



May 21, 2016

Des Moines Business Record
The Depot at Fourth
100 4th Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

To Whole It May Concern:

In 2009, when I first came to know Erin Chambers, I was impressed to see the combination of intelligence, common sense, poise, and leadership ability in someone so young. Over the years, as I have interacted with Erin through the Newton Historic Preservation Commission and Newton Main Street, my respect for her has grown.

Following a recommendation of the City's community-wide Comprehensive Plan, Erin was instrumental in the establishment of the Historic Preservation Commission in 2008. Since that time she has acted as the City's liaison to the Commission, attending our meetings, preparing a number of successful grant applications, coordinating with the State Historic Preservation Office, and helping guide the Commission through the process of getting Newton's downtown listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Whenever the opportunity arises she is willing to publicize and educate the public about the city's history.

In 2013, when City leaders decided it was time to apply to become a Main Street community, Erin assumed a leadership role in the effort. Working with the local organizing committee she helped synchronize our program goals with Newton's Comprehensive Plan, and she authored the application papers.

In the two years since Newton has been in the Main Street program, Erin has taken an active role in seeing that those goals are being achieved. Last year she was instrumental in the hiring of consultants who prepared design guidelines and a streetscape design plan for the Downtown Historic District. She has worked with Main Street leadership on plans for implementing the consultants' recommendations, and she has collaborated on a façade grant program that will assist downtown property owners in making improvements to their buildings. She has shown her faith in the Design Committee by granting us permission to take on several projects in the historic district; she does not dictate to us, but we know she is available to offer guidance when we need it.

Largely outside of working hours, Erin remains an ex-officio member of the Main Street board of directors, attends our design committee meetings when requested, and regularly participates in downtown "clean up" days.

GET TO KNOW *Newton*

With her characteristic energy and positive attitude, Erin has assumed more and more responsibilities as her job evolved from City Planner to Director of Planning and Zoning. The accomplishments I have described document only a small portion of her activities. Erin is already a leader in City government and is always ready to take on new challenges.

Sincerely,

Rita Reinheimer
Newton Historic Preservation Commissioner
Chair, Newton Main Street Design Committee