

astoria

Reboot Your
Downtown

In the beginning...

- Mid 1980s – Life is Good
 - Formation as 501(c)3
 - Poster-child for state Main Street effort
 - Paid staff person
 - City funding
 - Lots of newsletters
- Early 1990s – The Perfect Storm
 - Measure 5 killed City funding
 - Staff was recruited away
 - No money + no person = all volunteer
- Early 2000s – Let's Try this Another Way
 - Organized attempt to pass EID/BID
 - “Give us some money and we'll show you what we can do.”
 - Failed to go to vote
- Continuous cycle of burst and burnout

2008

- Board of 9 had dwindled to 3
- Those remaining were not interested in continuing
- Monthly meetings attracting about 12 people
- Relative unknown announces run for president; incites interest of others to run in opposition; board returns to full capacity for January 2009

2009

- New board of 9 in place
- No committees or Main Street structure
- No formal membership or dues
- Business Development Committee forms in February and begins meeting monthly
- Three new members join the board to fill vacancies in the fall

2010

- Board sees that nothing will change until there is continuity and paid support – “We need staff,” but...
 - We have <\$900 in the bank
 - We have no members
 - We have no dues structure
 - We have little to no credibility in the community
 - We might even have some baggage
 - We have one committee
 - We have a bunch of excited board members (here we go again)
- February 2010
 - We (re)discover Main Street
 - We discover the RARE program (thanks to OMS)
 - We still have no members, no money and little support

2010

- We apply to Oregon Main Street and are accepted as an “Exploring Downtown” community
- “People will support us if they see the difference permanent staff can make.”
 - We can’t afford staff
“Let’s apply to RARE as a bridge program.”
 - We can’t afford RARE
Mounted a campaign to raise \$20k entirely from the community; local Astoria Sunday Market organization with similar mission offered a generous dollar-for-dollar match
- By the fall of 2010, we have a RARE volunteer and are promoted to “Transforming Downtown”

2011 to now...

- The City added us as a line-item in their budget and provided approximately 1/3 of our funding for the last two annual cycles
- Reinstated paid memberships, raising over \$10K in memberships in 2011, and targeting \$15k in 2012
- Created an award-winning event – a topsy-turvy fashion show – that raised \$4000 in its first year and \$5000 in its second year
- Applied for and received a \$10K RBEG for online downtown building inventory
- Inherited a brew festival in 2012 – anticipated net revenue of \$10k-\$15k
- Partnered with City, Market and hospital on \$250k streetscape grant
- All Main Street committees are up and running
- Are starting our third term with RARE
- Continuously have 30+ people at monthly meetings
- Currently securing funding for \$20k downtown revitalization plan
- Now we're working to develop a funding model that can sustain a permanent paid position (est. 1-3 years away)

2011 to now...

- What WORKED for us:
 - Developing trusted partnerships with other organizations
 - Developing trusted partnerships with the City
 - Re-establishing and strengthening credibility, political capital
 - Serving as the unified, representative voice of downtown
 - Working on short-term, visible projects just as much as the long-term, behind-the-scenes projects; our first was a downtown clean-up day
 - Cultivating leadership
 - Lots of hard work
 - It's not "Give us some money and we'll show you what we can do."
 - DO SOMETHING. Then say, "Look what we have done. Is it valuable to you and do you want to see it continue and grow?"