



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MINUTES • JULY 1, 2014

Regular Meeting

Common Council Chambers

6:30 PM

7725 West North Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI 53213

PRESENT: Aids. Tilleson, Walz-Chojnacki, Wilke, Wilson, Bryne, Berdan, Causier, Dubinski, Kofroth, McBride, Moldenhauer, Pantuso, Stippich -13

EXCUSED: Aids. Roznowski

ABSENT: Aids. Hanson and Walsh

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Archambo, City Administrator; Mayor Ehley; Mr. Ruggini, Finance Director; Ms. Aldana, Asst. City Attorney/HR Director; Ms. Ledesma, City Clerk

Ald. McBride in the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ITEMS

1. Continued Ad Hoc Marketing and Communications Committee presentation on the benefits of branding

Continued from the last Committee of the Whole meeting were presentations by Scott Schwebel, Marketing Director for Colectivo Coffee, and Chris Swartz, Village of Shorewood Administrator.

Beth Fredrickson, Ad Hoc Marketing and Communications Committee, introduced Mr. Schwebel, stating that he would be sharing his experiences about the economic impact of a strong brand.

Mr. Schwebel noted that approximately one year ago, Alterra Coffee struck a deal with Mars Drinks to sell its name and certain artistic assets. A name change, therefore, became necessary; Mr. Schwebel outlined the process that the company undertook before and during this process.

Mr. Schwebel characterized the process as story-telling, since a brand is a promise that is fulfilled each day. The Alterra brand was built over the course of 20 years. The challenge was to take that story and give it a new name to grow into. Mr. Schwebel reviewed the process that took over two years of planning prior to the actual name-change, stating that his challenge was to explain to people what happened - and did not happen - and what the company was going to do going forward.

Time was spent evaluating the brand - what it meant, what the company was, and what it had become in the community. This step was critical to knowing what the company would become. Time was spent with those invested in the company, and with those the company was invested in. Once that information was solidified, work began on creating concepts. Mr. Schwebel pointed out that this process was done in parallel with the Mars Company and their attorneys. A plan was ultimately created months before the re-branding began.

In a subtle move towards rebranding, Mr. Schwebel explained how Alterra's iconic coffee bag was slightly modified one year prior to the re-naming to create a more visual image such that when the name change occurred, it was less jarring to see. Time was spent investing in the company's people, as well as in the customers and the public in general.

The new message needed to be concise and consistent: "Tell you what I'm going to tell you, tell you, tell you what I told you." Mr. Schwebel stressed again that the message was that the company was not being sold; just the name was changing. He added that they did not spend money on media. Instead, they relied on public

relations, and the relationships built with media outlets. The staff was prepared for the change so they would be able to concisely and consistently answer questions appropriately. Mr. Schwebel opined that the importance of language and wording cannot be overlooked in a branding effort: Clarify the process, control the results.

Mr. Schwebel stated that whatever approach the City takes, it must be within its character, and explainable in 2-3 sound bites. In Alterra's case, that meant the message, "Nothing has changed except the name we call ourselves. We are still local. The 'Alterra' name is going global."

Mr. Schwebel detailed how the company successfully built momentum prior to the actual name change. They were careful not to do the actual change-over at a time that would compete with the Milwaukee Brewers, Summerfest, or State Fair in terms of publicity. A narrative was needed that the news media would pick up; to accomplish this, the company provided the piece of content to them that explained the reason for the renaming. The message released was on-point and was picked up by every major news source. Over 1.4 million people knew within 24 hours, compared to the projected 1 million in ten days.

The conversation about Colectivo Coffee is still being shaped today; the story is still being told and they are working to fulfill the promise made. There is much power in the promise.

