



November 4, 2015

Deb Johnson, Director
Office of Community Development
Maine Office of Economic and Community Development
59 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0059

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I write to you today in support of reinstatement of Downtown Revitalization Grants and support for the Maine Downtown Center. Having worked in Millinocket in their downtown network, as former director of Main Street Skowhegan, and now as Executive Director of Waterville Main Street, I am proud of the way communities use this asset-based program to make their communities better.

- Main Street is a volunteer program that leverages community resources. For instance, last week alone in downtown Waterville, over 100 people and over 100 businesses turned out for our annual Kringleville auction, celebrating the joy of the season and our community pride.
- Valuable training and technical assistance from the Maine Downtown Center is available to all Maine communities, whether or not they have a designated program. We as managers are also teachers and trainers to other Maine towns.
- The Main Street program activities create a culture of confidence where the Paul Boghossians of Hathaway, the Colby Colleges, and the Charlie Gigueres of Silver Street Tavern will invest and participate enthusiastically.
- The Commercial core of Maine's downtowns is where the tax revenue per acre is highest, infrastructure already exists, and the most small businesses are located, making it a prudent investment.

When we think about the future of Maine, we believe wholeheartedly that in addition to businesses being attracted to where they can be most efficient, they also consider location where people most want to be, and increasingly, it's downtown.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Olsen'.

Jennifer Olsen
Executive Director