Downtown Boone Development Association
July Board Meeting – July 23, 2024
8:30 am – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Michelle Novacek, Fulton Lovin, Sarah Long, Renee Boughman, Megan Kevorkian, Mike Forrester and Suzanne Livesay.

Ex-Officio's Present: Eric Plaag, Lindsay Miller (virtually) and Edie Tugman.

MSD Members/Guests present: Annie Pipes (King Street Flats) Alyssa Hasty (Lost Province), Willard Watson (BRAHM).

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Geoff Hayes, Brad Farthing, Victoria O'Conner and Mark Freed.

Call to Order
Kendra called the meeting to order at 8:40 am.

General Business

Request for Approval of May Agenda
At the beginning of the discussion, Kendra noted the need to amend the agenda in order to move up the discussion of the partnership with BRAHM and place it as the second requested item. Kendra also proposed considering a marketing opportunity with High Country Host. Lane then asked on behalf of Megan to include a discussion of a proposed Boonetoberfest event. Following the requests, Fulton made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Renee seconded the motion and it received unanimous approval.

Request for Approval of May Meeting Minutes
During the June meeting, Kendra mentioned that the DBDA didn't have enough members for a quorum, so the minutes from the May meeting still needed to be approved. She also mentioned that at the June meeting, there was informal discussion about Boonerang and other downtown events. After that, Michelle made a motion to approve the May minutes. Mike seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Lane noted that she had included the end of fiscal year 23-24 statements as well as our current statements which have little expenditures. Renee made a motion to approve the statements. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and had a unanimous vote.

Requested Appearances

Water Conservation Program Coordinator Victoria O'Connor
Victoria O'Connor, Program Coordinator with the Town of Boone, spoke about the importance of water conservation and discussed the potential savings, both in water usage and cost, that can be realized by upgrading to a WaterSense labeled toilet. She then provided details about the Toilet Rebate program offered by the Town of Boone, which gives $100 per residential toilet replaced (up to 3) and $50 per commercial toilet (up to 5).

Discussion of Partnership with BRAHM to Celebrate Local Artist Alex Hallmark
The discussion began with Willard Watson, the Program and Outreach Director at Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, who spoke about an exhibit featuring local artist Alex Hallmark. He referenced the photo included in the packet that showed the proposed signage for the Doc Watson statue in downtown Boone. Willard and Lane discussed the possibility of incorporating information about public art and artist in downtown on the DBDA's new website. Lane emphasized the importance of seeking the Board's support before placing any signage on the statue, which is why it was on the agenda. Renee clarified that the request was for a temporary sign, which Willard confirmed. Edie mentioned that the sign might need approvals from Planning and Inspections. Lane stated that her intention was to ensure that the Board approved the sign before proceeding with seeking approval from Planning and Inspections. Michelle then moved in support of the partnership and sign, which was seconded by Renee, and passed unanimously.

Discussion of Annual Meeting in August
Lane opened by noting that per the DBDA by-laws, we have to have an annual meeting of the membership within two months of the end of the fiscal year to elect directors. She did note that this year was unique because only two positions were open and they were both Town Council appointed. She continued that she hoped to get some guidance from the Board on setting the date and time for the meeting. Lane continued that for the past few years the Board held their annual meeting during its regular time but incorporated breakfast and a more relaxed agenda. Lane continued that Emily Neely had reached out to her about doing a presentation for the Board on the importance of tourism and how the TDA can help it's local partners (as a part of the completion of her Tourism Marketing Professional certification). Lane also added that she had talked with Jessica Mitchell with the Planning and Inspections Department about highlighting volunteer opportunities for downtown Boards, specifically the DBDA and Historic Preservation Commission. Lane noted that she thought there were some good opportunities for collaborative programming for the meeting that she hoped would encourage people to attend. After a short discussion, there was general consensus to keep the meetings current date and time but to send out hand-delivered flyers about the events and working on giveaway items for the meeting.