Mr. Swartz began his portion of the presentation by explaining that he has been employed by the Village since 2004. The rebranding of the Village of Shorewood has many similarities to the renaming of Alterra Coffee. The realization set in, in about 2005, that the Village was losing its identity. It was close to the City of Milwaukee, relatively safe, had good schools, but also had many challenges. The Village was losing population and had an aging infra-structure. The question became 'how to get to the next level?'. The Village embarked on the creation of strategic plan and a visioning plan. A community-wide series of workshops were held. Once the vision plan was created, the question became one of what the community is and how to deliver on that vision.

In 2006 the Village embarked on marketing Shorewood to both customers and residents -- to tell its story via the vision plan. It was important to determine what makes Shorewood unique and different from Whitefish Bay, or Grafton, or Elm Grove. To that end, a consistent advertising theme was developed. The intent was to attract and retain loyal customers, even though a product was not being advanced as much as a place. A firm was hired to provide services and a comprehensive plan. The firm confirmed the Village's key attributes and used marketing messages to convey this information.

Mr. Swartz noted that the Village engaged their School District, Village BID and Shorewood Foundation and got everyone on board with the rebranding effort. Declining school enrollment and building vacancies helped the two former agencies to become engaged in the process. It was critical to speak to the changing demographics, as the aging village needed a younger population. The resulting implementation plan focused considerable effort initially on advertising, but less so now. The *Shorewood Today* magazine is a product of that marketing effort. This entire process has helped confirm their brand values and showcases the Village's unique architecture, its downtown, its walkability, quaintness, and diversity.

The major benefits to this effort include increased school enrollment, improved occupancy rates and more new development. It is important now and going forward to deliver what was promised. Mr. Swartz commented that the Village needed to put forth much effort initially, as it did not offer a vibrant downtown, nor well-maintained parks and beach. The infrastructure was 30 years behind in repairs. Much upgrading was needed and accomplished to bring the reality of the Village's 'product' in line with the vision of the Village. The School District's capital campaign resulted in upgraded playing fields. The Village had a reputation for bad customer service, which was also addressed and corrected by the hiring of customer service employees. That same training has been held throughout the entire organization. The next step is to get the School District to embrace this same level of customer service. Work is ongoing to strengthen neighborhood connections.

Mr. Swartz noted that during this rebranding process, however, one step the Village did not do well was the measurement process. That is, did these improvements have a direct connection to the branding and the resulting success. They are working to correct this. The vision plan is currently under review as well so

revisions can be made as needed. Customer service is again being reemphasized. In summary, Mr. Swartz stated that this process helped the Village to understand what it needed and what it took to make success a reality.

Ms. Fredrickson noted that the Ad Hoc Marketing and Communications Committee's focus is more narrow than was Shorewood's, adding that the Wauwatosa School District refreshed its brand just a few years ago.

Ald. Wilson stated that he appreciated Shorewood's broad approach and favors incorporating more stakeholders (i.e., Chamber, School District, BID, etc.) into Wauwatosa's process as well. He added that Colectivo's approach was to 'keep the promise and change the name,' while Shorewood's approach was to improve the promise.

Ald. Tilleson observed that the City already has several plans in place (i.e., Master Plan, East Tosa Plan, Village Plan) from which to draw some data. He also questioned - in Shorewood's case - whether development occurred because of the infrastructure improvements or because of the rebranding effort.

Mr. Swartz responded that branding solidified the Village's plans and allowed them to market in a unified way. He believes branding is part of the success story.

Ald. Tilleson suggested that Wauwatosa is already attracting interest without branding, hence his effort to distinguish Shorewood's experience from Wauwatosa's. Some would ask whether there is a need to rebrand, as much activity is happening on its own. He noted that Wauwatosa's efforts are piece-meal to date, though effective.

Mr. Swartz stated that it was key for Shorewood to sell its new product.

Ald. Moldenhauer added that he has given considerable thought to the idea of renaming (Colectivo) versus rebranding (Shorewood). Wauwatosa's team is trying to rebrand and already has a good foundation on which to build. What he is looking for in the process is assurance that this process will help correct Wauwatosa's areas of deficiency. How will it help fill those gaps?

