

## **AQCA Monthly Membership Meeting Notes**

Thursday, February 21, 2008, 7:00pm (Classical Condos)

### **Guest speaker:**

Brian Connors, Deputy Director of Economic Development, City of Springfield

Carol Costa, newly elected Co-President of AQCA, called the meeting to order and apologized for the confusing notices in the Republican, which falsely advertised that representatives from Neal's and Petrolatti's office would be at this month's meeting.

Carol called for everyone's continued involvement in AQCA this year and noted the upcoming "Keep Springfield Beautiful" event this spring, as well as the May 17th Pancake Breakfast, and the Summer Concert Series.

Carol also mentioned the February 28th liquor commission meeting, at which a transfer of management for the Chestnut St. liquor store will be discussed.

The subject of graffiti was also raised - there has been more in the neighborhood lately, and people are encouraged to report it via the City's website (see link on the Office of Housing page). Carol introduced Brian Connors, who came to Springfield from Lowell, where he was the chief planner, playing a large role in the turnaround of that city's downtown. She praised his job-to-date in Springfield, and thanked him especially for his responsiveness to phone calls and emails from the public.

Brian can be reached at 787-6664 or [bconnors@springfieldcityhall.com](mailto:bconnors@springfieldcityhall.com)

Visit the Office of Planning and Economic Development online at: [www.springfieldcityhall.com/planning/](http://www.springfieldcityhall.com/planning/)

Please see attached meeting outline, which was provided by Brian. These are some additional notes which were discussed for each point:

1. Court Square (currently owned by the City) - Exciting proposals for this property have been received, despite the poor real estate market. Adjacent property (104-108 State St.), also owned by the City, is slated for demolition, to create parking.
2. Main Street - Downtown lighting improvements should be done by the end of March.
3. State Street - 143 State Street (Epiphany Tower) hotel project is almost totally approved.
4. Downtown Office - hope that the old Federal Building will be turned over to the City... people are working on this every day, trying to prevent it from becoming vacant.
5. Downtown Retail - Needs assessments have shown that before major work can go into attracting businesses, a better plan for safety and cleanliness needs to be in place. The City is

limited in its ability to give grants to attract business, because of past corruption. However, there is a \$5,000 grant opportunity from the Chamber of Commerce, for businesses going into empty storefronts. Birnie Building still working on finance for mixed-use redevelopment.

6. Downtown Parking - important focus, as parking often creates the first impression of the City for visitors.

7. Riverfront - lots of interest in the York St. Jail site. ONYX Restaurant opening in March. LA Fitness following soon after.

8. Other items - Major new "top secret" office tenant [Liberty Mutual announced last week]. People are encouraged to contact the new Office of the Governor for progress/info. about Tech High.

**Next monthly meeting** will be Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm, location TBA.

Notes submitted by Anna Brandenburg, AQCA Secretary