

SABA
December 6, 2006
Business Meeting - 8:30 A.M.
Saugatuck City Hall
Julie Abel, Recording Secretary
Angela Holmes, Co-President - Chaired Meeting

Board Members Present: Julie Abel, Angela Holmes, Pat Lion, Kerry O'Donohue, Frank Rojek, Rosalie Yaksic, Scot Eilbes, Fred Schmidt

Board Members Absent: Lisa Lungaro (Ill), Bill Galligan, Marilyn Starring, Fred Weber

SABA Members and Guests Present: John Thomas (Thomas Greene), Susan Smith (designsmith), Dian Taylor (Silverberry), Rick Vorel (Turning Point Realty), Sandra Randolph (Good Goods), Holly Hughes (The Commercial Record), James Brandess (James Brandess Studios Inc), Marsha Burd (Saugatuck Traders), Steve Williford (Massage by Steve), Sherrie and Jose Santos (Caribbean Colors & Nostalgia)

Meeting called to order at 8:34am

Introductions of Board and Guests.

Approval of November 2006 Secretary's Minutes. Motion by F. Rojek to approve the minutes. S. Eilbes second. Motion passed.

Treasurers Report. K. O'Donohue reported. The Christmas carriage bill of \$1,050 was paid. Some money was spent for the Holiday Social. We've collected \$350 in membership dues so far. That's about it since our fiscal year ended October 1. F. Rojek moved to approve the report. S. Eilbes second. Motion passed.

Presentation on proposal for Community Map by Susan Smith of designsmith.

F. Schmidt introduced S. Smith. R. Vorel initiated the map project. The intent was to perhaps create a mall-like map to put in locations around the towns. We also discussed having a tear-out sheet with a replica of the map. F. Schmidt asked S. Smith to prepare a proposal for making this happen. There are various options to consider. F. Schmidt also looked briefly into getting a display case on the Drug Store wall and overlay over the existing map. There is a guy in town who's an excellent woodworker. F. Schmidt would like to entice him into building one that's in character with the town and easily passed by the Historical Society. J. Abel clarified that we had not decided to post the map on the Drug Store wall but were considering other locations.

S. Smith introduced herself further explaining that she's been a graphic designer for over 20 years. She created our new SABA logo. Her proposal was distributed to the board. She started with a worse case scenario. 4 color at 3.5' x 5' in a wall mounted display

case that allows us to go in and update periodically. Most of work is in the creation of the map. Because it's so large, we can't start with a map we already have. It's a 15 to 30 hours scenario depending on the complexity of the map (icons for landmarks, etc). SABA gets her special discount rate. Also looked at maintenance issues wherein she took more of a reduction. She doesn't know exactly how many hours that will take so it was presented at a straight hourly rate.

Next, she discussed the map tear-off. It would be a reproduction of the large map with a legend that indicates the stores so people know where to find merchants. The Douglas map may be put on the back or just text or more descriptions. The schedule is on page 2 of the proposal. She would need to start the preliminary design development map immediately after the first of the year. Then after the SABA brochure information is due, it can be completed in time for the April Spring Kick-off event. For the map itself – quoting 4 color with high gloss and laminated – due to condensation, etc. For the Tear-off, she's assuming black and white at either 100 sheets per pad or 50 sheets per pad. In addition to display case, costs range from \$1,500 up depending on what case we want.

J. Thomas had a question for the board about Douglas. A. Holmes explained that our plan is to do a map for both Saugatuck and Douglas. The idea was that if we could reprint it on a cheaper paper, then we can add new businesses that joined during the year. F. Schmidt added that this project isn't in the budget so if we have to break this into pieces. If we could do all, we'd do the Saugatuck and Douglas and area map right away. We would have every SABA member on the maps. Then, we have to think about tear-off sheets. A wall map is up to \$2,000. The marquee in front of the SCA cost \$5,000. If you mount it on the wall and don't light it it's a lot less. We're talking about \$5,000 just for one map. We could start with Douglas since the map will be less complex. This has to be decided.

S. Smith said that the actual production is not that extreme but the time and cost is more on the creative side. Once we have the map, it'll be easy to add businesses. We want to design it for the most leeway. S. Smith said this project has legs. It gives the merchants support and can be used in other applications. This is a huge marketing effort.

S. Randolph asked about the procedure to talk about all the store owners who want to participate in the map project. Some stores may want to join to be part of it or you can charge to be on the map. A. Holmes explained that to do this we'll have to go to both city councils to get it approved as well. If it's financially viable, it's another reason for people to join us. F. Schmidt said he wanted to have this up by the Spring Kick-off but that's not locked in concrete. That being said, the board has been pushing that this should be a motivator for more businesses to join SABA.