Ald. Causer remarked that it is tempting for the City to sit back and enjoy its success. Success breeds success, however, and the City ought not become too comfortable with it. Gaps or deficiencies need to be addressed; people can be fickle if the City does not continue to move forward. A comprehensive plan is needed to do so.

Ald. Byrne opined that success is Wauwatosa's new story. What has happened so far is due to the hard work of some citizens. A comprehensive written set of literature will supplement that. Piece-meal efforts need not continue. This effort should 'put a bow on Wauwatosa.'

Ald. Walz-Chojnacki asked to what extent the branding process helped the Village. Did it lead Shorewood to become something new? Did it help determine that the Village had made promises it hadn't kept in the past? Does it help to keep promises now? To what extent does it enforce the existing and encourage what is new?

Mr. Swartz replied that the gap between the promises and the reality provided the same goals for everyone to sell. It better defined the original product and the improved product. Something new was created, but the values were always there; they were simply reinvented.

Ald. McBride thanked the two presenters, noting that Wauwatosa - and its 150-year history - also has a story, albeit one that has changed a lot. He opined that the current adopted plans address just two parts of the City (East Tosa and the Village). Utilizing focus groups may help clarify exactly *what* Wauwatosa is. He also asked that since the City is not losing population, and is attracting business and new residents, why should it spend additional resources in this area.

Mr. Schwebel replied that while he cannot tell Wauwatosa what it should or should not do, he can say that if the decision is made to proceed with a targeted marketing effort, now is a good time to embark on it. Sometimes

this effort may just be a restatement of the obvious and a clarification of what people want to be a part of. Creating a campaign now is easier than pushing a boulder uphill later.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

RESULT:	INFORMATION ONLY
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Carla A. Ledesma, CMC, City Clerk



VISIONING AND BRANDING FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Transforming Local Government Workshop August 2012

PRESENTED BY CHRIS SWARTZ, MANAGER
VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD, WISCONSIN



WELCOME TO SHOREWOOD, WISCONSIN

A charming, safe and walkable urban village just north of the City of Milwaukee.





WELCOME TO SHOREWOOD, WISCONSIN

- § **One of the oldest Milwaukee suburbs: 1.5 miles square and densely populated**
- § **Located between Lake Michigan on the east, the Milwaukee River on the west, City of Milwaukee on the south and the Village of Whitefish Bay on the north**
- § **Population: approximately 13,500 (same as in 1930) with 6,900 households**
- § **Nationally ranked, award-winning school district**
- § **More than 250 diverse businesses**



Village of Shorewood





SHOREWOOD DEMOGRAPHICS/HOUSING:

- § Has higher-than-average per capita income
- § Highly educated
- § Represent diverse ethnic backgrounds
- § Variety of singles, families (with children), professionals and seniors
- § Unique architecture: single-family, duplexes, condos and apartments (many older homes)
- § 52% of housing stock are rentals with 48% owner occupied



UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE:

Single-family, duplexes, condos and apartments





DIVERSE POPULATION

Variety of ethnic groups represented





VILLAGE CHALLENGES/ISSUES 2005

- § Declining population and school enrollment
- § Residents choose to relocate to other communities due to Shorewood's limited housing types
- § Limited Village master planning
- § No "big picture" policy direction; stakeholder groups (e.g., school district and business district) not focused on same goals/objectives
- § Upswing in business district due to active TIF and establishment of a BID



VILLAGE UNDERTAKES A VISIONING PLAN

Village Board agrees to a comprehensive “Vision 2015 Plan” (2006) and identifies:

- § Who are we?
- § Where are we now?
- § Where are we going?
- § Where do we want to be?
- § How do we get there?



