

Thank you for being here tonight for this community meeting. We want to share with you, our neighbors, what the German Village Society's Streetscape Committee has been up to for the past 18 months. It is recommending improvements to safety along Third Street and restoration of the historic feel to this corridor. Third Street acts both as kind of a Main Street to our Village and as our main artery to downtown Columbus, as well as the gateway that welcomes our visitors coming FROM downtown and the interstate.

Much thought, detailed research and valuable community input over the past several years have gone into developing this master plan for Third Street. This project began almost 15 years ago when the Society applied for a grant for the re-design of the Third Street Bridge coming into German Village. Once the I-70/71 project came along, Society leaders convinced the City to allow these grant funds to be used for creating a comprehensive, historically consistent master plan for Third Street.

Fifteen years! The fact that our focus on the safety and esthetics of our streetscape has been an ongoing, long-term effort underscores the importance that our organization and neighborhood place on the topic. That's why you're here tonight. In fact, this night is at least the sixth feedback and

ideas meeting to which we've invited the public. Past German Village Society President and current Trustee Dr. Brian Santin shared with me a series of blogs he did during his tenure at head of the committee, each announcing public forums and invitations to have input. So – welcome TO the process, or welcome back! Yours are among hundreds of voices who have been at the table over the years, and those opinions are reflected in what you'll see here.

Since that \$250,000 grant was secured from the city in 2008, the Society has worked with the City and its consultant, Kinzelman-Kline-Gossman, on a long-term plan for Third Street. More than \$150,000 has been spent to date. The Streetscape Committee has been evaluating this plan during monthly meetings since Kinzelman handed us its package of ideas in August of 2010. Committee members, which include business owners, residents and of course GERMAN VILLAGE SOCIETY members, have spent those many months sorting through and debating all of the possible options we saw in the KKG report, and working on delineating the next steps for this major undertaking.

Current Streetscape Committee chair Tim Bibler told me the heady days were back in 2009 when the Committee considered itself the "Dream Team" – thinking big and hoping for the moon. It was kind of a comedown to have to turn Committee

members' attention to being the "reality team" and start to make decisions based on what's really possible. That pragmatism is what you'll see tonight: The best decisions from among all the possibilities.

The key elements of the plan are: rebricking the street, adding bike lanes, cleaning up utility lines and poles, consolidating signage and restoring the historic look of sign posts, replacing and restoring limestone curbs and adding pedestrian lighting. This proposal represents basic safety and upkeep issues: we need pedestrian lighting and don't have ANY. We need additional street lighting. We as taxpayers deserve proper drainage – and that's in large part an issue of our curbs being buried in asphalt over time. Proper curbs also allow property owners to fix up their sidewalks. Consolidating poles and signage means fewer driver distractions.

This project also represents a development opportunity for the city: because German Village is one of Central Ohio's top tourist attractions, efforts to create pedestrian-friendly streets, bike-friendly lanes, appropriate lighting and attractive signage will only enhance our reputation as a destination and a source of revenue for the city. That's important for those of us living and working here because we need for the city to see us as "deserving" of its attention.

Let me suggest – this is just a beginning. We care about all of our streets. Not all of us live or work on Third Street, but we have to start somewhere. Third Street is our beginning.

So here's what we're up to tonight. Longtime German Village resident Connie Swain – who is known by many for her walking tours of Third Street – is going to give us a brief introduction. Then we'll hear from Streetscape Committee Chair Tim Bibler about the nuts and bolts of the plan and how his committee made its decisions for proposal. Nelson Genshaft will then kickoff and facilitate our community meeting. Sprinkled here in the room tonight are members of the Board of Trustees who will be responsible for taking the final proposal to the City and asking for the pre-engineering study. We are taking copious notes of what you have to say tonight, then the committee will meet again to synthesize your feedback against what they've proposed. They'll bring back to the board a supplemental report that reflects any changes, and then we'll begin our process with the city.

The ultimate success of the Third Street master plan depends on the support of our neighborhood. We hope you will join us in advocating for the safety and historic improvements along our Main Street.

Here's Connie Swain....