



Thank you for this opportunity to present our findings from last year and to give you an overview of what we have planned for 2020. I have been with the BDA for about 7-1/2 years, and I am so proud to be a part of such a great organization.

Brunswick is a Main Street Community and the BDA manages the Main Street Program. Our mission is to promote downtown Brunswick as a vibrant and attractive place to work, live, play and do business. Everything we do, all of the events and all of the programs must serve this mission. We believe that the downtown is the heart and soul of our community.

In 2019, the National Main Street Center calculated the reinvestment ration which measures the amount of new investment that occurs, on average, for every dollar a participating community spends to support the operation of Main Street program. That ratio is \$25.64 to \$1.00. 2019 was significant on many levels.



We increased our membership revenue by 2% and we have 335 BDA members. Our membership is very diverse – small and large for-profit businesses, small and large non-profit businesses, and individuals and families. Membership perks include promotion in the BDA Blast (now over 4000 subscribers), free placement of rack cards and brochures at the Visitor Center, an opportunity to be the featured Business of the Month at the Visitor Center, an opportunity to host a Simply Social, ribbon-cutting events, listing on the BDA website and referrals by the organization.



Every year we host at least 30 events downtown and attendance continues to grow, including Music on the Mall, 3 major Speaking Events, Mardi Gras Bowling, Brunswick Outdoor Art Festival, Community BBQ, 2nd Friday Brunswick, Silent and Live Auction, Early Bird Sale and Rolling Slumber Bed Races, and ending the year with the Shop Local Saturday and Holiday Tree Lighting event.



We expanded our Holiday Lighting program and lit even more large trees along Maine Street. The funds for the lighting program are raised through sponsorships and proceeds from the Silent and Live Auction.



The BDA is not afraid to address tough issues that concern, not just the downtown, but the entire community. We continue to participate on committees that deal with the challenges facing our transient and new resident population, sidewalk repairs



the usage and maintenance of the Town Mall, the design of the new Frank Wood Bridge if that is the chosen option by Maine DOT, and the tobacco free Maine Street. During the summer months we contract with Parks and Recreation to hire a part time person to clean the sidewalks downtown.



Parking continues to be an issue as the Brunswick continues to grow as a transportation hub. We now have 5 round trips daily on the Downeaster to Boston, 13 round trips to Portland on the MetroBreez, 2 trips daily on Concord Bus Lines and folks using the Brunswick Explorer.



The "Pay to Park" kiosk in the long-term parking lot serves many travelers, but my staff and volunteers at the Visitor Center are always challenged with parking overflow questions. I am so pleased that the Town is working on options to alleviate the parking problems, not only on Station Avenue, but in the downtown core. I look forward to continuing these discussions.



We plan to diversify our membership even more by focusing on increasing the number of “Friends of the BDA” memberships available to Individuals and Families. Our continued collaboration with local businesses, non-profits, the Town of Brunswick and residents on projects and programs to benefit the community.



Our January Annual Meeting paid special tribute to the upcoming Bicentennial celebrations. We look forward to participating in the many events already planned for Brunswick and we will endeavor to add a Bicentennial theme to our many standing events. You may have noticed the new National Historic District banners on Maine Street that feature the bicentennial logo.



We really work on coming up with ideas to encourage people to support our local shops. Right now we are in the midst of Maine Street Mania, and last month we focused on Valentine Day shopping and activities.



Last year, Maine Street Sweets and Little Dog Coffee Shop organized a Scavenger Hunt right before Halloween,



and Pathway Vineyard Church organized Christmas on Maine the first weekend in December. We are so encouraged to have ideas being generated at the grass roots level and we provide marketing assistance as required.



Given the rainy summer we had last year, we have decided on those wet Wednesday nights in 2020 when it is not practical or safe to hold the Music on the Mall concerts outside, we will move indoors to First Parish Church. They are excited to welcome the public into the sanctuary – it is great space, with great acoustics.



2020 marks the 4th year of 2nd Friday Brunswick and its popularity grows as more performers, artists, musicians and local businesses get involved with the event.



We kicked off the summer season with our annual Community BBQ that pays tribute to our local first responders. Even though Mother Nature got the best of us, we still had a great event with a record number of attendees



We have great speakers for our upcoming Speaking Event series. I hope you have your tickets to see our very own Curt Dale Clark, Artistic Director at Maine State Music Theatre. He will give a Behind the Scene look at MSMT at their Elm Street location and this fall we are planning an event that features Nate Wilde who is very active in the Live and Work Maine program.



Our Outdoor Arts Festival is going into its 14th year and based on the artists applications already received, it is sure to be another sold out event.



The tried and true, and very popular Early Bird Sale and



Rolling Slumber Bed races will continue, as well as our largest fundraiser the BDA Auction.



We look forward to the holiday season with the Shop Local program,



Holiday Tree Lighting and Visit by Santa, the Window Decorating Contest and all of the beautiful holiday lighting downtown.



I look forward to working with Town Staff, and the entire community on updating the Comprehensive Plan. I, along with other BDA staff and board members, participate on the Downtown Brunswick and Outer Pleasant Street Master Plan Implementation Committee. We continuously review the plan, prioritizing objectives and projects. The BDA has been tasked with several projects within the plan including obtaining the National Historic District designation for the downtown. a comprehensive banner program, and new wayfinding signage. I sit on the Streetscape Redesign Committee and I'm very excited about the proposed plans to date.



The BDA will continue to manage the Brunswick Visitor Center and strive to create a positive first impression for the many visitors to our community. With the exception of Portland, we are the only station along the Downeaster route that is staffed 7 days per week. The comments in the "Guest Book" reflect the appreciation of so many travelers – the knowledge of the staff and volunteers and the assistance they provide, and the clean and inviting atmosphere of the Visitor Center.



In closing, I would just like to emphasize the BDA is committed to our community. We have great staff in the office and at the Visitor Center as well as an incredible cadre of volunteers who assist at the Visitor Center and help out at all of our events. Last year volunteer hours totaled over 5,500.

Thank you so much for your continued funding of the BDA. Before I take any questions, I would like to invite Cathy Barter, BDA Board Member to read a couple of letters from local businesses and groups that support the BDA.