IDENTIFY SIX MAJOR GOALS WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES/ACTION PLANS

- § Promote vibrant urban housing
- § Promote and enhance the environment
- § Commit to open, interactive communication and involvement
- § Deliver quality services at a competitive tax rate
- § Protect and enhance property values
- § Maintain a high-quality, safe, walkable, small-town urban living experience



CREATE A CENTRAL MASTER PLAN

July 2006

“A Blueprint for the future” is developed with specific implementation plans:

- § Identify top 20 redevelopment sites
- § Conduct economic market study
- § Create a housing “whitepaper”
- § Establish design guidelines



CREATE A CENTRAL MASTER PLAN July 2006 (continued)

- § Identify master plan basics
- § Conduct a parking study
- § Increase public parking



CREATE A LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLAN 2006

- § Establish projections for debt and operations for a 10-year period and set policies for:
- Fund balance
 - Tax-rate stability
 - Preservation of general obligation borrowing capacity
 - Debt payment structure and duration
 - Interfund advances
 - Maintenance and enhancement of credit rating
 - Fees for survey



CREATE A LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLAN 2006 (continued)

- § Plan is updated annually by staff and presented to Village Board in late august for approval prior to budget review.



IDENTIFY/DEVELOP COMMUNITY BRANDING NOVEMBER 2006

Program objectives:

§ Achieve essential elements of the
Shorewood vision

- Per the Village Vision
- Per the Schools Strategic Plan
- Per the Central District Master Plan



Program objectives (continued):

§ Effectively market the Village to:

- Current and potential residents
- Current and potential businesses
- Current and potential customers of the business district
- Developers

§ Apply these important steps:

- Positioning
- Implementation of appropriate improvements
- Branding



COMMUNITY BRANDING NOVEMBER 2006

Process:

- § Hired a branding company to provide comprehensive branding services (market research, focus groups, publication/logo branding)
- § Confirmed key attributes and benefits of community to use as marketing messages
- § Developed an implementation plan, including operations and communications



COMMUNITY BRANDING: WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Key Attributes and Message

Market research/focus group feedback confirmed:

- § **Brand values:** Diverse and lively, small-town serenity, welcoming, vibrant architecture, sophisticated yet unpretentious
- § **Positioning statement:** Shorewood provides a quaint Village setting with a refreshing diversity of people and architecture just minutes from Milwaukee
- § **Take-away phrase:** “Just two feet from everything”



COMMUNITY BRANDING: POSITIONING

Call to action – what we want our audience to think and do

Why Shorewood is the perfect place to live, work, shop and raise a family:

- § Refreshing diversity of people and architecture
- § Easy access/convenience to everything, including downtown, Lake Michigan, Milwaukee River
- § Nationally recognized, quality school district
- § Safe and friendly neighborhoods
- § Vibrant business district



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- § Created a formal Marketing Committee to compile and implement an annual marketing plan with a \$70,000 annual budget. Marketing vehicles include:
- Website (shorewoodtoday.com)
 - Online and print advertising
 - Promotional videos
 - Television spots
 - Special events (e.g., public art, community concerts)
 - Realtor and developer initiatives (e.g., informational “walking kits” and open house events)



WEBSITE: shorewoodtoday.com





ONLINE ADVERTISING: shorewoodnow.com

"We love our neighbors in Shorewood ... and we can walk everywhere!"
New Shorewood residents Ben & Rho Nelson

"Bravo, Shorewood Schools ... and the great teachers who challenged me."
Steve Wexler, Executive Vice President-Journal Broadcast Group & Shorewood High School Alum

"We love the urban way of thinking with a small-town way of life."
Kelly Klawonn and Heather Heaviland with daughters Margo & Shirley

Boundless amenities and a special place to live!
Choose Shorewood, Wisconsin
Request a free info kit & find out more at shorewoodtoday.com



SPECIAL EVENTS: Free Community Concerts and Public Art Events



2012 Public Art Event





PRINT ADVERTISING: Focusing on fascinating residents and why they chose to live here

**VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD, WIS.
"WE WOULDN'T LIVE ANYWHERE ELSE"**

Mike & Beth Giacobassi, long-time Shorewood residents & Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra musicians



Shorewood "Easy access to downtown Milwaukee and a beautiful lake setting, plus the feel of a small-town village drew us to Shorewood, Wis. We've raised three children here in a terrific school system with very high academic standards. Our schools offer a variety of athletic teams, an unsurpassed music and theatre program, and the arts remain important in the curriculum.

