

*Healthy and Vibrant Main Streets:
Unlocking the Potential of RI's Commercial Districts*

November 16, 2023

Speaker Biographies:



Kathy La Plante is the Senior Director of Coordinating Programs at [Main Street America](#), headquartered in Chicago. Kathy has over 30 years' experience working for and with the Main Street programs. Working for Main Street America, she provides training and technical services for cities of all sizes and works mostly closely with the 46 coordinating programs across the country. Prior to this position, Kathy was the first Director of the New Hampshire Main Street Center for over 10 years, assisting 23 communities in initiating local Main Street programs. She began her Main Street career in 1989 as the Executive Director of the Chippewa Falls (Wisconsin) Main Street Program, a 1996

Great American Main Street Award winner that recognized the top five downtown revitalization programs in the country.



Delilah Poupore has been the Executive Director of [Heart of Biddeford](#) since January of 2011 -- engaging the community in an effort to foster a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable downtown. Delilah grew up in the post-industrial city of Duluth Minnesota, attended college and grad school in Vermont, and worked in higher education primarily in Southern California for 16 years before moving to Maine with her husband. Heart of Biddeford recently received the Great American Main Street Award, which is Main Street America's highest award for historic preservation, community engagement, and inclusive development. Learn more about what Heart Of Biddeford is doing at www.heartofbiddeford.org and follow them

on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).



Gary Holloway is the Downtown Program Coordinator for the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development where he provides support for the Designated Downtown Program. He works in the field extensively, assisting communities with community revitalization initiatives, downtown organization development, and strategic planning, and provides other technical assistance as needed. Gary has worked in a variety of downtown and economic and community development capacities, co-founding and managing the Bellingham Public Market in Bellingham, WA from 2004-2010. In 2010 he moved back to the East Coast to serve as the project manager for the City of Vineland, NJ overseeing the development of the Landis

Marketplace downtown revitalization project and worked as Executive Director of Main Street Vineland, the local downtown organization.



Ed Gaskin has served as the Executive Director of Greater Grove Hall Main Streets for 10 years. Greater Grove Hall Main Streets is part of Boston Main Streets, a public-private initiative of the City of Boston, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation devoted to the continued revitalization of Boston's neighborhood commercial districts through design, technical and financial support in 20 districts across Boston.

Ed's work experience includes consulting at Deloitte and IBM and extensive business experience ranging from helping successful startups to Fortune 500 companies. He has also worked for the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, where he helped over 300 individuals start, expand or acquire businesses. He is also a prolific writer with an extensive list of publications. Gaskin has a bachelor's degree in marketing and a master's degree in management from MIT's Sloan School.



In 2022, **Michelle McCabe** was named as Executive Director of [Connecticut Main Street Center](#) (CMSC), a leading advocate and resource for downtown revitalization and management, providing technical information, regional cooperation, training and networking in communities across Connecticut and at the state level.

McCabe brings several years of non-profit management experience to CMSC, coming from [HomeBridge Ventures](#), a non-profit focused on holistic workforce development and re-entry programming for formerly incarcerated individuals, where she has served as Interim Executive Director since last October. Prior to that, McCabe spent seven years as Director of the [FEED Center](#) with The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport. In the course of this work, she built multiple programs from the ground up, leading strategic planning and fundraising efforts, and guiding boards and staff through organizational change. Her experience also extends to successful public/private collaborations, community engagement, and policy advocacy.