Downtown Boone Development Association

April Board Meeting – April 28, 2026
8:30 a.m. – Jones House

Board Members Present: Suzanne Livesay, Ethan Rector (virtually) Joe Lynch, Jordan Humler, Stephanie Boozer, Kendra Sink, Mike Forrester, Melody Pineda, Julia Moretz and Megan Kevorkian

Ex-Officio Members Present: Anne Pruitt

Town Staff Present: Dale Presnell, Lane Moody and Geoff Hayes

MSD Members Present: Jeff Thompson (Goofy Foot Tap Room), Hope Thingelstad (Explore Boone), Amber Bateman (Watauga Arts Council) and Evan France (Real Boone Studios)

Call to Order

At 8:37 Kendra called the meeting to order.

Announcements
Kendra asked Lane if she had any announcements to share, and Lane noted that she did. She shared that she recently met with Frances Keel, Director of Conference and Event Services at the University, and had a productive conversation about potential partnership opportunities. Lane added that she will be hosting a "Downtown Boone 101" session for camp staff to encourage visitation to downtown.

Lane also noted that the Mountaineer 10 Miler is scheduled for Sunday, June 14, and that event organizers are currently seeking volunteers. Jordan expressed interest and requested contact information for the organizers. Lane indicated that she would follow up after the meeting.

Lastly, Lane shared that the ribbon cutting for the Northern Peaks State Trail was a success and noted that each Board member received a piece of the ribbon as a memento to display in their space. She added that, with the sidewalk largely complete, there is a growing balance in the undesignated fund, and once the Howard Street project is complete, the Board can revisit some of the larger projects previously discussed.

Lane also noted that she had planned to bring back details of the Hellbender Mural expansion; however, Josh Johnson had a pressing family matter. She anticipates sharing those details in May.

Request for Approval of April Agenda
Stephanie made a motion to approve the April agenda. The motion was seconded by Fulton and passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of March Minutes
Jordan made a motion to approve the March minutes. Mike seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Lane noted that the Howard Street pole decorations had arrived and have outgrown their current storage space. She anticipates bringing forward a request at a future meeting to purchase additional storage. Following a brief discussion, there was general consensus from the Board to support that

request.
With no further discussion, Stephanie made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and passed unanimously.
A brief discussion followed regarding potential public art opportunities and future beautification grants.

Organizational
Update on ARC Non-Profit Board Development Grant
Lane shared that a grant coordinator has been assigned to the application and has been helpful to work with. She noted that the goal of the Non-Profit Board Development Program is to move the grant toward approval. Lane added that Dominique requested a few revisions to the application, which have since been completed and submitted.

Suzanne offered to assist with pre- and post-initiative metrics if needed. Lane thanked her, and with no further discussion, the Board moved on.

Review of Updated By-Laws
Lane apologized for the delay in turnaround on this item and noted that NC Main Street had previously shared best practices for by-laws. She explained that the organization is generally aligned with those recommendations, with the exception of adding indemnification language for Board members.
Lane shared that she consulted with the Town Attorney, who supported the recommendation and provided suggested language, which was included in the agenda packet. She also updated the staff position title from Coordinator to Director.
Following a brief discussion, including confirmation of associated insurance coverage, Jordan made a motion to approve the by-laws. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Rural Economic Development Institute Application
Lane requested permission to apply for the Rural Economic Development Institute (REDI), noting that if selected, the cost would be approximately $3,500.

She explained that the NC Rural Center works to strengthen rural communities by investing in leadership, supporting small businesses, and helping communities build sustainable economic strategies. Lane noted that this program would complement current NC Main Street efforts and strengthen connections with NC Rural Center initiatives.

Following discussion, including a suggestion to pursue scholarship opportunities, Kendra made a motion to approve the application. Stephanie seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Update on New Public Art Insurance Carrier
Lane informed the Board that the current public art insurance carrier will not be renewing coverage due to “lack of carrier appetite.” She reached out to Peak Insurance to secure new coverage ahead of the April expiration deadline, given contractual obligations to maintain insurance.

While a new carrier was secured, it came with a significant cost increase. Lane noted that funding is available to cover the increase, but she is open to exploring other options if the Board prefers. She also shared that rising insurance costs are a common concern among Main Street programs statewide and the Board agreed that it is tough coverage to secure.