"We can walk or bike anywhere in the village with everything close by. Shorewood's amenities are by far the very best in the Milwaukee area. What a great place to live and raise a family - we wouldn't live anywhere else."

**Fascinating people...
Fabulous living...
Choose Shorewood, Wis.
(Milwaukee's best-kept secret)**

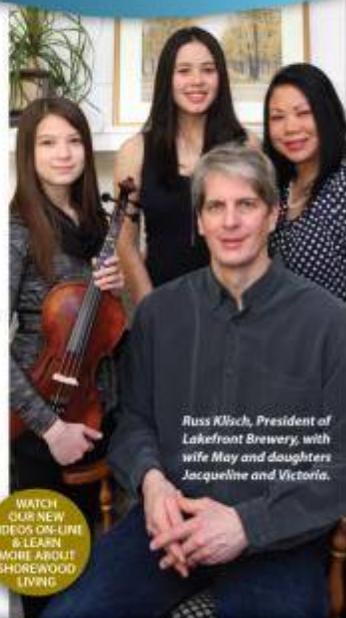
WATCH OUR NEW VIDEOS ON-LINE & LEARN MORE ABOUT SHOREWOOD LIVING

**REQUEST A FREE INFORMATIONAL WALKING KIT
Visit shorewoodtoday.com or call 414.847.2700**

**"WE LIVE IN SHOREWOOD, WIS.
BECAUSE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT"**

Shorewood "Our children are our greatest assets and we owe them the best education we can provide. In Shorewood, that means our superior public school district. Our children flourish in outstanding schools where educators go the extra mile for our kids and an award-winning curriculum provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

"We also embrace the arts with one of the best district strings orchestras and choirs, and a nationally recognized drama department. Shorewood schools are a vital part of our safe, connected community. We wouldn't live anywhere else!"



**Fascinating people...
Fabulous living...
Choose Shorewood, Wis.**

WATCH OUR NEW VIDEOS ON-LINE & LEARN MORE ABOUT SHOREWOOD LIVING

**REQUEST A FREE INFORMATIONAL WALKING KIT
Visit shorewoodtoday.com or call 414.847.2700**



PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS: Three-part series: Village, Schools, Business District



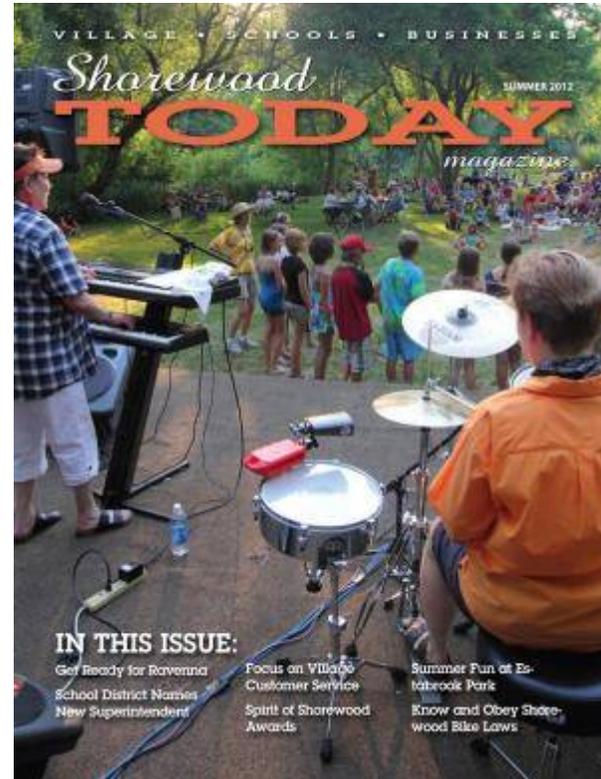
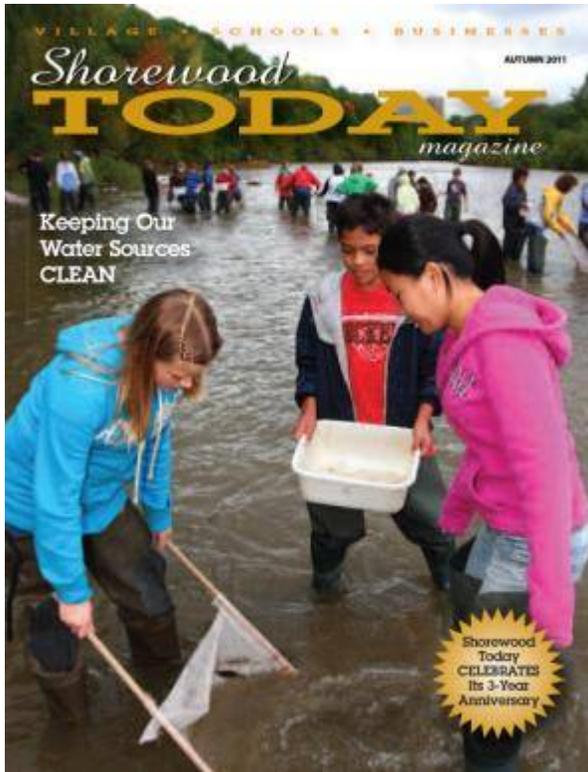


