

Downtown Boone Development Association

January 2014 Board Meeting

In attendance: Sheri Moretz, Robb Olsen, Dempsey Wilcox, Bob Meier, Eric Plaa, Colton Lenz, Andy Stallings, Brad Harmon, Lynne Mason, Jamie Goodman

Staff in attendance: Virginia Falck, Pilar Fotta, Victoria Parnell (intern)

Others in Attendance: Mayor Andy Ball, Chris Larson, Melissa Garramone, Charlie Travis, and Margaret Eggers

Rob called the meeting to order at 8:38 am

The board reviewed and discussed the financial information for the two months there was no quorum as well as the current month.

Bob made a motion to accept the November financials. Brad seconded.

Brad made a motion to accept the December financials. Dempsey seconded.

Bob made a motion to accept the January financials. Brad seconded.

Virginia reminded the board of the new board member training to be held on January 28 at 9am, and any members who would like a refresher are invited as well.

Virginia also noted that Pilar Fotta will be leading a workshop about the DBDA operating account and municipal budget, on Jan. 28 at 10 a.m. again at 5:30 p.m.

Spring retreat dates

Virginia discussed the possibility of holding the spring retreat March 25 or 27 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the upcoming year, projects we want to work on, and concerns members might have. Lynne Mason suggested that we might want to hold this earlier in the year to be able to set priorities and make recommendations to the Council earlier.

Marsha suggested that we combine the retreat with the financials workshop and hold it Jan. 28 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. There was general agreement, and Pilar also recommended we mark this as our Winter Budget Retreat. Virginia will email the membership and send out flyers about the event.

Promotion

Virginia discussed some ideas for spring and summer promotion, and noted that some folks have asked her about setting up a billboard coming into town. She also mentioned the possibility of a brochure distribution. Virginia then asked the board for suggestions. Marsha noted we could consider a billboard in Winston or Raleigh area. Andy Stallings suggested partnering with West Jefferson to promote both downtowns rather than competing. Bob mentioned a tasteful sign on 321 that points out Downtown, noting that some folks who vacation in Blowing Rock did not know Boone had a downtown. Marsha then suggested partnering with all the area towns. Sheri noted that the TDA is beginning to plan their travel writer's focus for this year, if anyone has any ideas to suggest.

Some discussion took place about utilizing Mountain TV to promote downtown more, perhaps spotlighting different restaurants, shops, etc., perhaps a weekly spot.

Virginia noted that ASU is creating a new TV station that will focus on campus and the area. Virginia talked with them about including content that featured downtown, and they expressed interest in having ready-made content

Lynne noted this is also good for the local community, not just tourists, and that using a local TV to promote would be good way to help foster downtown as a community gathering place. Sheri noted that a lot of hotels are not using cable now.

Rob asked about forming a Promotions committee. Virginia noted it is in our bylaws that we can. Visitor Melissa Garramone said she is interested in being on that committee. Rob asked Virginia to let the DBDA members know we are going to form a promotions committee and to see if anyone else in the membership would like to participate in the committee.

First Fridays

Virginia updated us that she and Jamie had a conversation about the July First Friday, which falls on July 4. The Turchin Center is on board with changing to the following week, July 11. Jamie noted that if the Turchin, Jones House and Nth Gallery all change, and we promote it well, the change should not be a problem. Brad noted that Highland Games is that weekend, but Jamie noted that in July there is always a conflict and that Highland Games should not be too much of a conflict.

Discussion took place about First Fridays and winter. Virginia noted that some communities start in April, while Bob noted that the year that we didn't do it, folks came to his shop asking about art crawl. Virginia noted that the Jones House, Turchin Center and Nth will be holding shows no matter what (unless weather is bad), except for January, and there was general agreement DBDA will hold First Fridays February through December each year.

Bob asked about trying to do another Friday event during each month to try and get folks out, not just for Art Crawl. Colton mentioned that Boone Independent Restaurants had small plate crawl last year that was successful.

Financial

Pilar presented an update on the cost-share of a traffic study on Howard's Street. The transportation committee met last week, and it would seem that ASU does want to look at being involved in the study. This might extend the study and change the cost, Pilar hopes to have an accurate update at the February meeting. The initial projection cost was \$29,000.

Virginia mentioned the 2012-13 Audit. Rob asked that we all get a copy and review it before the Budget meeting. Pilar noted that Virginia and she have been squirreling away some funding for major projects, while Mayor Ball noted the Tax allocation will remain the same this year. Virginia noted that our fund balance last year was \$61,000, and is now \$223,000, so the organization should be able to partner on some good projects this year.

Virginia also noted that David Jackson of ASU sports is interested in communicating the changes going on at ASU, and that she, Lynne, and Andy Ball have scheduled to meet with him to learn what ASU has researched regarding models on other small schools

and how they handled issues such as parking.

Lynne Mason brought up that someone who was issued a parking ticket was disappointed in the tone of the letter they received from the Town. Lynne procured a copy of the letter and concurs that the follow-up for unpaid fines was not overly friendly and should be more professional. Pilar noted that we will be adding that to the overall parking changes coming up, included in the education, etc. Pilar also noted there will be a sticker put on the tickets now that says something about the validation stamps. Pilar noted that she has asked Virginia to craft an education plan for the parking changes.

Mayor Andy Ball addressed the board, thanking us for our service to DBDA and to the town. He noted that the DBDA and board is a great group and that he is looking forward to working with us!

Virginia submitted a copy of the online request for a vote that Rob made on December 16, 2013, regarding the board sponsoring Virginia's enrollment in the Watauga Leadership Challenge 2014 at a cost of \$595. Nine affirmative emails were received, with the motion passing. Attached with these minutes is a copy of the email asking for the vote.

With no further business, Rob called for a motion to adjourn. Dempsey made the motion, and Brad seconded.

Rob called the meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.