

**Downtown Boone Development Association
Regular Board Meeting – January 25, 2022
8:30 am – Webex Virtual Meeting**

Board Members present: Denise Lovin, Sarah Long, Megan Mason, Michelle Novacek, Brandon Bettis, Austin Northern and Lisa Flanigan

Ex-Officio's present: Lindsay Miller, Edie Tugman and Becca Nenow

MSD members/guests present: Laura Kratt

Staff present: Lane Moody, Mark Freed, Ferrin Page, Rudy Broschinski, Josh Eller and Brad Farthing

Call to Order

Megan called the meeting to order at 8:32am.

Request for Approval of January Agenda

Megan asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. Lane stated that she did not not have any additions. Denise made a motion to approve the agenda. Brandon seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of November Minutes

Megan opened by asking if anyone had any suggested changes to the minutes. With no additions or deletions, Sarah made a motion to approve November minutes. Denise seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote. Michelle joined the meeting during the vote and abstained from the vote.

Approval of Financial Statements

Michelle made a motion to approve the financial statements. Austin seconded the motion. The motion had a unanimous vote with the exception of Lisa, who abstained, because she had not seen the financial statements.

Organizational

Request to Set Date for Combined Budget Retreat and Main Street Work Plan Review

Megan opened by pointing to the calendar that was included in the packet. Lane suggested setting the meeting for Tuesday, February 8 at 8:30am to give ample time in between meetings to complete meetings minutes and other meeting preparations. After a brief discussion, Denise made a motion to set the meeting date for Tuesday, February 8th at 8:30am until 10:30am. The motion was seconded by Sarah and had a unanimous vote.

Reminder of Upcoming Main Street Conference

Megan opened by reminding the Board that the Main Street Conference was coming up March 8-10 and will be done virtually. Lane reviewed the conference topic and encouraged anyone interested in attending to contact her.

Review Main Street Assessment and Discuss Upcoming Training Opportunities

Megan opened by turning the discussion over to Lane to review the Main Street Assessment. Lane began by stating that this year Main Street has rolled out a new assessment format that covered 11 topic areas. She said that each section has a variety of question that seek to identify if the program is currently using

established best practices. There are three answers for each question: yes, needs work or no. Yes indicating that the program is meeting best practices, and so on. Lane stated the first area seeks to identify if the organization has broad based community support from both the private and public sectors. She continued that for the 14 questions in this section she was able to answer “yes” to the majority of the questions, and answered “needs work” to the question asking if we have a least five non-board members on each committee. She stated that moving forward the Board will need to work to expand its volunteer base.

Lane stated that the second area confirms if the DBDA has both a developed vision and mission statement that are relevant to the community’s conditions and the Main Street Organization stage. Lane stated that to her understanding the Board complies with this section because both the mission and vision statements are relevant, reviewed and updated annually.

Lane stated that the third area seeks to confirm that a comprehensive Main Street work plan is in place. Lane stated that the Board does have an up to date work plan. However, best practices are to review the plan quarterly, which is not currently being done. She continued she felt that while COVID had been burdensome to the goals set last year, that the Board has been creative with planning and working towards those goals despite the obstacles of COVID.

Lane stated that the fourth area seeks to determine if the Board has a historic preservation ethic. Lane continued that she believed the Board did, but according to best practices, the Board would need to include preservation training for the Board of Director’s and Committee members. She also noted that she had answered “no” to the question inquiring if Boone is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. She stated that this was an incorrect answer, and if it turned out to be a problem, she would correct it.

Lane stated that the fifth area seeks to assess if the Board has an active Board of Directors. Lane stated that she was able to answer yes to the majority of the questions. However, she stated that according to best practices each committee would need to be meeting monthly and again stated that need to recruit additional volunteers.

Lane stated that the sixth area seeks to assess if we have an adequate operating budget. Lane continued that currently the DBDA is funded by taxes collected in the Municipal Service Tax District. Lane stated that the DBDA also has creative partnerships that help fund programming.

Lane stated that the seventh area seeks to make sure that a professional program manager is in place. Lane continued that she was able to confirm that the DBDA is meeting all the best practices for the Main Street director position.

Lane stated that the eighth area seeks to confirm that there is ongoing training for staff and volunteers. This includes mandatory attendance requirements for Main Street programming as well as local volunteer trainings. Lane reiterated the need for additional volunteer recruitment and associated trainings to be meeting the best practices.

Lane stated that the ninth area seeks to confirm if the program complies with the annual Main Street Statistical reporting. Lane stated that the DBDA continues to submit completed reporting before the due date.

Lane finished up by saying that the tenth and eleventh areas seek to confirm if the program is in compliance with National and North Carolina Main Street Programs. Lane confirmed that the DBDA has current contracts with both National and North Carolina Main Street Programs and all associated dues and fees are paid.

Megan then asked if trainings outside of Main Street would be considered towards the goals of the eighth area. Lane stated that she had listed a variety of trainings she had attended in the assessment in hopes that

they would count. Lane stated that she would confirm when she get the assessment report back. With no other questions, the Board moved on.

