

**Downtown Boone Development Association
Regular Board Meeting – July 14, 2020
8:30 am – Webex Virtual Meeting**

Board Members present: Denise Lovin, Kendra Sink, Wayne Miller, Monica Caruso, Sarah Long and Wayne Randall

Ex-Officio's present: Lindsay Miller, Sam Furguiele and Dustin Hicks.

MSD members/guests present: David Jackson, Katie Greene and Diane Deal

Staff present: John Ward, Lane Moody, Mark Freed and Brad Farthing

Call to Order

Kendra called the meeting to order at 8:48. The meeting started late because Lane had technical issues with her computer.

Request for Approval of March Agenda

Kendra asked if there were any items that needed to be added. Lane stated that she would like to add under the financial section, a discussion about the purchase of COVID-19 related items. Monica made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Kendra seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of March Minutes

Kendra made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Wayne Randall and had a unanimous vote.

Approval of Financial Statement

Lane opened by stating that the reporting format had changed slightly and that she would see if she could get it back to the format the Board preferred. Wayne Randall made a motion to approve the financial statements. Kendra seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Organizational

Discussion of Input Regarding Proposed Updates to the Smoking and Vaping Ordinance

Lane informed the Board that Town Council has been working to update Town Ordinance regarding smoking and vaping. She continued that Town Council has requested input from the DBDA. Lane stated that from her discussion with the Town Attorney the two changes that would impact the downtown area was the proposal to regulate vaping like smoking and the expansion of no smoking areas to include building entrances and downtown sidewalks. Lane stated that she would like to use Survey Monkey to gather input from the MSD. Kendra stated that she would like to get input from other municipalities as well. Kendra voiced concern that the removal of ashtrays could result in more littering. Sam suggested that the Board reach out to Jennifer Greene the Public Health Director to get input from her as well. Kendra suggested that the Board be sensitive to Jennifer's schedule given her role in managing the areas COVID-19 response. After short discussion, Kendra made a motion that we gather information from other communities as well as the MSD in the form of a short survey. Wayne Randall seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of August Annual Meeting

Lane stated that over the past two years the annual meeting had been used as an opportunity for a downtown "State of the Union" type meeting to fill in members of the activities of the DBDA. Lane asked that given the current restrictions for gatherings how the Board would like to proceed. Denise inquired about how past meetings had been scheduled. Lane responded that the last two years had been different. She continued that in 2018, the annual meeting was an evening meeting and in 2019 it was a breakfast meeting. Denise thought that it was really important to make sure that the public was invited to the meeting. Lane agreed and stated that she always advertises the meetings to the public.

After some discussion Kendra made a motion to postpone the annual meeting but make sure to continue to invite the public to the regular virtual DBDA meetings. The motion was seconded by Sarah and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Megan Sheppard Contract and Timing for Photography

Lane confirmed that the two items the Board had issue with in the contract: the ability to crop/edit and trademarking had been worked out. Lane continued that she would like some feedback from the Board about timing of the photography given the current mask mandate. Denise stated that she did not want to see people in masks in the pictures and thought it would be good to postpone the photography. Denise then made a motion to postpone downtown photography. Lane stated that she would keep it on the monthly agenda due to the changing nature of things. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Design

Approval of Façade Improvement Grant

Lane opened by referring the Board members to the façade grant application for Village Jewelers that was enclosed in their packet. Lane continued that she had talked with Planning and Inspections and their renovations met the Secretary of the Interior standards. After short discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the grant. The motion was seconded by Wayne Randall and had a unanimous vote. Sam chimed in that he thought that item number seven on the design criteria, page 4 of the application was ambiguous and might need some work to tighten up the language. Lane stated that she would add the discussion of the language to a future agenda.

Approval for High Country Souvenir's Use of New Logo

Lane opened by reviewing the application. Kendra then made a motion to approve the use. Wayne Randall seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

2020-2021 Public Art Update

Lane updated the Board by letting them know that due to an inability to meet and out of stated artists, the decision was made to extend the contracts for one year for the current artists.

Discussion of Proposal for King Street Closure to Accommodate Further Social Distancing

Lane opened by letting the Board know that at the last Boone Town Council meeting there had been a suggestion to close parts of King Street to accommodate further social distancing. During that meeting the Town Council asked for input from the DBDA. Lane asked John if he would like to add anything. John stated that if restaurants were allowed to expand dining into the streets he anticipated that retail would like the opportunity to expand as well. He continued that one option mentioned was shutting down King Street or possibly making it one way, however he expressed concern that altering King Street in any way would directly affect Fire Department operations. John also expressed concern that closing King Street would also severely limit available parking and that DOT regulations for the space could be problematic as well. Kendra asked if John thought that the DOT would sign off on the road closure and he responded that he thought it would be difficult. Kendra stated that she really likes the idea and thought it was successful in the Town's where road closures had been implemented. However, she noted that parking was the biggest obstacle in our downtown and this proposal could only exacerbate the problem. Sam brought up that part of the discussion had also been the expanded use of the sidewalks. John concurred and voiced concern about being able to social distance on the sidewalk if more activity was pushed outside. Wayne Randall stated that he thought social distancing was difficult on the sidewalks but most of the people he had seen were wearing masks. He was concerned that having tables and chairs out on the sidewalk could cause more incidents or people tripping over each other. Dustin clarified that he thought that the input sought from the DBDA was more specific to sidewalks and crosswalks and what changes could be made to be more accommodating of social distancing. He continued that he was aware that some people were hesitant to go downtown because of areas like the King/Depot Street crosswalk where it could be hard to socially distance.

