

**Downtown Boone Development Association
Annual Board of Directors Meeting – August 8, 2017
8:30 am – Jones House Cultural and Community Center**

Board Members present: Angela Kelly, Sam Parker, Monica Caruso, Anna Roseman, Dave Walker, Michelle Novacek (for Mike O'Connor)

Ex-Officios present: Loretta Clawson, Lynne Mason

MSD members present: Jennifer Lynch

Staff present: Brittney Clark, John Ward, Pilar Fotta

Handouts: Agenda, May minutes, June Minutes, July Minutes, August 2016 minutes, Job Description for DBDA coordinator, Board application for Mike O'Connor, 2017-2018 DBDA Bylaws, Town DBDA budget worksheets, Streetscape photos, Howard Street project

GENERAL BUSINESS

John Ward called the meeting to order at 8:40 with a quorum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

At 8:40 am, Anna made a motion to approve the agenda, May, June, and July minutes, as well as the 2016 August Annual minutes and Dave seconded it. All voted in favor.

John discussed the online agenda management system – the agenda and agenda packet, including minutes, are posted on the DBDA website as well as on the Town of Boone website. DBDA agendas will be on the meeting management system one week in advance. This will be no additional cost to DBDA. This reduces copying expenses, as well as provides information to the public and the media. Our hope is that this will increase participation.

ORGANIZATION

Introduction of New Staff

John introduced Brittney Clark, new Downtown Boone Development Association Coordinator. Position was posted nationally; over 30 applicants; interviews done as far as Montana. Hiring committee was Pilar Fotta, Peri Moretz from HR, Kendra Sink who was appointed by the DBDA, Randy Jackson from the Chamber, and John Ward, as well as two interns, one HR and one Town Hall. Local since 2005, Brittney was selected, and was available to start rather quickly. She started last week, and has started town policies and procedure. She was available for the Governor's visit, was active and around for First Friday, and is heading to a Main Street conference tomorrow for the rest of the week. Brittney introduced herself, and shared one of her big goals is to increase membership of MSD members at the meeting, and asked for feedback from board on how to do her job better.

John shared about misinformation about milling the street being shared, as well as about the sidewalks; no business entrances were blocked by sidewalk construction. John has tasked Brittney with being very visible and out on the streets. She has been introduced with the directors of different departments. Part of the focus and part of the challenge is new development at old Hospitality House, which will be added to the App Theater, then adding a parking deck behind Town Hall, then new construction at Marketplace

and Riverswalk. Both Marketplace and Riverswalk will have new commercial space, probably at the same time. We will have to change into project-management because of the impact to town; trying to mitigate site plans, construction materials dropped off, parking for construction workers. Lots of new construction of the next two years.

Included is the DBDA job description that Brittney has been charged with – the new one will be in September's agenda – there will be more economic development focus and business recruitment and retention focus. If any business has any questions, Brittney will be a conduit. It made sense for a long time because of Pilar's influence to house DBDA under Cultural Resources, but most businesses don't know to go to Cultural Resources for business, so DBDA is now located in Town Hall. Brittney will also be the main liaison for parking for McLaurin – both are located in Town Hall.

Festivals and events will remain under Pilar at the Jones House, with Brittney sliding in to assist as needed. Putting more of a business/economic development/promotion focus on Brittney. A lot of this came from suggestions from the Board after Virginia's resignation, as well as questions that came into Town Hall regarding business.

Board Membership

Brittney shared that on July 31, Colton Lentz and Michael O'Connor's board terms ended; Colton didn't respond, but Michael submitted an application and his application was included in the packet for the Board. John shared that Michael has been very instrumental for making a plan on how to bury power lines on Howard Street. Michelle Novacek, proxy for Mike O'Connor, refrained from voting. Angela moved to approve, Monica seconded.

Review for Revisions and Additions to DBDA bylaws (Updated December 2016)

Brittney asked for revisions to bylaws. John shared about voting via email, in Section 12, since DBDA is using Tax Funds. Email is not in line with open meetings and sunshine laws. John expressed that email is nice for getting things done between meetings, but that responsibility will fall back to John and Brittney for bringing action items to meetings. With additional revenue coming in, we may fall under additional scrutiny, and John's suggestion is to bring everything into light.

John suggested another possible revision is yearly meeting without dictating when during the year that takes place. John is not asking for any changes to be made today; will go back on the agenda in September; asked the Board for suggestions on how to make these bylaws. Brittney suggested to have the date of revision at the footer of each page.

FINANCIALS

Review of Budget

Copies of budget worksheets were included in meeting packet. John wanted Board to review projected budget, revenue before big developments come to town. Revenue and expenses are on the same sheet. John shared that the Town of Boone will provide Brittney with access to run reports. John stated that we will shoot to bring in year-end financials to September meeting for review. John shared that there is a separate audit for DBDA than from the Town of Boone. John asked for any input regarding a separate audit for the DBDA. Dave asked why. Pilar stated that it is written into DBDA contract with the Town that it has to be separate. Loretta stated she remembered that. John asked if anyone thinks strongly about just having one audit to let him know.

