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

Board Members present: Kendra Sink, Wayne Miller, Monica Caruso, Brandon Bettis, Jim Marsh, Michelle Novacek, Denise Lovin and Sarah Long.

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

MSD members/guests present: David Jackson, Amber Leigh Thompson, Angela Kelly and Bob Meier.

Staff present: Lane Moody, Kat Eller and Brad Farthing.

Call to Order

At 8:48 Kendra called the meeting to order.

Approval of September Agenda

Wayne Miller made a motion to approve the September agenda. This motion was seconded by Michelle and had a unanimous vote.

Approval of July Minutes

Kendra made a motion to approve the July minutes. The motion was seconded by Monica and had a unanimous vote.

Approval of August Minutes

Kendra made a motion to approve the August minutes. The motion was seconded by Monica and had a unanimous vote.

Approval of Financial Statements

Kendra made a motion to approve the financial statements. Michelle Novacek asked to abstain from the vote because she had not reviewed the statements. Monica seconded the motion and the financial statements were approved.

Approval of Board Member Application

Lane informed the Board members that Denise Lovin's term expired in July and she was reapplying for her position. Wayne Miller made a motion to approve the application. Sam pointed out that Denise will continue to serve until she is replaced and that she should be voting. The motion was seconded by Sarah and had a unanimous vote.

<u>Organizational</u>

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

Lane stated that at the last meeting there was not a quorum to be able to move forward with recommendations. Lane began to share her screen to show the input that was received. Kendra asked when the questionnaire was sent out and Lane stated that it was the week after the July meeting. Kendra was concerned that there wasn't enough feedback and expressed concern about the changes impact on vape stores and bars. Lane followed up that after the last meeting she e-mailed the downtown restaurants directly for input and she received input from 4 of those restaurants and they were all in favor of the changes. Sam stated that the Public Health Director was in favor of the changes as they protected the health of those people being exposed to second hand smoke or vaping. Sam then inquired about the feedback, asking if it was a low level of feedback. Lane stated that the response was about average. Sam suggested bringing the presentations from the student who proposed the initial changes and any past presentations Jennifer Greene might have. Lane stated that she would work to get those presentations to continue discussion in October.

Discussion of Façade Incentive Grant Application Criteria Wording, Specifically Item #7

Lane stated that she included a large part of the grant application so that the Board would have context, but she would share the specific item to which she was referring. She brought up item number 7 in the façade grant wording and reminded the Board that Sam brought up that it offered no consequence that if due to unforeseen circumstances changes were made to the approved plans. Lane expressed her opinion that it might be best to not add additional meetings or criteria, but to remind the applicant of the importance of maintaining the Secretary of the Interior standards for final approval. Denise and Brandon both agreed that it would be best to not make things difficult for the businesses. Jim inquired if the façade grants were tied in with the Historic Preservation Committee. Lane stated that they were drafted with NC Main Street guidance without any input from the HPC. Sam stated that he thought that the proposal to encourage meeting the Secretary of the Interior Standards would fix the issue he saw. Lane stated that she would draft wording that reflected the discussion and bring it back to the Board for final approval.

Discussion of Blanket Policy for MSD Property Owners Wanting Access to the DBDA Collection Images.

Lane opened by stating that the DBDA has a collection of photos housed within Digital Watauga, which they get requests for use. She continued that collection owners, like the DBDA in this case, are entitled as the rightsholders of the images in their collections to charge a permission fee for outside commercial uses. Lane stated that the DBDA collection is made up of pictures of businesses and properties in the downtown and asked if the Board would like to waive the fee for businesses in the MSD asking to use pictures from the DBDA collection. Denise asked what the charges were and Lane brought up the page in the agenda that reviewed the different fees. Lane clarified that she spoke with Eric Plagg about potentially having a blanket policy that DBDA members asking to use pictures from the DBDA collection. Denise asked if the businesses requesting use could only use photos of their property. Lane said that she thought DBDA members should have access to all the pictures, not just limited to photos of their property. Denise and Brandon both agreed and thought it would be helpful to offer. Wayne Miller then voted to draft a blanket policy giving DBDA members access to the photos without a fee but would still need to meet the conditions of use. Brandon seconded the motion. Kendra stepped away from the meeting momentarily but the motion had a unanimous vote. However, Monica added that in the language it might be good to encourage a donation to Digital Watauga.

