

Downtown Ravenswood Partners

Meeting minutes for September 15, 2025 Board Meeting

In Attendance:

Andrea Knopp, Melanie Mosser, Todd Ritchie, Dee Scrichfield, Jennifer Casey, John Casey, Martin Unrue, Chad Sharp, Dawn Sharp, Francesca George.

Strategic Guidance

- **New member appointment:** Chad Sharp officially approved and welcomed as 9th board member, completing full board capacity
 - Professional background: 26+ years IT experience, 20 years management
 - Strong creative skills in painting, drawing, sculpting, woodworking
 - Community-focused mindset aligned with organizational mission
 - Board now at maximum capacity with strategic skills mix
- **Property acquisition opportunity:** Macintosh hardware lot available for \$600,000 from Bob Winebrenner and Brian Gould
 - Sellers motivated but frustrated with city relations
 - Strategic location critical for downtown development vision
 - Board unanimously approved pursuing design services for this corner property
 - Alternative to expensive community center rebuild at existing site
- **Transformation strategy development:** Molly presented Main Street West Virginia conference insights
 - Small-scale manufacturing identified as optimal strategy for Ravenswood
 - Makers and artists thrive in flexible downtown spaces, paying 10-15% more than retail positions
 - Workshop scheduled for January to develop an implementation roadmap
 - Local foods and maker economy proposed as primary transformation focus

Operational Feedback

- **Meeting technology implementation:** Board chair using dual note-taking software (Granola and Wave) for enhanced documentation
 - Granola used for laptop-based meetings
 - Wave available for phone-based meetings
 - Significantly improved meeting minutes quality compared to manual process

- **Grant application processes:** Established a systematic approach for funding requests
 - All committee projects must receive board approval before proceeding
 - Dollar amounts specified with “not to exceed” provisions
 - Retaining wall mural project approved for \$1,500 (increased from initial \$1,300)
- **Committee structure refinement:** Design committee actively engaged in multiple concurrent projects
 - Fall planter installation (20 mums, approximately \$300 budget)
 - Memorial bench program expanding with 3-5 additional installations
 - Coordination with other committees on integrated projects

Financial Insights

- **Current financial position:** Treasury report shows strong standing at \$52,959 including pending \$8,000 Arts grant
 - Original \$50,000 city funding plus \$7,000 from first event donations
 - August expenses: \$7,400; September expenses: \$4,706
 - Operating margin of \$15,000 in unallocated funds
- **Executive director salary increase:** Unanimously approved increase from \$24,000 to \$28,500 annually
 - \$16,000 covered by Fund for Ravenswood grant funding
 - City responsibility reduced to \$12,500
 - Salary competitive with similar positions nationally
 - ROI justified by successful grant acquisition track record
- **Video production investment:** Approved \$2,100 for six-video business spotlight series with Shane Johnson
 - \$350 per video rate negotiated with Shane
 - Application-based selection process for featured businesses
 - Part of \$5,000 annual video production budget

Risks and Opportunities

- **Community center vs. downtown development**
 - \$4 million insurance settlement
 - Limited parking availability at proposed location
 - Alternative: invest in downtown development with Macintosh lot acquisition

- **Communication gaps identified:** Residents working outside Ravenswood lack awareness of downtown activities
 - Proposed solution: bi-annual postcard mailers to 5-10 minute radius around city limits
 - Target audience includes professionals who don't frequent local businesses or use social media
 - Newsletter signup promotion strategy needed
- **Grant funding pipeline:** Multiple applications in progress totaling significant potential income
 - T-Mobile \$50,000 wayfinding signage grant (due September 30)
 - Jackson County Community Foundation \$9,300 (high probability)
 - EPA \$50,000 environmental assessment grant (dispersed October 1)
 - USDA Community Facilities Grant for potential community center

Key Decisions (Motions Submitted and Approved)

- **Board appointments:** Chad Sharp officially voted onto board (unanimous approval)
 - Francesca approved as new member (referenced from previous meeting)
 - Both appointments require city council approval at next meeting
- **Budget allocations approved:**
 - \$1,500 for retaining wall mural project (not to exceed)
 - \$2,100 for six-video business spotlight series
 - \$300 estimated for fall planter installation
- **Grant strategies confirmed:**
 - City council to approve \$8,000 advance for tile mosaic project (reimbursable)
 - Design services to focus on Macintosh hardware corner property
 - Scope reduction for HLC design standards grants to a commercial focus only, or reduced requirements for the residential historic area. Molly to meet with the HLC and SHPO to confirm.
- **Bylaws adoption:** Board bylaws unanimously approved and enacted
 - Formal governance structure now in place
 - Submitted to city council for final approval
- **Project prioritization:** Macintosh lot development identified as primary strategic focus
 - Community-led planning approach recommended

- Phased implementation strategy for maximum grant funding potential
- Integration with existing downtown revitalization efforts

Chat with meeting transcript: <https://notes.granola.ai/d/af80386f-0928-4c91-aca8-176206c21000>