

SPOTLIGHT



Main Street Area Association Board members include back row left to right - Faye Wolke, Tim Meehan, Sherry Hoskins, Todd Fowler and front row left to right - Kym McCaughey, Nancy Bruns, Ann Bressler and Karen Underwood Kramer. Not pictured are Steve Schnabl and Mary Fran Peipmeier.

Main Street - What Do We Do?

Many Hamiltonians remember the Main Street business district in the "good old days" when Main Street was filled with quaint family-owned specialty shops selling a wonderful variety of clothing, shoes, toys, gifts, meats, flowers and much more. There were malls in the area, but, the quality of the goods sold on Main Street was much better.

Today it seems that most of the specialty shops have closed both on Hamilton's Main Street and in other city downtowns. A common theme amongst city planners is "revitalizing downtowns." It sounds like an easy concept to plan but is actually more difficult to achieve.

The Main Street Area Association (MSAA) includes a group of business and property owners who are interested in continuing to improve the district.

Obstacles to overcome seem to be landlords that maintain substandard housing which attracts undesirable tenants, an increase in petty crime, the perceived lack of parking, and the inability to find new businesses to fill vacant storefronts. MSAA has a good vision for Main Street, but, the process is sometimes complicated to achieve those goals.

MSAA has a dynamic group of board members this year. Meetings are filled with positive ideas and plans to accomplish them. Several years ago, a comprehensive plan was created by a consultant for the district. The Board is committed to implementing parts of the plan in a gradual and continual process. One of the goals was to create a

farmer's market at Armstead Park which was successfully organized last year. Other plans include updated street "furnishings" such as trash cans, benches and planters and the replacement of the brick crosswalks with a more durable and less bumpy alternative. These projects are in the works and are awaiting approved funding through the city's Community Development Block Grant program.

Armstead Park was a wonderful project completed by MSAA several years ago.

The park was purchased and renovated entirely with donated funds and is currently owned by MSAA. We are trying to do the same with the other former gas station in the district, but, the process is lengthy.

Main Street has the potential to revitalize once again and the MSAA Board is committed to that vision. Please help in any way you can. Visit the farmer's market each Thursday evening from 3:00-7:00 PM at Armstead Park on the corner of Main and "D" Streets.

Also, consider joining the "Friends of the Main Street Marketplace" - a group of people who are supporting the market and the vision for Main Street through their donations. Membership is \$35 for an individual and \$50 for a family. Membership information is available at the Market Manager's booth.

Together, the citizens of Hamilton and the Board of the Main Street Area Association can work to return our Main Street district to its former success.