Appointment of Board Treasurer

Lane explained to the Board that Wayne Miller could no longer serve as treasurer. She inquired with the Board if there was anyone who would like to serve as Board Treasurer. Monica pointed out that the were Board members missing and that maybe when there were more people meeting there might be a volunteer. With no volunteers Lane stated that she would keep this on the agenda until someone was nominated or volunteered.

Appointment of Authorized Signers on PNC Accounts

Lane noted the need to update signers on the PNC accounts. Lane stated that it was her understanding that Monica and past Board Member Tucker Deal were listed as signers. Monica stated that she was fine to remain on. Lane stated that she thought it would be best to table this as well because ideally the new treasurer would be a signer on the account.

<u>Design</u>

Queen Street Parking Update

Lane stated that she left this on the agenda in case there were any updates regarding the Queen Street Parking deck. Lane stated that she was not aware of any major changes in the last month and asked Sam if he was aware of anything. Sam stated that three options were presented to Council. The engineers confirmed that a multi-story deck was geotechnically possible and could hopefully be done in such a manner that it would not have a great impact on the neighborhoods. Lane stated that she would keep this item on the agenda to provide updates as progress develops. Sam stated that there was a presentation that was a part of the Town Council packet that could be distributed to the Board members. Lane stated that she would work to get that out as quickly as possible.

Discussion of Stand Alone Public Restrooms

Lane opened by stating that public restrooms had been discussed at length at the last DBDA meeting and acknowledge that it is an important issue. Lane stated that she thought that it would be a good solution if public restrooms were included with any parking structure that is developed. Kendra expressed concern about the restrooms being in a parking deck because they would not be close enough to the downtown foot traffic. Jim Marsh inquired if there was any town property that would be available. Bob Meier suggested that the space across from the Veteran's Memorial at the top of the King Street lot in his opinion would be a good spot. Bob felt that using Town Hall and Jones House restrooms were only band-aids and he felt that public restrooms, not attached to another project was of the utmost importance and should not be stalled for any longer. Sam added that there was an attempt to reach out to the property owner of the empty space next to Carolina Pizza, with the intent to add public restrooms but the property owners did not respond. Sam also stated that there is the potential to expand Town Hall into the King Street lot with a potential to add restrooms. However, due to COVID-19 Sam expressed concern that there might be budget shortfalls. Jim expressed his empathy with the downtown families and stated that not having available restrooms could leave a lasting negative memory. He continued that there needs to be restrooms located throughout downtown and echoed Bob's urgency. Denise also expressed the immediate need and advocated for temporary restrooms to help accommodate the need.

Sam then inquired about possibly moving up the DBDA meeting so that topics that come up during the DBDA meeting could be addressed during the same month's Town Council meeting. He continued that he would like to address this at the September Town Council meeting but that the agenda deadline had already passed. Kendra expressed her frustration about Town Hall and the Jones House still being closed, despite most other businesses being open on some level. Denise thought it should be looked at from a public health perspective and addressed as quickly as possible. The Board brainstormed different options and locations for public restrooms. Lane stated that what she was hearing from the Board was a request for portable restrooms in downtown and asked for more specifics. Bob expressed his opinion that the Board should share the costs of this with the Town. After continued discussion, Kendra stated her agreement with Sam that this item need to go before Town Council. Then Kendra made a motion to present to Town Council regarding public restrooms in October. The motion was seconded by Jim. Sarah had stepped away and did not vote but the motion had a unanimous vote from the Board members present. There was a pause while waiting on Denise to vote. During which Sam stated that if any members would want to come and speak during Public Comment at the September Town Council meeting, he would propose amending the agenda to discuss. Kendra and Bob both stated that they would be willing to attend the meeting. The vote for the motion was unanimous.

