

Portage County Bicentennial Committee July 13, 2005 - Minutes

Attendance

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. Those in attendance included: Chuck Keiper (Portage County); Mark Cheplowitz (Chairman); Kerry Macomber (Portage County); Jim Conley (Atwater Twp); Tom Repcik (Edinburg Twp); Bill McDowell (Freedom Twp); Mr. & Mrs. Nick Ehlert (Mantua Twp); Mr. & Mrs. Vechter (Palmyra Twp); Becky Carter (Randolph Twp); Dorothy Caldwell (Shalersville Twp); Ron Mischler (Suffield Township); Brian Miller (Windham Twp); Teri Eierman (Village of Garrettsville); Roger Cram (Village of Hiram); Mary Pallone (Village of Mantua); Rita Nieman (Sugar Bush Knolls); George Horvat (Aurora)

Welcome

Commissioner Keiper welcomed the members of the Bicentennial Committee and expressed his appreciation, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, for the effort that each will bring in preparing for this momentous occasion. He introduced Mark Cheplowitz, who will guide the Committee through this process, and encouraged input from each member to ensure each community is represented during the celebration.

Portage County Bicentennial PowerPoint Presentation

Mr. Cheplowitz described the steps in developing a timeframe for celebrating the bicentennial and explained how budgeting can be accomplished. He discussed how for these types of events and celebration can take many forms including a legacy project – leaving something behind or how it could be approached as an economic development tool such as marketing Portage County. The purpose of the Bicentennial Committee is to ensure that each community has input into the final outcome and events that will mark the County's Bicentennial on June 9, 2008. Areas discussed included:

☆ Events

The committee agreed there should be multiple events held throughout the year in each community. Examples included a kick-off gala; sports events; and a birthday party finale with a simultaneous event such as bell-ringing or siren sounding throughout the county. Starting next year, the bicentennial committee should have a presence at each community's unique celebration (i.e., Mantua's Potato Festival; Herman's Pickles in Garrettsville; Deerfield's Apple Butter, etc.) to promote and to gain interest. This could be accomplished with a mobile kiosk for distributing literature and promoting fund raising activities.

☆ Funding

Ideas for funding the Bicentennial celebration included soliciting and recruiting corporate sponsors, selling advertisement opportunities; and organizing local projects such as spaghetti dinners and brick-by-brick campaigns. It was also suggested that the local political subdivisions could be asked to support the necessary infrastructure of events such as the security and restroom facilities.

Each community representative was asked to bring a list of their community's businesses to the next meeting. Packets will be developed to sell project to corporate sponsors beginning August and September, 2006 to secure funding.

☆ **Mission Statement**

The beginning discussion of developing a mission statement identified that this event is "for the citizens of Portage County – past, present and future." It was agreed the mission statement should focus on unity, awareness, education, and diversity. It will be used to build awareness and to sell this project to corporate sponsors. Ideas for the mission statement included highlighting the county's:

- Diversity through religions, resident's racial heritages, the employers, and educational institutions;
- Economic Development Features: transportation hub – crossroads, attract new industry by celebrating future job potentials, or feature the balance of land use preferences with rural setting and limited growth; and/or
- Historical significance and traditions.

Mr. Cheplowitz and Kerry Macomber will draft several mission statements for the Committee's review at the next meeting.

Committees

Mr. Cheplowitz asked members to select a committee that they could commit to serving on and then begin to build their committees by identifying friends and neighbors that could serve as well. Each committee will need an effective chair person to coordinate that committees' responsibility throughout the events of 2007 and 2008. For example, the Food Committee Chairman will be responsible for approaching a sponsor or soliciting a Request for Proposals once all food orders have been determined, which will provide the Food Chair with the buying power of a full year of events and activities.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held August 10, 2005, at 6:00 p.m. at the Coleman Professional Services Sue Hetrick Building at 3922 Lovers Lane, Ravenna OH 44266, which is located behind the Robinson Memorial Hospital.

Each member should bring from their community:

1. a listing of community businesses (name, address, contact information);
2. committee selection and names of potential individuals to serve;
3. sponsorship ideas;
4. contact name and information for their community's special events.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Macomber