

# THE TIME IS NOW

ISSUE 1  
2010



## TORONTO COALITION FOR REVITALIZATION

### *How it all began...*



It was during a Toronto Chamber of Commerce luncheon meeting, in the spring of 2009, when guest speaker Lou Stein of Valley Ventures spoke about revitalization, his work with the Steubenville Revitalization Group (SRG) and his involvement with the City of Follansbee. Lou Stein's presentation motivated George Komar, a Toronto Chamber of Commerce member and owner of Ohio Valley Massage, to take a stand on forming a group to revitalize Toronto.

"I attended a meeting with SRG and was impressed with what they were doing," said Komar who eventually spoke by telephone with Mayor Pissano of Follansbee who was also impressed with Stein.

Soon a meeting was called with Mayor John Geddis on July 10, 2009 at the Toronto City Building with Laura Cade, Clark Crago and Severine Petras also in attendance. Komar spoke about Valley Ventures but the group thought that the fee of \$8,000 that Valley Ventures would charge for its services was too much and that Toronto should do the work itself.

While researching revitalization programs on the internet, one sight stood out among all the others, the Main Street Approach, a program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation; designed to save historic commercial architecture and, in turn, promote economic development in historic communities. The Main Street Approach has successfully re-kindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern while earning national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions. Because it is a locally driven program, all initiative stems from local issues and concerns.

The City of Toronto paid for membership in the Main Street program and three other meetings were held with a steering committee. Toronto City Schools Superintendent Fred Burns soon became part of the group as did Carolyn Walker of the Historical Society of Toronto and Jay Foster of J.E. Foster Funeral Home. Longtime Toronto businessman Don Clarke of Clarke Funeral Home soon came on board as a behind the scenes advisor.

Upon further research, Komar discovered Heritage Ohio which administers the









November 18, 2009 - REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM was the first community forum with presentations by Heritage Ohio explaining the Main Street Approach of revitalization, Progress Alliance and Franciscan University SIFE. Former and current Toronto business owners spoke about past and present Toronto. Jefferson County Commissioner Tom Graham moderated, fielded and directed questions during the open forum and discussion. Several members of Toronto City Council were also in attendance.

November, 2009 - It was brought to the attention of TCR the condition of the building at Fourth and Myers and the bad impression it makes to visitors and residents driving south on Fourth Street.



December 10, 2009 - Meeting at Karaffa Middle School Library. A power point presentation showing present day Toronto followed by exchanging of ideas for possible projects were discussed and committees were formed. Attendees voted to make the exterior of the former toy store location in the Rudy's building the first project of TCR. A myriad of other topics were discussed including a newsletter and promotional video. This meeting proved encouraging due to the turnout of the young adults, their interest in being involved and enthusiasm for getting their friends involved.



December 10, 2009 - Business owners Wes Jacobsen and Michelle Miller of Nanny and Mim's Country Kitchen & The Gem City's Diner on Wheels offered to donate \$5 from the sale of each Holiday Cookie Tray to benefit Toronto Coalition for Revitalization's efforts.

December 17, 2009 - George Komar, Margie Monigold and Cindy Miller met for lunch to discuss the layout of the newsletter, advertising and other content. Following the meeting, George and Gail Komar and Margie Monigold met at the Rudy's building to clear a pathway for the glass window installation in the old toy store.



December 18, 2009 - PHASE 1...the installation of a plate glass window in the toy store and a smaller replacement glass in a window of Rudy's were installed by Olympic Glass at a cost of \$240.







December 21, 2009 - PHASE 2...Doris Matyas, Gail Komar and George Komar washed windows and hung curtains in the "toy store" windows of the Rudy's building. Since then Sherwin-Williams has agreed to donate paint to the project.

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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**St. Patrick's Day - 5K Fun Run / Walk & 1K run /walk for Kids**  
**Saturday, March 13, 2010 at 10:00 AM**

**TheGemCity.org for more information.**

**Contact Margie Monigold at 740-317-8994 to place an ad in an upcoming newsletter.**

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