



## Summer Toolkit Sustainable Main Street

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### Speaker Biographies & Contact Info

**Kamala Bauers, Owner, Hotel Floyd**

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Kamala Bauers is the owner, with her husband Jack Wall, of the Hotel Floyd. Wall and Bauers bought the downtown Floyd land in 2002 to design and build the hotel with the idea of bringing "green" lodging into downtown. Both entrepreneurs are committed to the intentional growth of the beautiful town of Floyd and to introduce responsible tourism to the area. Bauers is also a founding member of Partnership for Floyd, a diverse group of citizens working to preserve and enhance the unique life and beauty of Floyd and its surroundings.

**Bill Blatter, Director of Planning, City of Lexington**

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Bill Blatter has been the planning director in Lexington for more than 15 years. Blatter's previous planning experience includes several years as the planning director for Annapolis, Maryland and the base planner for Homestead Air Force Base. He also worked as a community organizer for energy issues, an organic farmer and had a charter sail boat business in the Florida Keys for five years. Blatter presently live in an off-the-grid, passive solar house of his own design.

**Suzi Carter, Marketing and Membership Coordinator, Friendly City Food Co-op**

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As the marketing, membership and outreach coordinator for Friendly City Food Co-op in Harrisonburg, Suzi Carter worked as Friendly City's only employee for the better part of 2010 to raise the capital necessary for the co-op to sign a lease, hire a general manager and open its doors in June of this year. With a degree in sociology and Spanish, and a background in events, start-ups and community organizing, she welcomed the opportunity to work on everything from communications and rebranding to outreach and human resources. Through her role as outreach coordinator, Carter helped to found the Valley Crop Mob in collaboration with James Madison University's Earth Club, the Harrisonburg Farmers' Market and the Office of Children and Youth's Youth Council. She also serves on the boards of Wayside Center for Population Education, Community Resource Center and Harrisonburg's Downtown Dining Alliance.

**Becky Clay Christensen, Managing Principal, The Clay Christensen Group, LLC**

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Becky Clay Christensen is the managing principal of the Clay Christensen Group LLC. She has been a facilitator and organizational consultant for 15 years and in public service for more than 25 years working with local and state governments, as well as for community development trade associations and teaming with engineering and architectural firms. Clay specializes in public process, leadership development, executive coaching and teams. Her work is grounded from an affordable housing and community

development orientation but extends into the areas of small-business development, health care, transportation and nonprofit administration.

**Sarah Whiting Cooleen, Director of Community Resources and Outreach, Preservation Virginia**

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Sarah Whiting Cooleen joined Preservation Virginia in 2006 as the Revolving Fund program manager. The Revolving Fund Program is dedicated to saving Virginia's endangered historic properties from demolition and severe neglect. Cooleen's other duties include acting as project manager for the Preservation Virginia's annual conference and workshops. In April 2011, Cooleen was promoted to director of community resources and outreach as a result of her efforts to promote Preservation Virginia's mission through social media outlets. She still manages the Revolving Fund Program. Cooleen worked for Historic Richmond Foundation from 1999-2006 where she held the following positions: project manager, director of development and special projects and managing director.

**Andrea Dono, Program Manager of Research and Training, National Trust Main Street Center**

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Andrea Dono brings more than eight years of Main Street Approach experience through her work at the National Trust Main Street Center. As program manager of research and training, she tracks national trends and case studies, assists in the development of trainings and national conference educational sessions, and leads research projects. For the last four years, Dono has been analyzing the growth of the Main Street field as it relates to sustainability and has developed case studies and best practices for both urban and small town programs. She also has been serving on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Sustainability Taskforce, and recently, joined the Sustainability Design Assistance Team, which is a group, based in Washington, D.C., of technical assistance providers in this field from NEA, EPA, ULI, APA, NACO, USGBC, US Conference of Mayors and other organizations. In 2010, Dono surveyed the field to collect data from revitalization professionals regarding their progress in sustainability, which informed the Main Street Green Summit that she lead in February 2011 – a convening of national partners including USGBC, LISC, BALLE, EPA, USDA, HUD, Virginia Tech, National Complete Streets Coalition and Main Street practitioners who discussed opportunities and challenges for greening Main Street. She is an integral part of the National Trust Main Street Center's team that is currently developing its green revitalization platform.

