

Downtown Boone Development Association Monthly Board Meeting - Sept. 5, 2013

Board members in attendance: Marsha Wapole, Robb Olsen, Sheri Moretz, Andy Stallings, Lynne Mason, Bob Meier, Dempsey Wilcox, Greg Lovins, Eric Plaag, Jamie Goodman, Brad Harmon

Staff in attendance: Virginia Falck, Pilar Fotta

Others in attendance: Anna Oakes, Jean Borhman, Colton Lenz

Dempsey called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Sheri Moretz made a request to amend the agenda to include a vote on the DBDA's contract with the town.

She also requested amendments for the minutes to fix several typos: replace copper with Cooper, replace martian with Martin, replace difficult with different, and replace concise with consensus.

Brad made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Andy seconded.

Marsha made a motion to approve the minutes. Sheri seconded.

Financials

Discussion took place on the statement of financial position. Andy asked about the Appalachian Theater balance and why that is still showing up, Pilar noted that it will not clear until July of 2014, since it was paid off in the current (2013-14) fiscal year.

Marsha made a motion to approve the statement of financial position. Bob seconded. All approved.

Brad made a motion to approve renewal of contract of the town. Marsha seconded. All approved.

Dempsey reviewed the board nominee scenario (1/2 town, 1/2 DBDA elected, officers elected by board). Rob and Andy were re-elected by the town. He also reviewed that we have 10 months left on Jason Berry's term that he was not able to fulfill. He noted that Colton Linz from Char restaurant (in attendance) is interested in finishing out that term.

Dempsey stated that, in the bylaws, the Board can nominate and vote someone into an open position. **Andy motioned to nominate Colton Linz to the 10-month open position. Rob seconded. All approved.**

Dempsey then noted that it was time to discuss and vote in officers.

Jamie volunteered to continue serving as secretary. **Andy made a motion to appoint Jamie as secretary for 2013-14. Rob seconded. All approved.**

Dempsey noted that Evalyn (who was not in attendance) had expressed interest in staying as treasurer for 2013-14. **Sheri made a motion to appoint Evalyn as Treasurer. Bob seconded. All approved.**

Dempsey noted that would be good to have different president every couple of years, **and nominated Rob Olsen as president. Greg seconded. All approved**

Pilar thanked Dempsey for all of his years of service as President, including through the transition of the DBDA. All on the board heartily agreed.

Bob offered to serve as vice president. **Sheri made a motion to appoint Bob as vice president. Rob seconded. All approved.**

The board then took a minute to go around the room and introduce themselves to the new and potential board members.

Review of Parking Committee:

Virginia noted that the DBDA owes the Town Council a few more recommendations to finish out the parking review. One question that came up was if there would be a payment partnership with the town. Virginia updated that DBDA gave the town \$44,000 which was the windfall from the change to the sales tax collection methodology, and that the town is interested to see if DBDA can put a commitment in for the future to continue to help fund this. The town will need to take out a loan for the full project, but there is a commitment to moving forward with the new parking management plan.

Virginia noted it is likely we will have the windfall from the municipal taxes next year, and feels that the DBDA could commit that amount.

Lynne updated that discussion revealed we should look into more high-tech meters that could handle credit card payment, which bumped the cost up. Costs of the project include not only the purchase, but also fees, maintenance, and internet connection. She noted that the Council has asked Town staff to prepare a detailed budget for these costs.

Dempsey noted that we were able to have a short ½ day consultation with a parking consultant, John Edwards, his recommendation would be to go with smart meters, because they would be more convenient for customers and would reduce the amount of education we would need if we otherwise went with pay stations. The meters he recommended would take either coins or cards, and can be programmed for different pricing, such as on game days, to make up for the extra cost in credit card fees. Dempsey said it was his understanding from the consultancy that in other towns credit card meters actually raise the number of folks who use the meters.

Virginia noted that the final configuration would include combo stations at the Depot and Town Hall lots, with smart meters on the street. Also Virginia noted that the meters were a little more historically accurate to the "old" downtown, and they are available in black powder coated to match feel of rest of town. Pilar and Virginia are pulling together specific numbers on costs, maintenance, spare parts. The cost for installing the project would likely cost between \$230-260,000. If town took out a loan, the amortization period would be 2-5 years.

