

Downtown Boone Development Association Monthly Board Meeting – June 9, 2015

In Attendance: Dempsey Wilcox, Chris Grasinger, Sheri Moretz, Tucker Deal, Nealy Andrews, Jamie Goodman, Eric Plaag, Lynne Mason,

Staff in Attendance: Virginia Falck, Pilar Fotta, Town Manager John Ward

Others in Attendance: Anna Roseman, Rosie Bentley, Pat Anderson, Kendra Sink, and Christy and Ron from the Happy Place

With no quorum initially, an unofficial conversation took place about renewal of insurance for First Fridays. According to Virginia, the current policy covered 5-10pm, and there was some discussion about changing to cover from 5pm to 9pm, since most galleries and venues are closed by 9pm. It was brought up that if the Jones House or other town-sponsored events run over 9pm, then it would be important to have the coverage extend. Since the cost was negligible, everyone in attendance agreed we should just stay with the current policy terms.

Eric arrived at 8:45 a.m., and with a quorum the meeting officially began.

Sheri made a motion to approve the agenda. Dempsey seconded. All approved.

In the review of minutes from May, Sheri noted that in the section about Howard Street, "Riley" should be Raley.

Eric moved to approve the amended minutes. Chris seconded. All approved.

FINANCES: Virginia went over the finance sheets with the board, and pointed out that the balance sheet reflects minimal activity, but two checks have been written for new public art sculpture which is on display now. Mark also used public art funds for a workshop with regional musicians. She pointed out that we are well under budget for the year and should be able to put more funds into the MSD general fund.

Virginia also addressed a question from Eric at the last meeting about whether we could move the DBDA money market account to a higher interest rate account. Virginia did some research on the subject, and brought a recommendation that we leave the Doc Watson funds in the current MM, and put the DBDA account in a CD. Dempsey recommended that since the Doc Watson fund is a long-term, we should move that into a CD or some other long-term investment as well as the DBDA account. He offered to look into some options before the next meeting.

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

TOWN CONTRACT: Virginia noted the contract with the town is up for renewal. Sheri questioned if the contract would preclude the ability to solicit funds from another source (such as asking people to help pay into a co-op ad). Virginia noted that as long as we make the option available to everyone equally, we should be ok, but said she would call Liz with the Main Street Program to verify.

Dempsey made a motion to approve the contract with the Town. Sheri seconded. All approved.

PARKING REVIEW AND UPDATE: A number of individuals and business owners were in attendance to discuss the parking meters. The board first had discussion and Virginia provided an update before opening the floor to the visitors.

Virginia sent out a survey to measure reactions to the parking meters and 1 hour parking. Chris asked what channels we had used to solicit responses. Virginia replied that we had used the MSD listserv to email all business and property owners, posted on social media and the DBDA website, and sent to all media contacts.

Virginia also noted that the majority of comments concluded that one hour was not enough time for

shopping, eating, getting hair cuts, and other downtown business. She did not see any comments that noted 1 hour was not long enough to go to class, other than one from an older student who is taking a 2-hour class once a week at the Hayes Music Center. Virginia suggested to that respondent that long-term parking might be better for him.

Eric suggested asking ASU to address a need from nonstudents or non-traditional students who need to park on campus for research or other needs.

Sheri noted in talking with Rita, ASU does have spaces available every year, but students choose not to purchase them. Virginia noted some ideas for facilitating better education to the students, and opportunities for information-sharing with ASU, and began a tentative dialog with them.

Virginia noted one concern after talking with Rita, that the King Street lot is used by employees, students and business owners, and once we let folks know the longer-term lot options, there is concern that those populations will fill up the long-term spaces and not leave any for visitors and shoppers.

Dempsey noted that the reason we had one-hour previously was to ensure students wouldn't park there, but pointed out that we can experiment with the parking structure, and suggested we try 2-hour and see how that does.

One business owner in attendance asked if we could include a sign saying "Patrons only" on the meters, but Dempsey noted that was illegal.

Sheri suggested putting stickers on the sides of the meters with the information about rates and times, as it is hard to look at the display when you are shorter.

Virginia pointed out that the summer pattern shows the busier section down by the courthouse and flowing back down King Street in the morning, while in the afternoon it picks up from Shear Shakti to Jimmy Johns. During the school year, it is opposite, with the section near the Turchin Center busiest in the morning, and extending back toward the Courthouse.

Virginia also noted there is a waiting list for business owners and employees to get long-term spaces.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION: Once discussion had taken place among the board members, other attendees were invited to participate. Anna, an alumni of ASU who has owned the consignment store Anna Banana's for almost 5 years and used the King Street Lot, pointed out that all agree town is really growing, ASU is growing, we are going to need more parking. She suggested a need for a parking deck, and thinks we need to start planning this now. She also suggested we keep Saturdays free, and asked if there is a way to see where the revenue from the parking meters goes.

Virginia noted that the NCGA states that any money brought in by parking fees should go back into the parking infrastructure. Virginia also noted that if parking is free on Saturdays, there is a risk that ASU football fans would take up those spaces.

Town Manager John Ward noted that the biggest issue we have is volume, and there are discussions happening about how to move forward with addressing this, whether it is a parking deck or some other solution. He noted that typical decks cost about \$20,000 per space, so there will be some challenges finding funding, but that he is working on a recommendation for the proposed budget that includes Howard Street improvements plus a parking deck, and that this proposal will be reviewed by Council at the start of the next fiscal year in July.

Lynn Mason noted that one rationale for paid parking on Saturdays was due to students who live downtown parking on the street all weekend and taking up spaces. There was also discussion about keeping parking paid on Saturday to continue bringing in revenue for a parking deck and other long-term parking solutions.

Christy from the Happy Place and Boone Rock and Roll Emporium asked about seasonally changing the parking, with two-hour parking in the summers and one-hour when school is in session.

Another business owner Rosie noted that June through December is the busy season, so changing times to one-hour in September would not help her. She also pointed out that it is difficult to read the meters when it is bright and sunny, and agreed with Sheri's suggestion of putting stickers/signage on the side of the meters.

Anna noted that we want people to get the impression we are friendly to visitors, we don't want them to get a bad taste in their mouths.

Kendra Sink from Mast Store noted that it is important to educate downtown customers and business owners about parking downtown, and thinks business owners also need to represent a positive front and help educate customers.

Eric made a motion to recommend to council to adopt 2-hour parking to run on a pilot basis from July 1 to Dec. 31, after which DBDA will evaluate to make a determination for 2016. Dempsey seconded. All approved.

AUDIT CONTRACT: Virginia noted that the contract with Pricilla Norris to audit DBDA finances is up for renewal, and suggested continuing the contract with Pricilla. Eric noted no changes except the dates of the contract. **Dempsey made a motion to renew the contract for audit services with Pricilla Norris. Chris seconded. All approved.**

FAÇADE GRANT: The contract with Farmers Hardware manager Brandon Langdon for the façade update to the Farmers building was changed to say that he will not use sealant on his bricks but will use a gentle wash. Virginia asked if the board would approve the upcoming facade grant recipients to be paid out of general funds, since the 2015 Façade Grant funds will roll over to general funds at the start of the new fiscal year in July.

Sheri made a motion to approve paying the façade grant recipients out of general funds. Chris seconded. All approved.

Virginia then asked for \$1,000 to pay for new multi-color parking banners for downtown. **Dempsy made a motion to approve the funding. Eric seconded. All approved.**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Jamie Goodman