Downtown Boone Development Association
September Board Meeting – September 24, 2024
8:30 am – The Jones House

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

Ex-Officio's Present: Lindsay Miller and Edie Tugman.

MSD Members/Guests present: Bob Flanigan and Morgan Murray.

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Geoff Hayes, Brad Farthing, and Mark Freed.

Call to Order
Kendra called the meeting to order at 8:42 am.

Request for Approval of September Agenda
Kendra asked if anyone had any changes to the agenda. There were no requests to change the agenda. Fulton made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Correction of January Meeting Minutes
Lane opened and noted that she was working on verifying the Board vote on the Main Street work plan and realized that she had neglected to include the vote in the minutes. She continued that Michelle's notes did include the vote, and she reviewed the recording to confirm. She has corrected those minutes and is requesting board approval. Michelle made a motion to approve the minutes. Megan seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of July Meeting Minutes
After a short discussion, Michelle motioned to approve the July meeting minutes. Kendra seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Lane noted that there were still a few items that had not been accounted for but should be included soon. There was a brief discussion about the Destination Development Training and the digital trainings being offered by National Main Street. Michelle then made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Fulton and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Updated Website
Lane opened by informing the Board that the new website is now live. She continued by noting that the new drone footage had been added and encouraged Board Members to review their photos and biographical information. Lane also asked if the Board would be interested in hosting a headshot session. Suzanne expressed that she would greatly appreciate this. The Board then discussed hosting a headshot session for Board Members and other downtown businesses, to be organized by DBDA. After a brief discussion, Lane stated that she would gather more information and bring it back to the Board for final approval in October. Fulton inquired about the relationship between the DBDA and the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, and a short conversation followed about the upcoming Town Council meeting.

Lane also mentioned that she had met with Jessica Mitchell and identified the need for some updates to the Façade Incentive Grant page on the website. She went on to inform the Board that NC Main Street Program Manager Sherry Adams had complimented the new website, and that Raven Tools would be used for diagnostics. Lane concluded by encouraging the Board to review the website and let her know if they found any issues.

Discussion of NC Main Street Site Visit Notes

Lane began by informing the Board that she felt the NC Main Street site visit with Sherry Adams had gone very well. She pointed out that Sherry's notes from the visit were included in the packet. Lane also expressed that she believed Main Street recognized and appreciated the work the Board had put in over the past year. She mentioned that Michelle had joined the walk-and-talk to brainstorm ways to strengthen relationships between the DBDA and the University.

Lane further noted that the Main Street representatives suggested having someone from the Board attend the International Town and Gown Association (ITGA) Annual Conference. However, after researching the costs, she discovered it was outside the Board's budget. Upon further review of the ITGA website, she identified some useful trainings and stated that she would gather more information about becoming a member to present to the Board at a later date.

Michelle added that it would be ideal if the University was also involved and mentioned that a new chancellor likely wouldn't be in place until next year. She suggested it would be best to delay action on this matter until then.

Lane continued by sharing that she had met with Jessica Mitchell to discuss a Lunch and Learn-style training in partnership with Planning and Inspections and the Historic Preservation Commission. This training would be aimed at downtown business or property owners considering renovations and would align with Main Street's work plan goals.

Lane concluded by noting Sherry's encouragement for the Board to focus on committee work and volunteer recruitment.

Discussion of National Main Street Accreditation Assessment

The conversation then transitioned to the Main Street assessment, where Lane acknowledged previous concerns about the Board's diversity. She informed the Board that, this year, National Main Street was allowing significantly more time to complete the assessments, noting that the portal opened in August and the assessment was due by January 17. Lane added that she had already begun working on the assessment to allow time for any necessary adjustments. She expressed confidence in the assessment process and the Board's accreditation status. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next topic.

Discussion of 2025 First Friday Planning

Lane began by acknowledging that this topic was still a bit in the future but needed to be addressed. She informed the Board that in 2025, the 4th of July would fall on a Friday. Lane pointed out that many businesses might be closed or have adjusted hours, which could affect the First Friday event. She asked if the Board would prefer to move the July 2025 First Friday to either a "First Thursday" or a "Second Friday." After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that holding a "First Thursday" event in July 2025 would be the best option.

Discussion of Upcoming Buskers Fest/Boonetoberfest

Lane began by mentioning that she had met with Amber and showed the Board the passport prizes she had purchased for the event. Amber Bateman provided an update on the number of artists, buskers, and vendors who had signed up. Lane then gave a brief overview of the activities planned by the participating businesses. Megan added that South End would be hosting the official stein-holding contest at 4 p.m. Fulton asked about the event's name, and Amber clarified that the weekend would be called Boone Fall Fest, with Buskers Fest taking place on Friday and Boonetoberfest on Saturday. Amber further explained that this was the first year they were expanding the event and were still finalizing the details. With no further discussion, the Board moved on.

Discussion of Boone BOO! Programming

Lane began by informing the Board that she had met with Mark and Brad last week to finalize details for Boone BOO! She announced that the roving street performer, "Mirror Person," had been secured for the event. Lane also confirmed plans to host the costume contest, followed by a performance from Appalachian Rhythm, and mentioned the need for judges. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to have Sarah, Suzanne, and Fulton serve as judges, and to consider including a Town Official as well.

Fulton mentioned that he was planning to showcase a monster model display and asked if there would be space for it during Boone BOO! Mark confirmed that space could be made next to the stage for the display. He also reminded the Board that Cultural Resources had Halloween inflatables available for businesses to borrow.

The Board then briefly discussed the possibility of bringing the Grinch for Festive First Friday and the logistics involved. Lane concluded the discussion by stating she would reach out to downtown restaurants to see if they would offer to-go meals for Boone BOO! and, if so, she would work on informing the community about these options.

Update on Town Hall Restrooms

Lane informed the Board that the downtown restrooms were nearing completion and looked fantastic. She reviewed some of the challenges encountered during construction and expressed her appreciation for the Public Works staff. Lane added that she would notify the Board once the ribbon-cutting ceremony was scheduled. She also mentioned that the current operating hours were set for Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Edie expressed her satisfaction with the restrooms, and with no further discussion, the Board moved on.

Update on Howard Street Bid Process

Lane provided a brief update on Howard Street, informing the Board that no bids were received during the August 29 bid opening. She recapped the discussion that took place regarding the challenges of the project. Lane continued by noting that the Town had re-advertised the request for bids, with the next bid opening scheduled for Thursday, October 10 at 2 p.m. She mentioned that Downtown Concord had recently completed streetscape work, and she was considering reaching out to them for any advice they might offer. A brief discussion followed about other communities and projects we could consult for tips on navigating construction and concerns about the cost of the project.

The meeting concluded with a casual conversation about the status of ongoing construction projects, including updates on The Social Restaurant, changes at Jimmy John's, renovations at Venture Chocolate and Wine, and potential public art at 681 W. King Street. Suzanne also suggested exploring the idea of hosting a local weekend celebration in May or June.

Call for Adjournment
At 10:26 Megan made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and had a unanimous vote.