Bob asked about the infrastructure, and Pilar noted that we do not have to install this system under the street, but the meters are independent systems that speak to each other and would allow town staff to program special day pricing, such as 5-hour parking during the Christmas shopping season.

A question was asked if it would require full-time staff, and Pilar responded that theoretically it shouldn't. We would give the information we need to the programmer (which is a part of the package), and public works staff would be trained on maintenance. Pilar also noted that these are high-level of internet security that ensures credit card transactions are safe.

The discussion turned back to the funding contribution of the project by the DBDA. Dempsey noted that the windfall is defined by the extra money the DBDA received because of the sales tax allocation defined by the county.

Eric made a motion that the DBDA contribute the amount of the windfall from the sales tax reallocation fund if received up to a max of \$44,000 per year up to a max of 3 years or until the installation costs of the technology are paid off. Andy seconded. All approved.

Howard Street Budget Request

Pilar updated the board on the next step for the Howard Street redesign, which would need to include a traffic study. She noted that the previous one was over 5 years ago. Pilar consulted with the architects who redesigned Wall Street in Asheville to come and analyze Howard Street and offer suggestions. The design they suggested works with the easements we have, and is aesthetically pleasing.

The traffic study will incorporate the Depot intersection and Waters Street, and would assess what our options would be during heavy-traffic flows. She noted that the DBDA has the funds in our current streetscape budget to cover this, and is thinking if we ask for a max of \$10,000, this should cover that final traffic study.

9:27 -- John Cooper from Appalachian Theater and Mast General Store arrived

Dempsey noted we have \$69,000 in the streetscape budget for this type of need. Andy suggested maybe paying a little more to expand the scope to include a study of King Street.

Eric noted he would like to see us expand to include whole Howard Street section (from Waters to Appalachian streets). Lynne asked Greg if the University would be willing to collaborate with us on that, he responded that might be possible, and committed that he would look into it.

Pilar noted that the request for proposal would go through public works, but Lynne suggested that it might be best for this to go through the transportation committee of the town, to make it a more collaborative effort to keep the brunt of the project from falling on the DBDA.

The board gave Pilar permission to look into the costs of a traffic study from River to Queen street and Water to Appalachian and to approach the town for a funding request.

Membership luncheon

Virginia reminded the board about the member luncheon scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 18 at the High Country Press building and catered by Farm House Café. It is an event she would like to do bi-annually, and would provide an opportunity for folks in the MSD to connect with each other. Virginia asked for \$500 to help Farm House Café offset the costs. **Brad made a motion to provide the \$500 for the luncheon. Rob seconded. All approved.**

Boone Community Network Update

Rob asked Colton and his mother, Jean, who are from Char restaurant, if they were happy with the Sunday festivals Boone Community Network is hosting. Colton responded that is happy with them, and that for a new event it feels like the organizers are going to work out the bugs.

Virginia updated the board that Rio Tazwell is stepping down from Boone Community Network events, to focus on the online component. She noted that students from the Sustainable Development department at ASU will be taking over for the September and October events (the final two for this year).

Lynne asked about tying these events to First Fridays, but Bob countered that perhaps it would be better to not combine and instead create multiple days to bring people downtown. Lynne noted that the utilization of staff time by combining the events could keep costs down, if that is a factor.

Appalachian Theater Update

John Cooper from the Appalachian Theater spoke, and updated the board that he learned that the Main Street Program has left over available funds in their solutions grant programs. He asked the board if they would be willing to partner with the Town to apply for this grant to potentially secure \$75,000-\$100,000 for the Theater. Since it is a Main Street Program, the Theater needs the DBDA to put our name on the grant. **Bob made a motion to include the DBDA name on a grant to the main street solutions fund for the Appalachian Theater. Andy seconded. All approved.**

Other Business

Andy noted there are a number of businesses in town that he does not know the owners, and suggested that the DBDA board put a group together to go meet the business owners in person.

Jamie mentioned dividing the list of downtown businesses and have board members personally invite business owners to the Sept. luncheon. Marsha noted that we used to have a "welcome committee" to new businesses that moved to downtown.

Virginia noted that downtown lost Loretta's Vendentta, but now have Art Mart, so there is some turnover but overall downtown is flourishing.

Andy made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded.

Dempsey adjourned the meeting at 9:43 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Jamie Goodman