NEW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE: Mailed quarterly to all Village households

- § Created a custom, full-color village magazine, *Shorewood Today* to:
- Improve quality and frequency of communications with residents
 - Build pride in community
 - Offer affordable advertising options for local businesses
 - Act as a promotional vehicle to support realtors
 - Act as a recruiting vehicle for new businesses



Shorewood Today Magazine: Took first place in a national communications contest





PLUS, ESTABLISHED REALTOR INITIATIVES

- § Build bridges with area realtors who can act as our ambassadors and advocate for more Shorewood realty sales
- § Stage annual Realtor Open House to keep agents informed
- § Make office presentations to share Shorewood news with agents; distribute *Shorewood Today* magazines, informational “walking kits,” etc.
- § Created a homeowner cost comparison sheet to dispel rumors about high taxes and other myths



ALSO ESTABLISHED DEVELOPER INITIATIVES

- § Recruit area developers to take an interest in Shorewood
- § Stage developer Open House to share news about commercial development opportunities



BRANDING SUMMARY:

A consistent message across all marketing vehicles defines our high quality of living

- § Knowing who we are, and what we offer, enables us to market the community in a positive way and promote our most valuable assets
- § The Shorewood “brand” permeates other areas/departments and is a catalyst for new Village policies and procedures



Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures NEW DEVELOPMENT “BUZZ”

- § Three new mixed-use properties developed/constructed over the last three years:
 - The Cornerstone
 - Ravenna
 - Lighthouse 4041

- § \$1 million+ spent for new facade improvements in business district



Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures NEW DEVELOPMENTS: THE CORNERSTONE, RAVENNA AND LIGHTHORSE 4041





Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

- § Established a Customer Service Department with formal customer service training, including:
- Dedicated department manager
 - Well-trained customer service staff
 - Focus on unparalleled customer service at all levels



Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- § Partnered with Milwaukee County on upgrades at Estabrook Park (e.g., dog park)
- § Supported new playing fields at High School and Lake Bluff school
- § Focused on Atwater Beach (Lake Michigan) renaissance
- § Assumed major park upgrades





PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN





Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

- § Establish budget and implement
- § Revise for new sewer projects



Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures CONSERVATION EFFORTS

- § Shorewood designated an eco-friendly community
- § Created a sustainability plan
- § Created Green Leaf Awards for businesses
- § Created comprehensive bike plan
- § Created green infrastructure pilot projects
- § Support Shoreland zoning ordinance
- § Established a formal Conservation Committee





Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- § Specific zoning and ordinance changes
- § District branding and marketing
- § Developer recruitment
- § Streetscape recommendations
- § Facade Improvement Program
- § Expansion of TIF District
- § Business Loan and Grant Programs

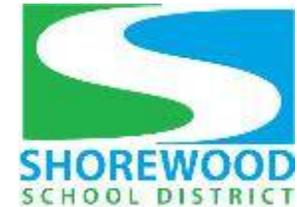


Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures RETAIL RECRUITMENT STUDY

- § Collected retail attraction data for Shorewood with focus on demographic characteristics to support new business recruitment efforts
- § Conducted survey of current customers to identify shopping patterns and dining behaviors
- § Identified potential markets for future business recruitment
- § Examined peer communities to identify possible business recruitment candidates
- § Developed process to assist Village in conducting/sustaining retail recruitment



Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures SCHOOL/VILLAGE LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE



- § Joint committee of Village and School Boards and community residents formed to:
- Identify ways to increase school enrollment
 - Fill school funding gaps
 - Study joint services opportunities
 - Track reasons why or why not residents choose Shorewood



Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures CARING, CONNECTING COMMUNITY PROGRAM

- § Neighbor assistance program
- § Neighborhood of the Year awards
- § Promotion of block parties
- § Support of older residents who need help:
 - Spring and fall yard clean-up
 - Home inspection program
 - Coordination with Senior Resource Center and Shorewood Connects Neighbors program
- § Neighborhood mediation program





Implement New Policies/Plans/Procedures BUILDING AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT

- § Established a formal property maintenance program (exterior) to support preservation of housing stock
- § Maintain code compliance program to support home sales
- § Hired dedicated code enforcement staff
- § Created duplex/attic conversion programs
 - Using \$350,000 fund balance, established pilot program with zero percent interest for duplex conversions, attic improvements and first-time home buyers



ENSURING SUCCESS: Ongoing updating of documents, processes and procedures

- § Updated marketing survey 2009 (part of branding program)
- § Updated Vision Plan 2009
- § Annual staff strategic plan for vision implementation
- § Plan implementation matrix
- § Senior housing survey 2010
- § Comprehensive Village plan incorporating all existing plans 2009
- § Update Central District Plan 2012-13



SUMMARY

- § Formalized vision plan
- § Community branding key to establishing who we are – to decide where we want to go and how to get there
- § Creation of Master Plans that carefully plan out next steps
- § Dedicated staff carry out implementation
- § Ongoing review of plans and strategies to keep focused and ensure results
- § Buy-in at all levels of community: government, schools, businesses and residents

Dedicated Branding Efforts Can Transform Today's Municipalities



by Chris Swartz, Village Manager, Shorewood, WI

October 11, 2012

The concept of “branding” is not new in today’s competitive business world. Branding is a marketing technique used by businesses to establish a unique image that differentiates their product or service with a goal of attracting new customers and retaining loyal, existing relationships.

If branding works for commercial enterprises, couldn’t it be an effective tool for today’s municipalities? Couldn’t it be a way to encourage businesses to locate in a community, influence home-buying, attract new customers to the business district and reinforce community pride? The Village of Shorewood, Wisconsin, got the answers when we undertook our own branding program.

The Village already had many solid advantages to build on, including our rich heritage and ideal location. As the first suburb north of the City of Milwaukee, we were incorporated in 1900 as the Village of East Milwaukee before changing our name to Shorewood in 1917. The Village is bordered by Lake Michigan to the east, the Milwaukee River to the west and the Village of Whitefish Bay to the north. Our shared southern border with the City of Milwaukee gives us close access to downtown and close proximity to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Through the years, we’ve maintained our tradition of offering a charming, small-town/urban living experience.