James Brandess asked about breaking it into pieces - like starting with the tear-off map and posting that somewhere. S. Smith said the tear-off isn't a big deal because the initial design work has to be done first. A. Holmes said that we're trying to respond to people who haven't joined because they missed the publication date to be in our brochure. This is an excellent reason to join at any time of the year.

A member asked if SABA has a procedure in place to contact a new business. F. Schmidt said they get a packet with information on how to apply to SABA when they apply for a business license. If you email any new businesses to F. Schmidt at info@saugatuckdouglas.com then, as a board, we'll go and talk to people directly. D. Taylor said she's been here for almost a year and didn't get a packet. She said that she was attending this meeting to find out what SABA is all about. A. Holmes discussed the great SABA website but explained that we will be talking to people directly. Our list of accomplishments is really eye opening. A. Holmes said that we're hoping that we'll make you proud to be a SABA member so you'll tell someone else about us and grow the membership that way.

S. Smith asked to go through other ideas for the map's usability. If it's laminated we can show all the stores but just laminate the member stores in color and identify them in the legend. The list could be a black and white insert that can be updated easily. S. Randolph said that we used to have a beautiful map with the drawing in it. S. Smith explained that this map can be kept simple but she could also do design enhancements around it. F. Rojek asked about selling advertising on it. S. Smith said that we need to think about time frame and how long the advertising would be good. The map's change out would then be scheduled along with that. R. Yaksic said there had been discussion about getting an underwriter to create the kiosks. That would be a permanent fixture on the kiosk. F. Rojek asked about the map vs. the brochure. What about making the tear-off an insert in the brochure. F. Schmidt said that could be done but it's a question of when. The map space in the brochure right now is pretty small. The map will be 8.5" x 11". S. Smith said that with the brochure, you're printing more vs. 50 to 100 sheets per pad. It's proposed that 150 packets be printed initially to see how it goes.

A 3.5' x 5' map with an original illustration plus design embellishment is what we're talking about. R. Yaksic asked about printing costs. Costs and process were discussed. We need to decide what to do first and what we can afford. F. Schmidt said we should maybe do tear-off sheets first. On January 10 we could decide exactly what to do. S. Smith said she needs to know the complexity of the map. F. Rojek suggested a separate board meeting to concentrate on the map. J. Thomas said that he thinks it's about getting people to come to Saugatuck and Douglas. It's not that hard to find your way around once you're here. Now our challenge is competing with other communities. He suggests that if money is short, he'd encourage SABA to look at external ways to get people here. A. Holmes said we were talking about ways of doing that as well and are investigating those things. Because of the time frame for this map, we needed to discuss it immediately. J. Brandess said J. Thomas has a good point but this idea is good. He said they get asked a lot how to get to Oval Beach so a small map that does that is important. F. Schmidt suggested excerpting this section of the minutes and sending to membership to let membership know we'll be talking about this and they should come and be heard. It was asked why we would go through the step of creating the map pads when we could just improve the map in the brochure? What about adding another panel? Do something that our membership might find more useful? All this will be considered.

Presentation by Officer Rios on Theft-Fraud-Shoplifting...the latest Do's and Don'ts.

Officer Rios will discuss bad checks, fraud and shoplifting techniques. Officer Rios was thanked. He explained that the Allegan County Prosecutors office wants the paperwork completed to be able to prosecute. Nothing under \$50 will be prosecuted. There have been problems with people not giving id with their license number on checks. The police need that because sometimes the address is not current. It also helps to make a practice to check ids so they know you've identified them. With out-of-state checks, along with the id, it helps to write down their date of birth and drivers license number. Bad checks have been down from past years. Super Valu has the most but they prosecute every one so maybe that's why it's lower – word gets out. Sometimes we get stolen checks – another reason to check IDs.

R. Vorel asked the prosecution process. How involved does a retailer get? Officer Rios said that you must send 5 day notice to the person by certified mail. The sooner the better when you get the check back. A year would be too long. Within a few months is okay. F. Rojek asked about low numbers on checks - should this make you suspicious? Rios said that's why it's important to verify ID.

M. Burd said that she learned that if the person had an expired drivers license but another ID - if you suspect the check might not be good - you can actually call the bank (if it's local) and they'll tell you if the account is closed or they have insufficient funds. This doesn't help on weekends. M. Burd said that she filled in a form for one person and they were prosecuting. She has since received restitution.

It is a felony if the account is closed. Three checks in three days with insufficient funds is also a felony. Rios said they usually go to the person and tell them to pay it or else they'll be prosecuted. S. Randolph said they'd had a bad check for over \$800. She hasn't received restitution.

