Downtown Boone Development Association

November Board Meeting – January 27, 2026
8:30 a.m. – Webex Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present: Ethan Rector, Renee Boughman, Suzanne Livesay, Fulton Lovin, Mike Forrester, Jordan Humler, Stephanie Boozer, Kendra Sink, Melody Pineda and Megan Kevorkian

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody and Jessica Mitchell

MSD Members Present: Amber Bateman and Annie Jones

Call to Order

While waiting for additional board members to arrive, Lane informed the Board that at the January Town Council meeting, Mayor Dalton George and Council Member Adrian Tait were selected to serve as the new ex officio Town Council liaisons to the DBDA Board.

Lane also noted that representatives from Blue Ridge Food Tours had reached out to offer a complimentary tour for Lane and one additional participant on Saturday, February 7, at 1:30 p.m., as an opportunity for Board members to learn more about the food tour concept they are working to launch in Boone. Lane added that Jenny Baynes, owner of Blue Ridge Food Tours, is a Boone native who has been operating tours in Wilkes County and is excited to expand into Boone.

Lane noted that she had signed up for the tour and was looking for another interested participant. Melody shared that she would be happy to join and learn more about the tour, and added that she would step back if another Board member wished to take the spot.

At 8:35 a.m., Kendra called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Announcements

Lane opened by noting that she had added an Announcements section to the agenda to provide space for staff updates. She reminded the Board of the Odyssey of the Mind group that will be on campus in March and shared that she plans to create a one-page handout encouraging participants and families to visit downtown while they are in town. She asked Board members to share any specials or coupons they would like included.

Next, Lane mentioned the Mountaineer 10-Miler, which will take place on June 14, noting that event organizers are currently seeking sponsors and volunteers.

Lane also shared that on February 4, Steve Little with Stravue Media will host a Google Profile Optimization Training at the Jones House. She noted that additional details would be shared later in the week but wanted to get the training on everyone's radar.

Lane reminded the Board that the Budget Retreat and Strategic Planning Session will be held on Tuesday, February 10, and that more information will be shared in a dedicated email and in the February newsletter.

She continued by noting that a combined Design and Promotions Committee meeting will be held during the week of February 16. Topics will include selecting the new alleyway mural design, discussing upcoming mural opportunities, planning for Downtown Restaurant Week, and coordinating the Howard Street ribbon-cutting. Lane also anticipated an Economic Vitality Committee meeting in early March to revisit the social district discussion.

Finally, Lane shared that the Wednesday evening Town Council meeting will include a public input session on the first draft of proposed language related to itinerant merchants and mobile retail vendors.

Request for Approval of December Agenda

Lane opened by noting that there was an error on the agenda and that the item should read Request for Approval of the January Agenda. Hearing no changes, Fulton made a motion to approve the January agenda. The motion was seconded by Ethan and passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of November Meeting Minutes

Kendra asked if everyone had a chance to review the minutes that had been sent out last week. Megan then made a motion to approve the minutes. Ethan seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements

Kendra asked if there was a motion to approve the financial statements. Fulton then made a motion to approve the statements. Kendra inquired about the Muncipal Service District Projects line, and Lane confirmed that this category includes streetscape projects connected to the agreement with the Town and is required to comprise 30% of the DBDA budget. With no other questions, Ethan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Organizational

Request to Review By-Laws

Lane opened the discussion by noting that NC Main Street shared an article at the end of the year outlining best practices for nonprofit bylaws. She shared that the organization's current bylaws align with most of the recommendations; however, three potential additions were identified for consideration: indemnification language for board members, acknowledgment of the organization's conflict of interest policy, and clarification of the minimum number of board meetings required annually. Lane asked if the Board was comfortable with her sharing these items with the Town Attorney for review and making updates as appropriate. The Board reached consensus for Lane to consult with the Town Attorney and bring back any recommended changes for further consideration.

Update on Transition to NC Capital Management Trust

Lane opened by noting that, in conversations with Monica Gould, who is assisting with the narrative for the Appalachian Regional Commission grant application, it was clarified that the grant is reimbursement-based. Because the organization will need to use existing account funds to support grant initiatives, the organization will need to continue utilizing its PNC accounts. Lane noted that it will likely be about a year, or possibly longer, before transitioning to the NC Capital Management Trust.

Kendra Sink asked whether not maintaining the PNC accounts could make it difficult to accept future grant funds. Lane responded that it would be helpful to connect with the Town's Finance Department to discuss best practices for managing accounts moving forward. Lane noted that the next agenda item was also related to the grant, and with no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Update and Request for Staffing on ARC Non-Profit Board Development Grant