Discussion of Streetscape (Benches) Field Trip Dates
Lane revisited the idea of conducting a walking audit of downtown amenities, particularly benches, now that weather conditions are improving.
Following discussion, the Board agreed to schedule the audit for Tuesday, May 12 at 8:30 a.m.

Promotional
Update on Downtown Restaurant Week Planning
Lane shared that she is continuing to finalize details with the Watauga Education Foundation and included materials being distributed to participating restaurants.

She noted ongoing efforts to refine the parking pass distribution strategy, including sending passes home with K–8 students and local nonprofits. She also mentioned working through options for reaching high school students. The Board discussed potential distribution methods and identified partnering with booster clubs as a possible approach.

Suzanne suggested reaching out to local PTOs and exploring printing sponsorship opportunities. The Board agreed to obtain at least three printing quotes before making a decision.

Kendra asked about restaurant participation, and Lane noted that WEF Board members are actively working on outreach, with an updated list expected later in the week.

Update on July First Thursday Planning
Lane shared that several festive ideas from the previous meeting are being developed further. She also clarified that the July event will take place on the first Thursday due to the Fourth of July holiday and related closures.

She noted that the 250th anniversary banners have arrived and look great.
Discussion then shifted to potential support events for the Fourth of July parade and regional event timing. Megan asked what to expect given that the holiday falls on a Saturday. The Board generally agreed that activity is typically busier earlier in the day, with slower traffic in the afternoon and evening.

Design
Update on Graffiti Clean Up Event
Lane opened by noting that she confirmed with Chief Duckworth that the Police Department has secured an intern to assist with the graffiti cleanup initiative. She expressed appreciation for Jessica Mitchell in the Planning and Inspections Department, who reached out ahead of the event and provided helpful information regarding SHPO-approved products for graffiti removal and anti-graffiti coatings.

Anne added that the Planning Commission recently discussed public art in downtown and noted that a map of contributing properties within the historic district may be helpful when planning the event.

Lane continued that she will be sending out a survey within the next week or two to gather additional information from property and business owners in advance of the event to support planning efforts.

Fulton mentioned the possibility of identifying a designated space for a creative graffiti outlet, similar to the graffiti tunnels on campus. Lane noted that, based on previous discussions, it may be challenging to find a property owner willing to offer their wall or space for such a project, but she will keep the Board informed if any opportunities arise.

With no further discussion, the Board moved on.

Update on Bats in Boone Initiative

Lane opened by reviewing that for many years now the DBDA has been trying to find a animal to rally around to develop similar programming to the Mice on Main in Greenville or Bears in New Bern to have a perpetual scavenger hunt in downtown. She continued that Lisa Cooper with Mast General has taken that initiative on a was working on developing the “Bats in Boone” project to showcase an endangered species in our region but making them a little more main stream by partnering with a local artist to make them more visually appealing. She wanted to let the Board know that she is still working with Lisa and staff to develop the programming and would keep the Board updated on the progress as she feels that this initiative will provide multiple opportunities for programming in downtown. Lane noted that she thought they might start with a window cling of the bats initially to work out the kinks of the initiative and work towards more permanent pieces in downtown.

Update on Alleyway Public Art Project

Lane noted that the artist selected for this project indicated it would be easier to paint panels off-site for later installation. Amber confirmed that she is working on securing Josh Johnson to install the panels and finalize project details.

The Board briefly discussed panel specifications and noted that the wall would likely not be painted prior to installation. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project

Lane opened by noting that this was a similar update to the previous meeting, with crews continuing duct bank installation, which has been underway for some time. She shared that an additional alleyway remains to be completed, along with the installation of a large underground utility vault. As a result, while the project may appear close to the end of this phase, there is still significant work to be completed in the coming weeks.

Lane noted that the next phase will likely include some unknown elements, as multiple utility providers begin coordinating efforts to prepare for and relocate overhead lines underground. She provided a brief overview of the logistics involved and explained that final finish work and hardscaping cannot be completed until after the undergrounding process is finished due to the equipment required.

She added that some modifications to the hardscape plan have been made to address field conditions and that updated plans are nearing completion. A brief discussion followed regarding the utilities involved in the project.

Lane concluded by noting that while she remains enthusiastic about the project, she recognizes that its impacts are experienced differently by stakeholders and expressed appreciation for the community’s patience. She added that while the end of construction will be welcome, the new traffic pattern may introduce its own challenges, and noted that Boonerang will serve as an early indication of how those changes may function moving forward.

With no other discussion, the Board adjourned at 9:50 am.