John reviewed the actions that were taken after the last Town Council meeting, referring to the additional signage that had been placed downtown as well as Public Works making the intersection of Howard Street and Depot Street one way. Kendra stated that she felt that the crosswalks were not as problematic as they were being made out to be and that

additional regulations could cause more confusion. Denise commented that personal responsibility needs to be taken into consideration. Continuing that if someone was concerned for their health and saw people gathering, they could step back from the crowd and she thought that there was plenty of room for that. Denise agreed that more rules could cause further confusion. Kendra commented that she would prefer to put more energy into making mask readily available instead of additional regulations. After continued discussion Lane commented that from what she was hearing she thought that the board was more willing to support mask wearing instead of any additional regulations, road closures or making any sidewalks one-way. Kendra agreed with Lane's statement. John informed the Board that there was a large order of masks that would be coming in the next few weeks and would be distributed from both the Fire Department and Police Department. With no further comment the Board moved onto the next item.

Financial

Discussion of Possible Bulk Mask Order

Lane opened by asking the Board about the potential for a large bulk mask order but asked if John would chime in with any thoughts he might have. John opened by pointing out that there are some downtown businesses that are selling masks and so as to not interfere with a potential revenue source for businesses, the Board might want to consider purchasing masks for downtown staff and employees. Kendra commented about how hard it can be to keep masks in stock and she supported the idea of supplying masks to the downtown businesses. Lane asked Kendra if she would like to turn that into a motion and attach a monetary amount to it. Kendra then inquired about the number of employees in Downtown. Lane quoted the amount of businesses and acknowledged that the number of businesses might not be helpful to dial in the number of employees. Kendra suggested that Lane reach out to the businesses and ask for employee counts. Lane stated that she would e-mail the downtown businesses to inquire about an employee count and continued by asking if they Board would like to give a number to work within, so that she could keep the order moving without having to wait until another meeting. There was brief discussion about the costs of a decent masks. Sarah Long and Wayne Randall commented that they would share their masks resources with Lane. After continued discussion, Kendra made a motion to spend up to \$5000 on masks for downtown businesses and staff. Wayne Randall seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Due to numerous Board members needing to get to other meetings Lane moved up the agenda item discussing the purchase of COVID-19 related items.

Discussion of the Purchase of COVID-19 Related Items

Lane then opened the discussion by informing the Board that the Town of Boone was working on purchasing hand sanitizer stations to be attached to light poles in downtown. She continued by asking if this would be something the Board would like to partner with the Town on. Kendra asked how much the stations cost. Lane stated that it was her understanding that the Town was purchasing 10 stations for a total cost of \$6000. After brief discussion, Wayne Randall made a motion to contribute half of the costs toward the hand sanitizer stations. Kendra seconded the motion. John let the Board know that he would be submitting for reimbursement of a variety of COVID related items and if he were to get reimbursed for the hand sanitizer stations he would refund the DBDA as well. The motion then had a unanimous vote.

Lane then asked Denise to speak to her request about public restrooms. Denise commented that both parking and public restrooms are in short supply in downtown. She continued that while strides have been made to provide public restrooms in downtown, due to COVID-19 restrictions there were currently no public restrooms. Denise then asked if the DBDA could fund public restrooms in downtown. During the request she did acknowledge that they would need to be supervised. John responded that he was not supportive of portable restrooms in downtown because of a few reasons, the first be the general cleanliness of them. Second he stated that they would need to be routinely cleaned by trained personnel wearing personal protective equipment. He continued that while he was concerned about surface contamination he was more concerned about the poor ventilation and its role in transmission. He reiterated that he was uncomfortable installing something in downtown that has the potential to be a transmission source for COVID-19. He finished up by stating that he also had concerns about opening up the Jones House or Town Hall just to accommodate public restrooms, but that he was open to creative suggestions. Monica chimed in that the Library has restrooms that are open to the public during operating hours. Kendra inquired about how long it would be until Town Office would be opened. John responded that it would be at least Phase 3. Kendra asked if that meant they might not

open during Phase 3 and John responded that if the numbers continue to rise there might be limited opening of town offices, and working towards a business by appointment strategy. He continued that protecting Town Operations was of the utmost importance and not having Town services be impacted or slowed. Kendra also voiced her concerns about putting portable restrooms. Denise said that she liked the idea of reaching out to downtown businesses, inquiring who is offering public restrooms and then reporting that back to the businesses. Lane stated that she would be happy to work on compiling that list.

After the consensus, John and several Board members had to leave the meeting. Lane stated that she would briefly review the last few things on the agenda.

Discussion of Hiring Someone to Review and/or Update Website

Lane opened that as a result of discussion coming from the Main Street Community, she was advised that since many things have moved to being virtual, that the Board needs to make sure that our website is in good working order. Lane stated that she was planning to reach out to Sunny Morgan to make sure that the website is as current as possible.

Promotion

Discussion of Supporting the Show Your Love Campaign

Lane quickly stated that while she has still be working on our Main Street plan, there have been some pivoting that has had to occur due to COVID-19 regulations. She stated that she had reached out to the folks at the Chamber, in the absence of DBDA meetings to continue to support our Main Street goals of supporting the community. However, she thought that continuing to partner with the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce would supportive of the goal of the Main Street work plan.

Social Media Strategy Update

Lane finished up by stating that when COVID hit our new social media campaign in partnership with White Blaze Marketing was rolling out. She continued that some of the posts were modified to address the pandemic, but that she felt the roll out had been successful.