D. Taylor has looked into devices to check accounts. She said the cost is quite high if you don't have a lot of checks. It was implied at that time that if you have a coalition of stores then everyone could use the devise and benefit from it.

Rios explained the process that the prosecutor's office uses. After you fill out a form, the party is contacted. If they don't pay, they get a warrant and if they're in the area, they'll be picked up and go through the court process. There's a lot more involved with out-of-state. They need to get a search warrant and it's more time. F. Rojek said that in Chicago there's no way the police will go to someone's house over a bad check. S. Williford asked about the status of the guy who was caught in a dumpster. Rios didn't know – he wasn't working that day. Be careful of anyone returning something without a receipt. What can happen is that shoplifting had occurred earlier and a partner is trying to return them. M. Burd explained that this happened to her and the person told her that he didn't have the receipt. She looked through her receipts. Then, Ron from Wilkins came over and told her that she had a shoplifter in the store and he ran away.

J. Thomas explained that they don't accept out-of-state checks except if it's someone they know or it's a small enough amount that they'll take the risk. This works great. Penalties in Michigan are stiffer now than they were a few years ago. Triple amount of check plus attorney fees, etc.

It was suggested that adding the expiration date of the license also helps. F. Rojek asked about counterfeit travelers checks or fake checks. Are there other new scams that are going on? Rios said that this year we didn't get any of those. If a check is on an ink jet printer the ink will run if it gets wet. Company checks might be counterfeit. F. Rojek asked about shoplifting scenarios we should know about. The main one, Rios explained, is distracting the employee while the other shoplifts. You can call the department any time and they'll walk through and take a look. R. Yaksic asked about shoplifting booster bags with a false bottom. They are still used but not as often.

Need to redo the calling tree. Rios said to make sure whoever starts it should call the department first so they can get downtown immediately. The dispatch number is 269-673-3899. S. Randolph said that sending an email out with the name of the person identified will help. J. Thomas said that for jewelry with ring trays you can put stuff in the extra spaces then, if there's an empty one you know you're missing one. The new calling tree will be distributed at spring kick-off. Rios said don't be afraid to call the police.

OLD BUSINESS

Sidewalk Sale. Plans for 2007 – involving Douglas? Conclusion from last year was to go back to one day but people liked the music. The idea of Douglas being a part was discussed. It makes sense for the two towns to have separate ones. R. Yaksic said that it could happen on the same day. J. Thomas said that Douglas can't even decide what day to have one on. He doesn't think that it's important for things to be coordinated but if SABA is involved, then it should be equal commitment to advertising both. A. Holmes said that we want more members from Douglas and want to get behind more of their projects. We've been talking to the DDA members about coordinating more stuff. J. Thomas said the perception is that SABA is behind more Saugatuck stuff even if it's not true. He also mentioned the huge amount of turn around in Douglas. The membership cut off date becomes a major factor for Douglas businesses and often the next year, they're gone. M. Burd asked J. Thomas where Douglas gets all the money for all that advertising. Sometimes it's each individual shop owner. J. Thomas is behind the DDA concept because it's hard to coordinate. It's a tax on property. The individual business doesn't have to pay but it's the property. It's complicated but levels the playing field. Now we can use DDA money on marketing and advertising. He encourages Saugatuck to look at it. L. Lungaro has talked to Kirk Harrier, the Saugatuck City Manager, about this possibility. Last year they budgeted \$15,000 but this year just \$5,000 for advertising in Douglas. J. Thomas drafted the ad in the Commercial Record and it says to "Please shop locally for the holidays." In time, the DDA money will increase.

S. Santos noted that Douglas involvement in SABA and in events like Town Crier was low. If there'd been someone there then they'd have had a voice. A. Holmes said it's the chicken and egg – we need more members in Douglas.

R. Yaksic asked about drafting a letter to members in Douglas inviting them to be part of the Sidewalk Sale and have them commit in advance if they will. We will discuss this more in January.

Green Market Concerns. F. Rojek hasn't connected with L. Lungaro on this yet but he got a lot of feedback from other businesses - some on art fairs and the green market. He asked them to come and share them with us at a meeting.

Drug store wall – Pete the Painter proposal. F. Schmidt showed us what it looks like now. M. Starring had talked about repainting the back wall and bottom 10 panels which are history panels. It's a \$600 proposal to do this and redo the plastic enclosures. F. Schmidt proposed tabling it until M. Starring is available to discuss it and when we've decided what to do with community map project. To buy an ad on the Drug Store wall you must be a SABA member. There are currently six empty spots. Invoices will be sent – calendar year same as fiscal year for this. We will not wait for payments this year. F. Schmidt is going to tie it to membership.

