

Downtown Boone Development Association

Monthly Board Meeting

July 10, 2014

In attendance: Sheri Moretz, Lynne Mason, Andy Stallings, Brad Harmon, Jamie Goodman, Eric Plaag

Staff in attendance: Virginia Falck, Pilar Fotta

Others in attendance: Griffin Plaag, Nealy Andrews

With no quorum initially, Virginia opened an informal discussion at 8:56 a.m. She noted that on the financials, the DBDA operating account funds may seem lower than usually, but that four public art checks were written out of that account. She anticipates receiving the reimbursement checks from the town by tomorrow, Friday.

Sheri asked if there have been any unexpected expenses with the Doc Watson statue other than the appraisal. Virginia responded that there had not been any. She also reminded those attending of the previous discussion about combining the two accounts we have for the Doc Watson statue, and that perhaps we could vote on that in August.

Eric Plaag arrived at 9 a.m. to provide a quorum, and Sheri called the meeting to order.

Virginia asked to make an amendment to the agenda, adding a Christmas committee update and DOT update on way finding signage.

Eric made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Brad seconded. All approved.

Virginia noted that the minutes from the last meeting, the date on the digital version that was emailed out said June 5, but the printed version said June 17.

Brad made a motion to approve the June minutes. Andy seconded. All approved.

BUDGET UPDATE

Virginia updated that four checks written out of the public art funds (the line-item mentioned in informal discussion above), she anticipates getting reimbursed for that any day now.

Virginia revived the idea of merging the two Doc Watson Sculpture bank accounts, noting that the purpose of having the funds is to make sure we have an escrow if there is damage to the statue or we have to replace it. Eric mentioned that Money Market accounts are not paying much in interest right now, but there might be some accounts online that would offer higher interest rates. Jamie noted CDs, and that it is possible to borrow money out of that if necessary.

Town of Boone MSD: Virginia noted that we incorporated about \$52,000 into the MSD general fund, so that gives us around \$280,000, which could provide us with a substantial amount to match if we can find a matching grant for a project we would like to initiate downtown.

Facade Grants: Eric asked how West Jefferson was able to get buy-in for facade upgrades, wondering if there is a way to offer more money rather than small amounts of a couple of thousand. Andy suggested that we need to think bigger than \$10,000. Virginia said she would look into some grants and talk to Spartanburg, S.C., who recently just renovated their town. Eric gave example that if Boone Drug wanted to renovate their storefront -- a project which could

easily cost \$25,000 -- a grant of \$2,500 is not going to incentivize them very much, but a \$10,000 matching grant might be more appealing.

Andy thought we should develop a range of numbers to offer before we approach the business owners. Brad suggested it might be worthwhile to ask folks what they think might be appealing.

Virginia looked at other Main Street towns close to our size to see what they had done to build their current Facade grant. She heard a lot of interest before we started the process, but now that the application process is underway, very few businesses are applying. She reported that the Design committee agreed to extend the deadline a week, but perhaps trying the grant cycle in the winter/spring would get better response, as well as looking into increasing the size of the grants.

Eric made a motion to approve the budget, the statement of financial position and the expenditures. Brad seconded. All approved.

Archival Cabinet: Virginia asked if it would be possible for us to take the \$1,000 we promised the library for the archival cabinet out of the current 2014-15 fiscal year's budget. **Eric made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$1,000 from the 2014-15 budget for the Watauga Library's archival cabinet. Andy seconded. All approved.**

PROMOTION

Map: Virginia reported that she spoke with Max the map designer, and that we are on track for updating the map this fall.

Christmas Committee: Virginia reported that the Christmas committee has met, Phil Hinsley attended and helped the committee explore ways to update our downtown decorations & themes. One idea the committee discussed was to update the snowflakes with new paint, new wiring, and replacing the blue LED lights with warm LED lights as well as the swags. The estimated cost to implement this idea would be about \$18,000. Virginia also noted they looked at including some updates to give the feel of "toydom." Pilar suggested using more Holly in the decorations or plant Christmas Trees in large planters to match the 1940s.

Lynne noted that we might also look at including bells with the snowflakes, but that right after Christmas anything that was specifically Holiday-themed (such as the bells, swag or holly) should come down, and we would leave the snowflakes up through February for the winter theme.

Lynne also noted we hope to get the businesses to put up wreaths on their doors to promote the local Christmas tree industry, as well as decorate their storefronts. She recommended we not vote on this yet, and solicit recommendations at the annual meeting in August, following that with a formal proposal for the Town of Boone on the proposed recommendations.

DOT / Wayfinding Signage: Lynne noted that staff from the Town met with Dean Ledbetter of the Department of Transportation, and subsequently also found out that the DOT has a way finding sign program, which could be used community-wide and not just downtown. Signs could be color-coded for different sections (i.e. medical district, ASU, downtown, Blowing Rock Road) and that the town could start with one section first, such as downtown. Eric asked how the funding works for this, Lynne noted the town has to pay for all of it, but DOT has to approve it. She plans to present the full concept to the Town Council, followed by meetings with stakeholders, etc., to move the idea forward.

Sheri noted that Buncombe did one of these systems all over the county... the first round of signs were very bad, letters fell off, but on the whole the system seemed to be effective.

ORGANIZATION

Positions: Sheri make a motion that we accept Nealy Andrews to fill Rob's position on the DBDA board. Brad seconded. All approved.

Annual Meeting: Virginia noted that the original meeting date of August 28 would be in conflict with the Thursday night Jam, and asked the board to consider moving the date to Tuesday, Aug. 26. Eric made a motion to change the annual meeting date to Tuesday, August 26. Brad seconded. All approved.

Pilar asked if there was anything we want to add to the Annual Meeting agenda. Eric noted the Facade grant, and Brad suggested the way finding signs.

DESIGN

Art: Virginia updated that we have new public art downtown, she has heard some positive comments about the art... Virginia suggested that we consider buying one of Mary Ruden's benches (one is currently installed in front of Melanie's) as a permanent downtown installation. Eric suggested perhaps buying a blank bench, and then each year sponsor an artist to paint a new design on it.

Sample Street Lights: Pilar noted that a test had been requested to see how the lights will affect the apartments on the second floor of King Street, and suggested that we put the test lights beside Boone Drug, which has apartments upstairs. She also noted that we will have a sample on Depot Street where there is no lighting to see how well the amended lamps illuminate darker places.

With no other business, Sheri ended the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Jamie Goodman