Discussion of Potential Promotional Opportunities

Lane opened by stating that she wanted to touch base with the Board and discuss potential opportunities for a drive thru Boone Boo event and Festive First Friday. She said that she has been brainstorming with Cultural Resources about how to continue with events that are safe. She mentioned a reverse parade that was discussed during the Main Street Conference. She continued that while the reverse parade could be a safer option, she felt that due to traffic concerns it would not be able to be held in downtown. She went on to state that after talking with staff at Cultural Resources they felt that using the Horn in the West property could be a good alternative. However, she stated that she and Cultural Resources staff felt there would still be good opportunity for businesses to be involved. Lane went on to briefly describe Festive First Friday events, also at Horn in the West, and how downtown businesses could still be involved. Denise asked why if it could be done at Horn in the West why could it not happen downtown. Lane reiterated the concerns she had regarding traffic. There was little response from the Board and Lane went on the express her hesitation for moving events from downtown but also expressed her desire to have some sort of event. Brad chimed in during the discussion to give a review of the potential plan. He explained that it would be a decorated drive through event that would have minimal contact. Jim inquired if the cars would be there and Lane stated that the cars would be gone because students are not allowed to park in the lot on Saturday's. Lane inquired if the board had any input. Monica thought that it was a creative idea that would need to be fleshed out more. After continued discussion, Lane asked if the Board was supportive of moving forward with the event. Kendra stated that she would be but was concerned about using MSD funds outside of the MSD. Bob brought up the candy that is delivered by the DBDA and stated that it is not enough to cover for the night. Lane stated that she would like to discuss the candy purchase moving forward, because she feels that it is not the most efficient use of DBDA funds, because while it is a large candy purchase, it is typically not sufficient to cover trick or treating. Lane stated that if the event does move forward, she could get the promotions committee involved. Lane finished up the conversation by discussing at potential Facebook live Grinch event, that could be put on a large screen and shown at the Horn in the West lot.

Discussion of Website Updates

Lane informed the Board that at the Main Street Conference she got some ideas for updating our website. She continued that while she has currently paused newsletters, she thought that it might be beneficial to swap out the blog section on the website for a newsletter section. She stated that it is difficult to update the blog regularly and thought that the newsletters provided good information that people could find useful. Lane also let the Board know that the comments section was somewhat problematic, in that most of the comments were in Russian and typically trying to sell something. Lane continued that she thought a volunteer page would be a good resource for the community. She stated that it could be an opportunity to reach out to a variety of different groups to let them know about the various opportunities in downtown. Lane also felt that the volunteer page lined up with the goals in our Main Street Work Plan. Denise inquired about who was currently writing the blog and Lane stated that it was her. Denise continued by talking about the blog being an opportunity for search engine optimization and her desire to maintain that opportunity. Brandon asked if the Instagram page posts could be substituted for the blog. Lane finished up by stating that she would follow up with some input from White Blaze regarding the blog and work to develop the volunteer page.

Discussion of Purchase of any additional COVID-19 related items

Lane opened by stating that she didn't have anything specific for this item but wanted to keep it on there in case a Board member had a suggestion. Lane updated the Board that the face masks that had been ordered had been delivered to everyone who requested them and that there is about 150 of the 1500 remaining.

Discussion of Trespass Options for Repeatedly Disruptive Patrons

Lane opened by stating that she was hoping Ferrin would be able to address this more in depth. Lane continued that it was her understanding that Ferrin had run into an issue with a gentleman who was intoxicated and being repeatedly disruptive in downtown. Lane stated that she struggled with where to start the conversation, she continued that she thought input from John and the Town Attorney would be helpful, but she wanted to make sure the Board wanted to seek more information first. After a brief discussion, the Board thought it would best to seek out more information regarding the laws associated with the problematic behavior. Lane stated that she would discuss with Ferrin and possibly with John and the Town Attorney and bring back before the Board.

Discussion of Potential Shred Event

Lane stated that she had a request from a business owner for another shred event and wanted to see if the Board would be interested. Kendra stated that if she thought there was a need for the service we should explore offering it. Lane stated that she would work on planning that and bring it back to the Board in October.

Jim took a moment to update the Board about a new tenant coming to the old Elizabeth's treasurer's space, it is a business called Alumni Hall our of Knoxville, TN.

Then Kendra made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Wayne and had a unanimous vote.