Request to Reallocate Funding to Cover the Cost of Public Restroom Cleaning for FY 24-25
Kendra opened by noting the request to reallocate DBDA funding for the new Public Restrooms at Town Hall. Lane added that the request had initially been presented by the Town to the TDA, but the TDA declined because they are more inclined to fund infrastructure projects, not maintenance projects. The TDA offered to add an additional $15,000 to the restroom project if the DBDA would pay for the cleaning of the restrooms for the upcoming fiscal year. Lane again noted that this was not a request for additional funding, just a reallocation of funds that have already been committed. Lane then circulated a picture of the progress of the construction and noted that she was still working on the art opportunities for the restrooms. After a short discussion, Sarah made a motion to reallocate the $15,000 towards the cleaning of the restrooms. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval to Move MSD Funds for Sidewalk Work
Lane opened by letting the Board know that she had met with Deputy Public Works Director Justin Stines to discuss what sidewalks were left to be replaced, and she was happy to report that there were not many places left to be replaced. She noted that with the lack of sidewalk work needing to be done, it would be a good time to revisit identifying opportunities for additional public art, specifically on N. Depot, next to Melanies, and potentially the alleyway. There was a brief conversation about some

flooding issues that had occurred recently. Lane then asked if the Board would support moving $15,000 from the DBDA's MSD Streetscape line to the Downtown Streetscapes Project line to cover the minor sidewalk upgrades. Lane noted that she would work to bring back a list of the public art projects. The board briefly discussed graffiti downtown and clearly communicating responsibility of the public art projects. After a short discussion, Renee made a motion to move the $15,000. The motion was seconded by Sarah and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Hosting "Buy Boone Lunch" at F.A.R.M Café
Lane noted that this item had been discussed in the past but there was some concern about the DBDA's ability to fund the event. Lane stated that she had done some research and she thought that it would be appropriate for the DBDA to support the program and "Buy Boone Lunch". The Board discussed the tabling opportunity that comes along with the programming and the ways that this event would be mutually beneficial. After a short discussion of the logistics of the event, Kendra made a motion to spend $600 for the event. The motion was seconded by Mike and had a unanimous vote. Lane stated that she would follow up with the Board about hosting the event in October.

Discussion of Bulk Order of Downtown Boone Mugs
Lane opened by noting that she use to purchase Downtown Boone mugs for a variety of reasons mainly small gift baskets and social media giveaways, but thought they could be used as outgoing Board Member gifts as well. She continued that since Doe Ridge Pottery is no longer in Downtown Boone she would like to do a bulk order of mugs to have on hand when Board members roll off, for gift baskets or social media giveaways. She stated that she talked to Bob and Nate from Doe Ridge Pottery and they would be willing to do a bulk order at a wholesale cost of $24 per mug. Kendra made a motion to approve the request and the was some confusion about the vote and a spirited discussion regarding the use ensued. There was concern expressed about the cost of the mugs and the gifting of mugs to outgoing board members. After some discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the purchase of the mugs with the condition that they not be given to outgoing Board members. The motion was seconded by Renee and it had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Tabling at AppState Club Expo and Request to Order Promotional Supplies
Lane opened by noting that this event is scheduled for Sunday, August 18 and that she has already partnered and registered with Cultural Resources for the event. Lane confirmed that the event would be held in the Student Union and she thought that this event would be a good opportunity for volunteer recruitment and supportive of our NC Main Street goals. The Board took a few minutes to discuss the items needed and suggested aprons (for the FARM Café event), cups, stickers, bandanas and koozies. After a short discussion, Kendra made a motion to spend up to $2,000 on promotion supplies. The motion was seconded by Fulton and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Boonetoberfest
Megan opened the discussion by handing out an information sheet and reviewing last year's Boonetoberfest. She noted that for this year she would like to expand the event throughout downtown, but is not currently requesting any road closures. She continued that she is partnering with the Watauga Arts Council for the event programming which includes a passport activity that encourages visitors to visit many businesses. She stated that this event would essentially be the combination of Busker's Fest and Ocktoberfest making Boonetoberfest. Megan asked the Board if there were any questions. Renee inquired if there was a home game and Megan confirmed there was not. Eric inquired if Megan had reached out to Police Chief Andy LeBeau about having additional police presence for the event. Megan stated that she had not, but would be happy to once she got the blessing of the DBDA