**Tom Griffin, Consultant to the Virginia Green Program, RVA Green**

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Tom Griffin is a partner of RVA Green Management Services. He serves as spokesperson and lead consultant to Virginia Green, the state's partnership program to encourage green practices in sectors of its tourism industry. Virginia Green now has more than 1,000 participating hotels, restaurants, attractions, convention centers, welcome and visitor centers, wineries, marinas, special events and supporting organizations that have voluntarily committed to meet the program's core requirements and reduce their environmental impacts over time.

**Jennifer Heyns, Executive Director, The Partnership for Warrenton Foundation**

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Jennifer Heyns has been with the Partnership for one year now. Prior to championing for Old Town Warrenton, Heyns was a freelance writer, marketing consultant and authored a book in the genre of

healthcare memoir. She is a business management graduate of George Mason University and is learning to navigate the world of teenage boys and testosterone through parenting two of the best sons ever.

**Sonja Ingram, Field Representative, Preservation Virginia**

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Sonja Ingram started working for Preservation Virginia in 2008 as the field representative. In this role, Ingram works directly with local historic preservation organizations and individuals across the state on a variety of preservation issues. Before coming to Preservation Virginia, she was an archaeologist and worked in various parts of the U.S. and Puerto Rico. She also worked as a land preservationist and as a historic preservation planner for local governments in Virginia and Maryland. Ingram has a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Maryland.

**Jo Kelley, Executive Director, Altavista On Track**

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Jo Kelley hails originally from Idaho. Kelley graduated from Boise State University with degrees in English and gerontology. She started her career at the Idaho State Office on Aging, where she coordinated a Governor's Initiative on Home Care for the Elderly. She went on to the Idaho Transportation Department and became manager of the Office of Highway Safety. Kelley served there until moving to Washington, D.C., to work for the U.S. DOT, National Highway Traffic Services Administration, and administered highway safety programs at the national level.

She moved to Altavista with her husband in 2006, and, since 2008, has served as executive director of Altavista On Track. She also serves as the program administrator for Altavista Economic Development Authority.

**Joe Lerch, Director of Environmental Policy, Virginia Municipal League**

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Joe Lerch is a former local government planner and member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Before joining the league staff in 2009, Lerch worked most recently as principal planner for the City of Richmond. He also worked as a planner in the City of Fairfax and Spotsylvania County. He worked as senior land planner for the Bay Foundation for seven years beginning in 2001. In addition, he served as a planning commissioner for the City of Fredericksburg in 2004-2006. As director of environmental policy, Lerch represents the interests of member local governments in the General Assembly, staffs the Environmental Quality Policy Committee and oversees the Go Green Virginia environmental initiative, which encourages communities to take innovative steps to reduce energy usage and promote sustainability. He graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in geology and holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech.

**Louis J. Malon, Director of Preservation Services, Preservation Virginia**

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Louis Malon has been with the APVA Preservation Virginia since 1982. Hired as associate treasurer, he has also held the position of business manager, director of administration and director of properties. He currently is the director of preservation services, and in this capacity, he manages the preservation and museum operations at all of APVA Preservation Virginia's 28 historic properties, as well as seeking to expand

APVA's outreach through programs and selective marketing of technical preservation services. He has been working on a recent project directing the enhancement of the physical facilities at Historic Jamestowne, including the construction of APVA's first purpose-built museum facility, the Archaearium, which opened in May 2006.

Malon received his bachelor's degree in philosophy and religious studies from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1977, graduating Summa cum Laude. He is, again, a student at VCU completing work towards a master's degree in architectural history. Malon has delivered papers at several professional gatherings from Tallahassee, Florida (FSU Architectural History Seminar) to Portland, Maine (APTI Conference). Malon and his wife, Lucia, live in a historic 1907 home in Blackstone.

**Caroline Nowery, Program Specialist, Virginia Community Capital, Inc.**

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Caroline Nowery joined Virginia Community Capital as an advisory services program specialist in August 2010 and is responsible for coordinating outreach, training and technical assistance projects. Prior to joining VCC, Nowery served for five years as the director of the SBA Women's Business Center in Richmond, which provides training, technical assistance and access to capital for LMI entrepreneurs in Virginia. She is a graduate of Leadership Metro Richmond and serves on the board of the Virginia Microenterprise Network.

