

“Richmond Summer Fun on Hunt for New Funding” (Contra Costa Times East Bay and Bay Area, 02/03/10, pg. A3-4)

Richmond Main Street Initiative is losing its main financial supporter and fears it will not be able to continue “Music on the Main”. The city redevelopment agency, which provides 75% of the Initiative’s budget (\$150,000/yr), has informed the group that there is no funding for the next fiscal year.

The redevelopment agency is currently undergoing monetary problems of its own, having gone down from a staff of 37 to 19. Steve Duran, Richmond’s community economic director, hopes that property assessments will climb again so the agency can rehire some staff.

Richmond Main Street had meetings last Friday and Monday to mobilize support. Chairman of the board, Arnie Kasendorf talks about the need for a greater variety of businesses, of galleries and restaurants and cafes open late for the theater crowd. He fears downtown will lose momentum without funding.

Richmond Main Street partners with Contra Costa Small Business Development to advise merchants, teams with the city to train and pay youth to work at businesses, and is launching an Art in Windows display at an otherwise empty storefront. Music on the Main and the holiday festival draw 200 people on average.

“We can’t solicit funds without staff,” Kasendorf said. “Don’t let downtown die like it did when Hilltop (Mall) was created.”

If you would like to get involved, you may visit: <http://www.richmondmainstreet.org/> or email admin@richmondmainstreet.org