With a population of more than 13,500, Shorewood’s 1.5 square miles are densely populated with a variety of ethnic groups representing families, single professionals and seniors. Housing is diverse with unique architecture, including stately mansions, single-family and duplex homes, condominiums and apartments. The Village continues to maintain property values, neighborhood stability, a reputation for safety, convenience and commercial vibrancy due to an

active TIF and Business Improvement District. One of our greatest assets is our excellent, award-winning school district.

Along with the good news, Shorewood Village government and the School District faced some tough challenges about six years ago, including a declining population and declining school enrollment. Another roadblock was limited master planning by the Village, and no big picture policy direction to help stakeholders focus on the same goals and objectives. To move forward, we needed a visioning plan to identify who and where we are? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? Most important, to ensure our success, we needed buy-in from stakeholders at all levels: government, schools, businesses and residents.

Taking the First Steps

The Village led the way by creating a Vision , master plan and a long-range Financial Plan as well as a commitment to undertake our own branding effort that built on our strengths and marketed to current and potential residents, businesses, customers and commercial developers. We began the process by retaining a professional communications agency to provide comprehensive research, including focus groups to identify attributes and benefits of Shorewood living. The studies confirmed our positioning of Shorewood as an ideal place to live, work, shop and raise a family. They also recognized positive attributes such as diversity of people and architecture, easy access and convenience to everything, a nationally recognized School District, safe and friendly neighborhoods, and a vibrant business district. The studies also brought out other valuable imaging possibilities. The Village got high marks as an unpretentious and welcoming community with small-town serenity. At the same time we were viewed as lively and sophisticated. This unique combination gave us the fuel for positioning Shorewood as a quaint village setting with a refreshing diversity of people and architecture, just minutes from Milwaukee. It also gave us a take-away line (slogan): “Just two feet from everything.”

Bringing Shorewood to the Market Place

Armed with information to head us in the right direction, we launched our branding initiative. A marketing committee comprised of representatives from the Village, Schools and Business District, along with local residents, worked together to compile a marketing plan for achieving the following objectives of creating:

- A unique lifestyle website (shorewoodtoday.com)
- Advertising – print and on-line
- Promotional videos – three-part series about schools, businesses and Village life
- Television commercials
- Special events (public art exhibits and community concerts)

Realtor and developer initiatives, promotional kits and open house events were also introduced and continue to be used to reflect the Village’s proactive approach to attracting new residents, businesses and commercial developers. To improve the quality and frequency of communications with residents, the Village also created a full-color magazine, Shorewood Today. The publication has proven to be an affordable advertising vehicle for local businesses, an effective promotional medium for realtors and a useful recruiting tool for new businesses. The magazine went on to win a national communications award.

A Catalyst for Positive Change and Progress

The enthusiastic acceptance of our branding program was a spark that energized the Village, schools, residents and businesses. By motivating a synergy among these groups, Shorewood has created and maintained a comprehensive marketing “umbrella” while spurring much positive action: a Customer Service Department was formed to ensure unparalleled service to the community. A parks improvement plan was launched. The creation of a Conservation Committee accelerated the implementation of a sustainability plan with “green” awards for businesses and the promotion of eco-friendly habits among residents. Neighborhoods were united and strengthened by programs including neighborhood-of-the-year awards, support of older residents and neighbor mediation services. A property management program was formed to support preservation of housing stock and maintain code compliance. The Village and the School Board forged a stronger bond and united in efforts to identify ways to increase school enrollment and consider joint services opportunities. A retail recruitment study of shopping/dining patterns and potential possibilities for business development has been the stimulus for happenings all along our main commercial corridor. On our exciting “north end,” two mixed-use commercial developments, The Cornerstone, and the soon-to-open Ravenna, include new and unique shops and restaurants that are attracting new customers to the area. Mid-village, a similar mixed-use complex, the Lighthouse 4041, is under construction and will open in 2013.

The Shorewood branding program is a resounding success that has brought a new vitality and vibrancy to our entire Village and positions us to take on the challenges and opportunities of today and the future.

To learn more about the Village of Shorewood, visit <http://villageofshorewood.org>.