.

### Illinois Main Street

DMDC became an Illinois Main Street in 2005 and won two state wide awards for building renovations.

### Master Plan

As a result of the Strategic Plan, the board hired architects to develop a master plan which has been a guide for the visual enhancement of downtown. In addition to building renovation, DMDC realized the importance of SPECIAL streetscape projects.

### Streetscape Enhancement

We learned about the ITEP Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant for streetscape enhancements from I MS. Through the generous donation of a volunteer's time and talent who spent many hours preparing the grant and the support of the city, Mt. Vernon received the funding. The result was the Main Street streetscape. And today we are seeing the implementation of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor which is the second successful streetscape grant we prepared and the city received.

### TIF

In 2008, thanks to the city adopting the Downtown TIF, as we all know, downtown building renovation took off and we see the results of many more beautiful buildings. And the downtown was ready with the groundwork that the DMDC board laid from 2002-2007.

To fast forward, today we have three new local restaurants opening in downtown this year, DMDC is sponsoring an economic incubator Upstart Art Mart, a venue for area artists to show and sale their works- Creativity Redefined. A new gift shop, 4 Ever Gifts is opening two doors down from the Art Mart. In fact, they chose that location because they wanted to be located near the Mart. There is a florist next door and an art gallery located

on the corner will be open this summer. That is in addition to other businesses that have opened downtown in recent years. I am receiving calls of local businesses that are looking for downtown spaces and am optimistic about future businesses.

I'm here tonight to commend the DMDC officers and active board members and volunteers who have given their time, talent and commitment to making downtown what it is today and will become in the future. They believed in our mission and were tenacious about obtaining our goals. It has been a slow progress, but we always moved forward. These are all working men and women who have given their free time to make a difference in the quality of our community. Each president I worked under came at a time when their talents were needed. In order they were Robin Hensley, Jay Koch, Brian Edmison, Rex Cusumano, Doug Hoffman and Laura Thacker. Again, I want to thank them and all the volunteers who have and are helping make downtown, the heart and soul of our community, the best downtown in southern Illinois.

Having said all of this, I want to thank you- the city council- for all of your support- for believing in the DMDC mission and goals. You have been instrumental in the success of downtown. Our mission and goals could not have happened without your support and commitment to downtown revitalization. Improving the quality of life in our community depends on collaboration between the city, DMDC and the people throughout the community who want to make a difference.

As DMDC enters this new chapter with the city we will expand our boundaries and continue our mission to promote economic growth, encourage restoration and market our new enlarged downtown district.

A viable and active downtown reflects the quality of life in the community and pride in their town.

Thank you again for your support and we look forward to working with you as we move forward to a greater future for downtown.