Lane shared that during the final grant planning meeting with Strategic Consulting staff, Monica strongly recommended revising the grant request to include funding for staffing rather than professional development for the Executive Director. Monica noted that the funds would be unrestricted, which is relatively uncommon, and that additional staffing would better support internal capacity-building, a key goal of the grant. Lane expressed support for this approach but raised concerns about potential challenges paying a staff position through the PNC accounts. Suzanne suggested that the role be structured as a contracted position rather than a staff position. Lane added that, given concerns about paying a staff position, she could alternatively pivot to purchasing a laptop to support a part-time role. Fulton agreed with Suzanne's recommendation for a contract-based position, and the Board had a brief discussion regarding the logistics of a contracted role. Lane concluded that while the recommendation was initially unclear, she now understood the approach and proposed keeping the staffing request in the grant while working with HR and Finance to determine the appropriate structure. Lane quickly reviewed the main points of the grant and with no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Discussion of NC Main Street Conference Attendance
Lane noted that Suzanne has already committed to attending, which will satisfy NC Main Street participation requirements. Lane shared that three hotel rooms have been reserved at the Courtyard by Marriott and encouraged Board members to consider attending. Fulton and Kendra both indicated potential interest but noted they would need to confirm their schedules. Kendra added that the conference includes strong training sessions. Lane asked that any Board members interested in attending notify her within the next two weeks. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Request for Approval of Funding for Watauga Library Shred Event
Lane informed the Board that the Watauga County Public Library reached out about again splitting the cost of the Shred Truck event. Lane noted that while the DBDA has hosted the event in the past, she appreciated that the Library is now serving as the lead organizer. Kendra commented that the event is well attended and appreciated by the community. Kendra made a motion to contribute $497.50 to cover half of the event cost. Ethan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Vision Statement
Lane noted a typo on the agenda, clarifying that it should reference a "value statement" rather than a "vision statement." She explained that both the value statement and the Letter of Understanding were recommendations from the ARC READY Non-Profits training to help more clearly articulate board values and commitment expectations. Lane added that the draft language draws from the training materials as well as the organization's strategic plan. She added that for the Letter of Understanding it also includes the Oath of Office language that is required. Ethan made a motion to approve the value statement. The motion was seconded by Stephanie and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Letter of Understanding
Lane explained that the Letter of Understanding is intended as an extension of the Value Statement and the Oath of Office, with the goal that requiring signatures would strengthen accountability. Ethan made a motion to approve the Letter of Understanding. Mike seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Promotional
Discussion of Downtown Restaurant Week Planning
Lane noted that last year's event was successful and helped increase foot traffic. She suggested moving forward with setting dates, sharing that the event was previously held during the week after graduation and before Memorial Day weekend. Lane proposed holding the event during the week of May 18–22, 2026. Megan asked whether the dates could be flexible, potentially moving the event to March. Kendra noted that the event is easier to host when students are gone and parking availability is increased. Mike added that March presents a higher risk of unfavorable weather. Suzanne shared that May is a good timeframe and offers an opportunity to intentionally encourage local participation. Fulton also expressed support for holding the event later in May. The Board discussed ways to be more intentional and efficient with the use of parking mailers. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Discussion of Spring First Fridays
Lane noted that the February First Friday event is approaching and shared that it has historically been one of the busier First Friday events. She also reminded the Board that, due to the Easter holiday and Spring Break schedules, the April event will be held as a Third Friday**.** Lane then moved on to the next agenda item.

Discussion of Northern Peaks State Trail Southern Terminus Ribbon Cutting
Lane shared that Jordan Sellers is planning a ribbon-cutting ceremony during the April Earth Third Friday event for the Northern Peaks State Trail Southern Terminus. Lane noted that a similar trail event in West Jefferson was attended by the Governor and anticipated that he would likely be invited to this event as well.
Amber reported that the First Friday Art Crawl emails she distributes have an average open rate of approximately 60%, which she was pleased with. She also offered assistance to anyone interested in being paired with an artist. Lane expressed appreciation for Amber and Krista at the Arts Council and noted that the system they have developed has been working well.

Lane added that you can see the trail work from the road which is very exciting. Fulton added that he had walked the trail a few times now and it is very nice. The Board brainstormed for a few minutes how to let people know how to get there from downtown and noted they would follow up during the promotions meeting.
With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Design
Discussion of Downtown Bench/Trash Can Inventory Field Trip Date
Lane noted that there had been prior discussion about the Board conducting a walking field trip to inventory downtown benches and trash cans. The Board reached consensus to schedule the field trip for late March or early April. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Update on Stoneman's Raid Civil War Trails Marker
Lane noted that the Board initially agreed to support this project approximately two years ago and that it has since been moving through the approval process. She introduced Jessica Mitchell from the Town of Boone Planning and Inspections Department, who was present to provide an update.

Jessica confirmed that the DBDA has pledged $750 toward the project and noted that the design proof was included in the agenda packet. She asked if there were any concerns, briefly reviewed the plaque design and its proposed location near Linney Street, and shared that a spring installation is anticipated. Jessica added that she would keep the Board informed regarding installation timing and any associated events.

Jessica also informed the Board of a Public Input Session scheduled for the following evening to discuss Itinerant Merchants and Mobile Vendors.

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project
Lane reported that the sewer line from Appalachian Street to Depot Street has been fully installed and that the water line installation is complete, with crews continuing to work on individual service connections. She noted that only a small amount of stormwater infrastructure remains to be completed before crews begin work on the duct bank.
Lane explained that while the duct bank phase is slow and labor-intensive, its completion marks a key milestone when the project will begin to visibly come together. She reviewed the purpose and details of the duct bank, and the Board discussed aspects of conduit placement.

Call for Adjournment
At 9:45am Kendra made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Stephanie and had a unanimous vote.