Update on Downtown Advocacy Committee

Lane opened by giving a brief history of the Downtown Advocacy Committee, and its beginnings as a small business rescue plan proposal by a previous Town Council Member. She continued that she and Boone Area Chamber of Commerce staff had discussed diving into the topic more to see how the discussion could be beneficial to a variety of businesses. She stated that as a part of those discussions, the Committee identified the need for quarterly updates of Town ordinance. The goal being to bring together the construction community, and the Town in an informal manner to keep the community up to date. She finished up by stating that the first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 3 at 8am at the Homebuilders Association Building off the 105 Bypass. John encouraged Board members to attend if they were available.

Promotional

Discussion of Festive First Friday

Lane took a few minutes to review how successful she thought the December Festive First Friday was. She reviewed the different events from the evening and asked if anyone had any additional feedback. Sarah chimed in that while she did not have significant foot traffic in her office, her kids thoroughly enjoyed the event.

Discussion of Upcoming Boone 150 Events

Lane opened the discussion by asking Mark or Brad to chime in at anytime. She continued that January 23, 2022 was Boone's 150th birthday and while the celebration was postponed, there are a variety of events coming up throughout the year. Lane then listed a few events including special book readings at the library, kid-friendly story walks and field trip opportunities. Mark stated that there would be some decent lead historical walking tours. He also stated that there is a group working on special placemats. He continued that there are Boone 150 stickers as well as historic calendars. He encouraged everyone to stop by and pick up a calendar. Lane added that it was her understanding that Betty Bond was spearheading a time capsule project with the high school. After brief discussion regarding QR codes, Lane encouraged anyone interested in participating to reach out to herself or Cultural Resources staff.

Design

Update on Return of "Skywalk" by Wayne Trapp

Lane opened by informing the Board that "Skywalk" has been returned to downtown. Lane thanked Watauga Arts Council Director Amber Bateman, Lindsay Miller with the Turchin Center, staff of the Watauga County Library, the Trapp Family and the Petschauer families for their tremendous help in returning the piece. She continued that the return had not been without hiccups, stating that due to overhead power lines at the sculpture pad the crane was unable to place the piece, instead Public Works staff had to return the piece by hand. Lane commented that, as with many things, the Public Works staff had saved the day and then returned later in the week to pressure wash "Skywalk". Lane then stated that the piece would be repainted in the spring and that the associated budget is covering the costs to return and repaint.

Financial

Request for Approval to Sponsor "Boonerang" Event in Downtown

Mark opened by stating that he is planning a new downtown music and arts festival called "Boonerang." He stated that he is working with the Watauga Arts Council to develop the event, continuing that there would be a large stage set up on South Depot Street and the road would be closed for the event. He stated that there would be food and drink on the street with opportunities for vendors throughout downtown. There would be live music on at least two stages downtown, a kid-zone at the library and possibly events at the Appalachian Theatre. He stated that the event would be on June 18, when both Appalachian State and Watauga County schools are out, and pointed out that time is typically before the tourist season is in full swing, and will run from about 12pm until 8pm. He stated that the term "Boonerang" is an endearing term used to describe people who leave Boone but eventually find themselves returning. Mark continued that he has already received sponsorship money in the amount of \$10,000 from the Watauga County TDA and is hoping to get matching funds from the DBDA as well as the Economic Development Commission. Lane chimed in that she thought that the DBDA could handle the request for \$10,000 within the current budget and reviewed that she thought that between the Community Appearance Line and Community Development Line the DBDA could accommodate the \$10,000 sponsorship. She also stated that due to the expansion of the MSD and the upcoming tax revaluations she thought that this could be a continuing yearly sponsorship. Sarah inquired about outside sponsorship opportunities. Mark also expressed his desire to get feedback from downtown business for what a successful event would look like to them. After brief, discussion Denise made a motion to sponsor Boonerang in the amount of \$10,000. Sarah seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Other Comments

Denise inquired about the status of the Queen Street Stairs. Lane stated that she talked with Sustainability and Special Projects Manager George Santucci and Landon Pennington with Collaborative Solar, and they both thought that it would be best to wait to quote the project until building costs had come down and supply chain issues had begun to settle. Lane continued that the project was currently paused, but not abandoned.

Denise then inquired if anyone was aware of the situation that lead to the closing of Café Portofino. Austin chimed in that the Winkler Organization has bought the building and there were plans for either housing or a hotel space with retail space below.

Denise then asked for an update on the Greene-Wilcox building. Brandon has some technical issues at first, but he was able to update that the project is moving along and they are hoping to open in early April.

Denise then asked about Blue's Brews, which is located next to Blue Deer. Austin stated that is was his understanding that the property owner was hoping to open a specialty bottle shop but that the property owner lived out of town and might be part of the slow opening.

Denise inquired about the proposed Starbucks. Lane stated that did not have an update on that project.

Call for Adjournment

At 9:51 Denise made a motion to adjourn. Lisa seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.