**Kate Petranec, Board President, Berryville Main Street**

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President of Berryville Main Street and board member since 2003, Kate Petranec is principal of her own marketing consulting firm, founded in 1979 to advise clients on the profitable use of direct response advertising. During that time, she has served scores of clients in both the for-profit and not-for-profit worlds including The National Geographic Society, U.S. News and World Report, AARP, the Smithsonian, GEICO, Friends of the Kennedy Center, IBM and USA Today. Retiring from the Berryville Main Street board this month, Petranec will remain a volunteer helping broaden the reach and revenue of the not-for-profit's Fire House Gallery, which she helped create.

**Tom Raab, Chairman, Halifax Education Foundation, Inc.**

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Tom Raab has been a downtown retailer of furniture and appliances and active in downtown organizations for 31 years. Raab earned a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University and a master's from Duke University. He served on both the Town of South Boston Planning Commission and Town Council. Raab is currently chairman of the Halifax Education Foundation, a continuing education center located in and serving the residents of Halifax County and Southern Virginia, charged with linking local and regional colleges and universities together to offer post secondary, higher education and workforce training programs.

**Rebecca Watson, Business Owner, Turtle Lane Gifts**

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Rebecca Watson was born in Staunton, but left at the age of 13 and lived in Sarasota, Florida for 25 years. Watson has been happily married to her high school sweetheart for 24 years. Together they have two great sons. Watson was the administrative assistant for the Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) when the former owner of Turtle Lane Gifts came into the office to notify them she would be closing the store to care for her aging in-laws. Before Watson knew it, she had agreed to purchase her business "turn-

key"! That was over three years ago and she really loves her store. Turtle Lane Gifts has been in downtown Staunton as an antique store for 40 years, and since purchasing the store, Watson has expanded to unique gift items. She is really proud of Staunton's wonderful downtown!

**Meghan Williamson, Executive Director, Staunton Creative Community Fund**

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Meghan Williamson is the executive director of the Staunton Creative Community Fund, a nonprofit that strengthens communities in the Shenandoah Valley by funding and supporting local farmers, artisans, entrepreneurs and innovators. Prior to joining the Staunton Fund, Williamson served as the director of economic development for the City of Waynesboro, where she led the city's effort to attract new companies, encourage the expansion of existing industries, promote retail development and revitalize downtown. She has a strong track record collaborating with both small, start-up businesses, as well as larger manufacturers and commercial developers. She was instrumental in securing the Enterprise Zone designations for both the City of Staunton and the City of Waynesboro and continues to advise businesses on maximizing their resources through financing options and available state and local incentive programs.

Williamson has worked as a researcher and policy analyst for the Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based think-tank, and with numerous organizations along the I-81 corridor including the Blue Ridge Business Journal, the Southwestern Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank, the Artisans Center of Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.

**Marc Willson, Retail and Restaurant Industry Consultant, Virginia Small Business Development Center Network**

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Marc is currently the retail consultant at the Virginia Small Development Center (SBDC) Network at the George Mason University Mason Enterprise Center at the School of Public Policy. He brings 35 years of retail experience to bear in helping retail, restaurants and tourism-related small businesses refine and promote their concepts to the public. He conducts a series of seminars related to staying relevant to a changed customer and the fundamentals of retailing. He meets personally with small businesses throughout Virginia and has presented to more than 600 merchants and has conducted more than 250 confidential one-on-one counseling hours since July 2009.

In 1975, Willson started his retail career as co-owner of the largest distributor of Earth Shoes in the United States. As Earth Shoes went the way of the pet rock, Willson joined Britches of Georgetowne as a sales person and finished his 12-year career there as vice president of operations after growing the company from nine stores to 109. He then joined Circuit City and opened 83 mall-based Circuit City Express stores. At Crown Books, he managed 250 bookstores as vice president and general manager. The son of the founder of Circuit City asked him to be president and CEO of the Bicycle Exchange, a chain of bicycle superstores that he had invested in and was in dire need of a turnaround. He then took his career into cyberspace as the vice president of merchandising of an online college bookstore, specializing in textbooks and emblematic apparel. As president of Storetrax, Inc., he managed an Internet site dedicated to landlords and developers leasing retail space.

Most recently, he traveled to Dallas, Texas, to open the world's first energy efficiency store for Current Energy, LLC, a company funded by Ross Perot Jr. The store helps small businesses and residential customers reduce their consumption of gas, water and electricity. He continues to broker commercial power to industry and manufacturers in deregulated states throughout the country.