

Downtown Boone Development Association February 2016 Monthly Meeting + Winter Budget Retreat

In attendance: Chris Grasinger, Tucker Deal, Eric Plaag, Nealy Andrews, Lynne Mason, Colton Lenz, Jamie Goodman, Anna Roseman, Monica Caruso

Staff in attendance: Virginia Falck

Others in attendance: Officer Mike Foley, Justin Blalock

At 5:35 p.m. Colton called the meeting to order.

Virginia requested an amendment to the agenda to include a motion to approve the 2015 audit and 990 tax return prep.

Tucker made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Eric second. All approved.

After a review of the January minutes, **Colton made a motion to approve the minutes. Chris seconded. All approved.**

FINANCIAL

Monthly Statement of Financial Position: Virginia reported that there have been no major changes in the accounts since January, other than a few checks out of the MSD / public arts fund, specifically for Mark Freed's music arts program. She also noted that we had received an anonymous donation which offsets this, in addition to funds received from the instrument rental program.

Jamie made a motion to approve the statement of financial position. Colton seconded. All approved.

Audit: Virginia updated the board that Pricilla Norris has been handling the audits for the DBDA nonprofit financials the last several years. The audit costs \$3900 per year, which includes the generation of a 990 return; according to Virginia, this is about average for an audit. Virginia noted that we have a good relationship with Pricilla, and that Priscilla understands the MSD/town/nonprofit relationship.

Lynne asked if we had put the audit services out to bid recently, noted that is good practice to put things like this out for bid every 5 years or so. After a brief discussion, the board agreed that we should consider this for the next fiscal year, but proceed with Pricilla conducting the audit for fiscal year 2015 - 2016.

Colton made a motion to approve the expenditure for the audit and 990 return. Chris seconded. All approved.

Proposed goals for Fiscal Year 2016-17

End of 2015-16 Fiscal Year: Virginia reminded the board that we have March, April, May and June left in this fiscal year. Most of the items that remain to be budgeted for include food for first Friday receptions, the Easter Eggstravaganza, Doc Watson Day support, and costs for the NC Main Street conference for Pilar, Virginia, and Tucker. Virginia noted that the monthly expenditures haven't changed much from the previous year, and noted that June has more expenditures because the art honorariums are paid out that month. The conservative estimate is that we will have about \$10,000 going into our general fund at the end of the fiscal year.

Marketing

Virginia updated to the board that she would like to consider doing some advertising to capture folks already coming to the area in order to bring them downtown. One outlet would be to spend money on the Appalachian State Athletics website for the fall football season. Another would be running an ad in the Choose & Cut Brochure.

Eric asked if we could track the clicks from the website, Virginia noted she would need to check with the IMG regarding impressions on the website.

Jamie suggested that we not forget that one goal of advertising is focused on market saturation / brand recognition... and that we could make the ads more actionable (such as "Find how where to Dine / Shop / Park in downtown Boone!")

Chris then pointed out that there was an issue with viewing the Downtown Boone website on mobile, and it is important to ensure that our website is up-to-date, viewable on mobile phones, and has a nicer design for mobile since many folks visiting the area are browsing on their phones.

The board members then discussed the website at length, including: a) would like the website to look more appealing; b) make it mobile friendly; and c) that we should move the website to a more accessible and commonly available CMS platform like WordPress, Square Space or Drupal.

There was also general agreement among the board that we would like to see more money spent on updating the website before we consider what to spend on market advertising.

Virginia also noted that she would like to learn more about social media posting. Jamie offered to meet with Virginia to give her some pointers about websites and social media best practices.

RETROFITTING STREETLIGHTS

Virginia noted that a couple of years ago the board decided a budget year priority would be to improve lighting in downtown Boone. The new retrofitted lighting would appear as it does in front of the Jones House. The cost would be \$32,000 for the complete retrofit, which would include the kit and the light for 19 street lights and 19 sidewalk lights. Virginia noted that we would need to make a couple of budget amendments, and that there is money left in this year's budget for the lighting expense.

Eric expressed concerns that the light on the streetlight examples that were installed extends below the hood, which could potentially cause light pollution into downtown apartments. The original retrofit was because of a couple of dark spots, including the section in front of Art Mart, and other places where there are awnings.

After some discussion to address Eric's concerns on the streetlights, it was agreed that we could proceed with retrofitting the sidewalk lights while taking more time to consider the streetlights.

Eric made a motion that we fund the 19 sidewalk lights. Colton seconded. All approved.

The board then discussed scheduling a field trip one evening in order to view the existing street lights vs. the new sample lights, to discern whether the difference is enough, or if we need to look into different solutions. Virginia noted that she would try to set this up over email.

DOWNTOWN STREETScape

Virginia reported that the streetscape work will be starting in the spring. The work will start at Linney St. and continue just before the corner of Waters and King streets.

Lynne noted that the Town Manager would like to look at putting this out to bid, to hire a contractor to complete the work in a comprehensive way instead of piecemeal.

Virginia then reported that the Design Committee had approved the Appalachian Theatre's façade application.

A discussion then ensued of raising the Façade Incentive Award amount. The board spent some time discussing how to word the funding amount of the grant application, and agreed on "50% of a project's costs up to \$5000." Virginia will finish this content and Tucker offered to review it before making it public.

Virginia then mentioned that she and hopefully a few other board members will be meeting with the ASU graphic design class later this week, and the students will be presenting their designs to the board in April.

OTHER BUSINESS

A representative from Charter Communications presented some information on digital advertising, and more specifically a TV advertising idea which would be a combined ad with several businesses on one street, which would allow each business to participate but not have to pay full price for an ad.

With no further items to discuss, at 6:43 p.m. Colton adjourned the meeting.