

Questions and Answers from the Mainspring Meetup
Held January 18, 2023

Note: these Q&As are in no particular order

1. Regarding the development of the Ephrata Mountain, where would the access points be?

We are just at the beginning stages of planning the development of the Mountain. Through grant funding, we will secure a planning and design firm with great experience in Parks & Recreation. The development will be in phases. Phase I, this first year, includes forming the committee for this project, securing the funding and hiring the firm. Phase II, or the second year, includes presenting the drawn plan to the Community at large, addressing the Community concerns, and launching a fundraising campaign to begin the construction. Phase III entails the actual construction of the project.

2. Can you install more bike racks?

As the need increases, more racks will be installed. Current locations of bike racks include Scratch Bakes, the Whistle Stop Plaza, the Klinefelter Group building, and at the corner of Washington Avenue and Main Street.

3. Where is the access to the Rail Trail?

The Rail Trail can be accessed from the center of town through the alley between 19 East Main Street (Wiggles & Giggles Bldg) and 1 East Main Street (Klinefelter Insurance Group bldg.). It also can be accessed from Fulton Street. A public lot is located at the corner of Fulton Street and Railroad Avenue, at the Veterans Plaza.

Additionally, the Rail Trail extends slightly past the Whistle Stop Plaza at 16 East Main Street. Plans are underway to extend the Rail Trail through Ephrata Twp into East Cocalico Twp.

4. How is Mainspring of Ephrata addressing affordable housing issues?

Mainspring of Ephrata serves as a supportive partner in this issue, as in all other community issues that our struggling families and individuals face. While it is not part of Mainspring's mission to directly address affordable housing solutions; ie, initiate housing programs, provide intake and seek housing for people specifically, we feel strongly that we can play a supportive role to other social services and human services agencies, the Lancaster Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Lancaster, and the municipality.

5. We see an increase in homeless people on Main Street. What is Mainspring of Ephrata's plan to deal with the homeless?

How well a community manages its homeless population is an indicator of the strength of that community. Again, as with other community issues, such as drug addiction, affordable housing, domestic violence, etc, Mainspring serves in a supportive role to other social services and human services agencies, Lancaster Homelessness Coalition (LancoMyHome), the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Lancaster, the healthcare system and the municipality.

Mainspring believes that *eliminating* homelessness is not an attainable goal. There are a multitude of reasons why an individual or family finds themselves homeless. Additionally, there is no data whatsoever indicating that the decline in Ephrata's economic vibrancy and the sluggish recruitment of new business is caused by our homeless on Main Street. That simply is not true.

6. Is there money for public art?

Potentially, there are grants that can be submitted for public art initiatives, but these are not guaranteed, and the majority of grants are matching grants. The best success in funding public art initiatives is to pursue grass root efforts; ex., campaigns to raise funds from individuals and organizations that believe in the effort.

7. Parking is a problem in Ephrata. There is no parking. What is Mainspring doing about the parking problem?

In June 2019, a parking study was done addressing the perceived parking issues plaguing downtown Ephrata. The summary of this study indicated that, "...the parking data and usage trends collected during the hourly parking counts revealed that downtown Ephrata currently has more than adequate total parking spaces available during a typical weekday." But that's not to say there isn't room for improvement. Mainspring has formed a "Parking Committee" to address and implement parking solutions in partnership with the municipality. Solutions include beautification and lighting of alleyways accessing public lots off of Main Street, improved wayfinding signage, and utilization of Google to help visitors find public parking on their mobile devices. Certainly, as our businesses grow and pedestrian traffic increases, more lots will need to be created. Mainspring also wants to foster resources that encourage more alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling and public transportation.

8. Will we have more of these public meetings?

Absolutely. It is very important that Mainspring stay attuned with the perceptions of the community. Since this Mainspring Meetup was such a success, we plan to make it an annual event. Surveys continue to be an ideal method of gathering community sentiment. Mainspring encourages all Borough residents to please complete the surveys when they become available.

9. Is there State funding available to open businesses in downtown Ephrata? There is nothing in Ephrata. We have friends come to visit and they always want to go to Lititz because Lititz has everything. There is nothing in Ephrata.

There is no State funding specifically to open businesses in any downtown. The goals and vision that Mainspring has shared today are designed to encourage businesses complimentary to these goals to open in Ephrata. The quality of the space, the relationship between business owner and landlord, the solidness of the business plan, the business's financial situation to open and operate successfully all play a part in businesses opening downtown. Mainspring strongly desires that property owners buy in to this vision for downtown revitalization and wait for that right business to come along. Mainspring strongly desires good relationships with property owners and wants to encourage them to provide the high quality space that is so important to business recruitment. Mainspring strongly encourages new businesses to share their business plan with us so that we can make recommendations if needed. We want our businesses to be positioned for success from the get-go.

It has taken Lititz and downtown Lancaster many years to finally reap the current rewards that they are experiencing. As Bill Arrowood, field services specialist of the PA Downtown Center, said, "Ephrata is a community on the rise." Revitalization is a journey that does not happen overnight. And it takes coordinated effort among many willing partners. Mainspring suggests to its community members that they patronize the businesses already here. Look to Ephrata first, before looking outside of the town. For example, the New Main Theatre, under new ownership, shows first run movies. Check out the New Main first before going to Lititz or Lancaster.

Mainspring also encourages community members to perhaps look at things with a fresh perspective. Yes, an insurance group has purchased the former Ephrata Review building at the square as their primary

office space. This brings Monday through Friday pedestrian foot traffic to the downtown. That foot traffic will need to access services and amenities that are conveniently close by – a quick jaunt to the pharmacy, lunch on Main Street, or even after-hours Happy Hours. All of this generates economy for our downtown, and encourages more businesses to open.