John explained the third budget worksheet – the two figures reflected the two different types of tax revenue distribution (per capita to ad valorem) – middle column matches first worksheet, third column was in anticipation if there was a change in tax distribution. Gives breakdown for actual items under budget codes. Lynne asked where the audit was located in the bylaws – Pilar clarified that it is in the contract with the town, not the bylaws.

PROMOTION/DESIGN

Update on Downtown Streetscape

Photos included of sidewalks from Appalachian Theater down towards Appalachian Street. This year, per DBDA recommendation, has been worked on. In-house crews; \$340 thousand dollars; waiting on a final component from DOT; there will be a bulb-out at the end of Appalachian street; there will be pedestrian crosswalks and signal heads. Public Works money has been combined with DBDA money; pedestrian crosswalks and signal heads are coming from Public Works budget. Jennifer, of Insomnia Cookies, asked about street light on Appalachian Street. John stated that they are expecting the DOT to release the plan for the bulb out in the next month. John stated that the town was able to secure the easements in front of Boone Saloon to connect the level sidewalk to the storefronts; had to partner with private business owners. This might be a project that the DBDA would want to take on. Another project to take on would be from Our Daily Bread down to Vetro building for new sidewalks. Once the core is completed on King Street, where the highest pedestrian traffic is, then will move to Depot and Appalachian Street.

Update on Howard Street

John shared that the town has received lots of compliments on sidewalks. Right now, Depot Street is milled. Will be repaved, and in the Howard Street rendering, there is a 3-way stop with 4-way pedestrian crosswalks painted in. Town of Boone will be striping Depot with thermoplastic striping at that crosswalk, and adding in the 3-way stop signs, to train people using that road to stop for pedestrians. They are at about 80% construction design; review with New River Light and Power, then will receive bids and decide which projects get permitted first. Will have to coordinate with construction crews as we get closer. Go out to bid on the first phase of Howard Street at the beginning of 2018. Easements that were needed were obtained. Old pathway from old Tweetsie Depot up to Historic Post Office was surveyed and deed research showed that 100% of alleyways are owned by the Town of Boone.

Dave Walker asked about the UNC School of Government – John shared that the budget has been authorized, the scope has been authorized. John shared that we hoped to start working with them before September, but kick-off work with them in September. John negotiated for the entire MSD to be included, as well as Howard Street, without any additional cost (they were asked for \$15,000 extra). Original quote for this project was \$150,000; came down in price to \$100,000 without a change in scope, and John asked they add to the original scope for the same price and they agreed.

Website Update

Brittney shared that she found the contract that had been signed in May with Big Boom Design; checked in with Boomer Sassmann, no money has been transferred. Boomer would like to go forward, but he is not holding us to that contract. DBDA website is not serving our audience. Brittney's question to the board are: Who is our audience? What is our message?

Brittney shared that her thoughts were our audience were MSD members, businesses looking to come to town, with tertiary audience being visitors, but visitors are not finding our page.

Talked about putting link to DBDA website on the Town of Boone website. Opened up the discussion to the board. John suggested having the page nested within the Town of Boone website rather than something separate.

Lynne Mason shared that downtown is not local friendly. Multiple people shared about parking still being an issue downtown. Anna shared that having a reach to “the trifecta” – college students, tourists, and locals – it takes all three to get businesses through all seasons. Needs to be easy to use and easy to find – biggest issue is giving the trifecta easy access to downtown, while people are driving up the mountain, and before people get here. Businesses wanting to come to town will run numbers first on money spent downtown. It needs to be super easy to find, look super up-to-date or in front of the curve, we have to look “mega-good”. Same with social media. Sam Parker mentioned website needs to be mobile friendly. Also talked about making signage that share that visitors can park in Courthouse parking and Town Hall on the weekends.

John had everyone introduce themselves around the table – Sam Parker with ODB, Angela with Proper, Monica Caruso with the Watauga County Library, Anna with Anna Bananas, Dave Walker with Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, Jennifer with Insomnia Cookies, Michelle for Mike O’Connor – wanted to talk about parking, Loretta Clawson with Town Council, Lynne Mason with Town Council and business owner (Lost Province, who was celebrating three years of being open today).

Anna also asked for a welcome reception for Brittney – get a chance for business owners to meet her – suggested printing something out to pass out – John asked about mixing it with another meeting – Lynne suggested it be held independent of the annual meeting. Michelle suggested having it at the Turchin center.

Welcome to New Businesses Downtown

Elevated Piercing – Donnie and Erin Lee at 740 W King Street
Sabeing Boone – Sittaporn (Pam) Bunlue – 454-A West King Street
Carolina Pizza – Chad and Leah Duncan – 454-B West King Street

Anna asked about Reckless Arts and the new gift shop – John gave update. Asked about Reckless Arts and Something Else gifts.

Other Business, Comments, or Concerns

Lynne Mason asked about public vs private disabled parking info – John shared that Brittney will be sharing this information with the MSD members.

Brittney asked for feedback on ongoing projects – invited everyone to email me their suggestions.

Lynne reiterated parking on weekend, holiday, etc. Not clearly marked. John mentioned there used to be too many signs.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am

Anna motioned to adjourn the meeting; Monica seconded.