Night before Christmas – Update – Joint effort with Douglas. S. Eilbes reported. The town was packed for the lighting ceremony. S. Santos said that the week before there were a lot of people in town but no one was in town on Friday because of snow.

Dinner and a Movie. B. Galligan isn't here to report. A. Holmes and L. Lungaro were at the benefit. This benefit for the film festival is the only one they do. It will be at Coral Gables with a classic Hollywood theme including a red carpet. Dress as your favorite Hollywood star. An auction, sit down dinner and screening of 3 shorts will make up the event - maybe photos at the door. Someone has a 1955 limo to sit outside. January 26 is date. P. Lion will send out information to lodging establishments to make it an event. They'll send it to 12000 people. I may be more expensive but with an open bar this year.

Website Giveaway. Three winners have been selected and sent an email. One email was rejected. Two picked their businesses for gift certificates. R. Yaksic will talk to K. O'Donohue about the best way to get the gift certificates. We are paying for them through the marketing budget. Businesses could just bill us which would be best. The shop will create the gift certificate. Hopefully, they'll give it to us for a discount. F. Schmidt will contact the alternate winner. The seasons were Summer, Fall and Harvest. The letters were generic though. At first of year, we'll have Holiday season drawing.

Clings for Merchant Windows. R. Yaksic said they're ordered and hopefully will be here by next week's Social on Dec. 14. They're handed out to membership to create a sense of community and identity and reinforce the six seasons of Saugatuck Douglas concept. It's also a vehicle for showing our new logo and to market the website. It's for the membership not the customer. The residual benefit is having the website listed.

SABA Accomplishments Circulation. It's done and we have to decide how it will be circulated. It's on the website now. We talked about mailing it to members, too. We want it to be part of the membership packet. We will include it in the email to members with the minutes. We need to get it from L. Lungaro and upload a new one to the website.

Carriage Rides – update. P. Lion said part of her advertising was that she would donate tokens for this and then she found out that they're not taking tokens. So, maybe we should revisit this for next year. It would be nice to have carriage rides in Douglas next year. A. Holmes noted that both towns look great this year.

NEW BUSINESS

Nov 2006 – Oct 2007 Budget. K. O'Donohue said we have a proposed budget but we haven't voted on it yet. Not ready to approve especially in light of the map. Need to schedule another meeting for budget. Preference is after Christmas. F. Schmidt will email the board to a find date. J. Thomas suggested approving the budget now and just amend it as we go along. We will discuss at the meeting to discuss the map.

Goals for 2007. Let's continue to focus on these. J. Abel emailed the board the list of goals conceived after the last meeting. We'll disseminate to members in January.

Holiday Social. The Social will feature food from Clearbrook, Phil's, River Market and one other. Beer from the Saugatuck Brewing Company and Fenn Valley Wine will be offered. A. Holmes said that we're hoping to feature food from 6 different restaurants. Elaine Buck is the contact at Laketown Conference Center.

TIPS/TAM Training. M. Starring had new ideas but she's not here.

2007 Membership Drive. Hallgren Electric is new member. F. Schmidt said renewals are slower than last year. This year, we've heard from 30+ businesses but last year this time it was over 100. Of course, last year we started our membership drive three weeks earlier. Last year we told people that the end of December was the deadline after which they'd pay a penalty. This year, the deadline is the first of February and there's no penalty. We really must pump it up at the Holiday Social. F. Schmidt asked J. Thomas if he could try and get the business license list from Douglas. He's tried to get it to contact them about membership and to put together the Calling Tree but has not been successful. F. Schmidt needs the mailing addresses as well. J. Thomas agreed to try and get a copy.

F. Schmidt asked about having ads in the brochure again. There were 12 ads. F. Schmidt will push the ads in mid-January. He's suggesting to change the brochure color and put our new logo on it. The color will probably be a similar blue to the bridge in our logo. Should we update the cover design as well? We plan to use the same designer. F. Schmidt updates the documents from the designer then sends them to him. There's no linkage between member information and the map which is what we're talking about with S. Smith.

October sales were down 30% in Douglas over previous year according to J. Thomas. He's never been so low on cash flow in all the years he's been in business. D. Taylor says she comes from somewhere else where they advertised the town, not projects. She thought we should advertise the town more. F. Rojek said that this is part of our budget. We don't have a DDA or a budget like Holland has. We do advertise in Detroit and Chicago. A. Holmes said we're open to suggestions. D. Taylor also said she has heard people say that the town is taking on a dollar store mentality. Each place was individualized and now there are big signs saying 50% off and going out of business. People don't come here to save money but for the ambiance. F. Schmidt noted that those are the same businesses that do that every year. Members should contact other members about this type of behavior.

Adjourn.