

## AFTER ACTION REPORT

TO: Patrick Lawton, City Administrator

FROM: G. Andrew Pouncey, Director of Economic & Community Development

DATE: July 30, 2012

RE: After Action Report (AAR) of meeting (July 30, 2012) for Germantown Sidewalk Sales (July 20-21, 2012)

- Purpose

- What did we set out to do? The original purpose, ten years ago, was to: (1) give back to the business community, (2) provide sales at a time when students are going back to school and (3) promote Germantown.
- What was supposed to happen? All businesses would participate and provide sales opportunities for citizens and visitors that would help the businesses to dispose of older merchandise and raise the tax revenue for the City.
- Is there a process or procedure in place for this activity? Yes. The City of Germantown and the Germantown Area Chamber of Commerce, as leaders in this event, bring representatives of the different center management together, to make decisions on dates, participation, media representations, etc. While the Germantown Area Chamber of Commerce's membership goes beyond the municipalities' borders, "Sidewalk Sales" and the "Holiday Tour of Homes" remain truly Germantown. The meetings at the Chamber invite participation from all businesses. This summer, our centers (Carrefour, Saddle Creek, Market Square, Exeter Village, Germantown Village Square, Stone Creek, Shops of Forest Hill and Germantown and Germantown Plaza) within the City, contributed \$4,250 to radio advertising. The City also contributed financially to the banners, balloons and posters. Every attempt is made to utilize Germantown businesses in the purchase of supplies. The banners are erected one day in advance and the Chamber's ambassadors circulate the posters in advance.

- Executive Summary

- What actually happened? The weekend was successful in terms of attracting buyers, but the number of businesses participating was noticeably less. In short, after 10 years of putting this sales event on, the process has become somewhat second nature, so not as much preparation is needed, thus there is less planning and advance participation which translates to less business actively engaged. We believe that many think that they don't have to be engaged because it will take care of it itself.

In terms of business success, Kenneth Taylor of Saddle Creek stated that many businesses sold as much as last year, some exceeded last year's sales, and Vera Bradley sold \$200,000 worth of purses under their tent. We struggled with whether or not to allow the tent, but decided to proceed based on last year's success, the fact that road construction has been hard on businesses and tents had been previously approved by the BMA for the Race for the Cure. One firm that typically orders one to two boxes of materials of additional sales materials ordered 14 boxes and was sold out by Saturday at 11:00 a.m., meeting its goal for that weekend.

- What worked well that needs to be sustained? The media coverage (face book, radio, newspaper) was very good. Based on stories that were shared with the centers and staff, sales were good, and Sidewalk Sales has become such a tradition that they want it to continue. Such results mean increased revenues for the City.
- What did not work well and needs to be changed? This is an event to help the businesses with sales, and while they have done well, participation by the businesses has declined.
- Lessons Learned
  - What can we do better next time? We are meeting with the center management in two weeks to discuss participation by the businesses and the event's future, and see whether or not there are alternatives for better engagement.
- Action Items
  - Develop a list of the actions to fix specific needs. Meet with center management to discuss business participation. Determine what changes need to be made to renew interest by the balance of businesses. Ensure maximum communication from the City and the Chamber.
  - Time Lines and Responsibilities. We will meet again in two weeks and develop a time line and list of responsibilities that engage the City, the Chamber and the business community. There must be assigned responsibilities for the centers, their businesses, the Chamber and the City (as in the past) to garner participation and engagement on the two day event. I would suggest a two month timeline to establish the direction for the future and new goals.