Board. Fulton inquired about what would differentiate this event from the other Octokberfests. Kendra stated that she liked the idea of combining the two events and appreciated that the event had been expanded to include the entire downtown. Michelle agreed and also offered her appreciation of the expansion. Megan went on to state that the goal was to provide ideas to the businesses but ultimately the activity or participation level was up to the business. Suzanne inquired if there would be one central area for the event and Megan stated that while the breweries could serve as those locations there was not any central location that would be featured through out the day. Sarah stated that she would be happy to have a face cutout station that encouraged social media engagement. The Board discussed opportunities during the event and then reviewed some other downtown events. Suzanne inquired about the bandwidth of the Watauga Arts Council to take on essentially two events in one weekend. Megan clarified that for Saturday's programming the bulk of the participation would be on the downtown businesses and the Arts Council would be responsible for the Passport program. Renee then inquired about who would be coordinating the business and Megan stated that it would likely be the Arts Council that would serve as the coordinator. Eric added that this event has the potential to pose a real impact on the town and suggested that there would be the need for an increase in police and fire staff at the event, even if there is not a road closure requested. Eric went on to suggest that Megan put together an outline of the event to present to the town to see what town services would possibly need to be increased for the day. Megan then suggested that the town consider implementing a social district in downtown. She took a moment to review the benefits of a social district, noting that she would not be pushing for that this year. Lane stated that she thought that the proposal for a social district should be generated from the DBDA and not the Watauga Arts Council. Lane continued that social districts have a lot of pieces to unpack and expressed her desire to follow a strategic path towards a social district if that was a future desire of the Board. There was brief discussion about social districts. Renee added that she did like the idea of the event and it's expansion, she stated that she did have some organizational concerns but that overall it looks like a fun event. Suzanne stated that she was concerned about the lack of a central location and encouraged Megan to consider finding a central space for the event. Megan stated that she was planning on having a website that could serve as the information guide. A general discussion of the event programming and future planning occurred. Megan asked if the Board was supportive of endorsing the event. There was a consensus among the Board to support a Boonetoberfest event.

Discussion of High Country Host Print Ad in the October Edition of Our State Magazine.
Lane opened by noting that Candice with High Country Host had sent a marketing opportunity in the form of a print ad in the October edition of Our State Magazine featuring the High Country and Blue Ridge Parkway. Lane continued that the ad would be for a 1/4 page and cost $1900. After some discussion, the Board did not move forward with the ad.

Update of Hellbender Mural
Lane opened by letting the Board know that the mural unveiling is set for Friday, August 23 from 4 pm until 6 pm and reviewed the developing programming for the event.

Request for Approval of South End Brewing Improvement Grant
Lane opened by directing the Board to the South End Brewing Façade Incentive Grant application in the packet noting that this application would qualify for $7,500 and reviewed the recent changes to the grant application. Megan recused herself from the vote. Sarah then made a motion to approve the grant application. The motion was seconded by Fulton and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of NC Main Street Destination Development Training
Lane stated that she would like to ask for approval to rent a bus to take interested folks to the NC Main Street Destination Development Training in Lexington, NC on August 12. Lane then briefly reviewed the highlights of the event. Lane then asked if the Board would approve spending up to $1500 on transportation for the event. Renee then made a motion to spend up to $1500 on transportation for the event. Kendra seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Kendra then asked for an update on the Parking "Brainstorming" sessions. Eric reminded the Board that these would take place on Thursday, July 25 at 9am, Monday, July 29 at 9am and Wednesday, July 31 at 6pm in Council Chambers. There was a brief discussion of the programming for the event.

Motion to Adjourn
At 10:15 Mike made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Sarah and had a unanimous vote.