Downtown Boone Development Association
September Board Meeting – September 26, 2023
8:30 am – The Jones House

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

Ex-Officio's Present: Lindsay Miller, Becca Nenow and Edie Tugman

MSD Members/Guests present: Alyssa Hasty, Bob Sneed, Morgan Murrey, and Robert Flanigan,

Town Staff Present: Mark Freed, Geoff Hayes, Laney Pilkington, and Lane Moody

Call to Order
Lane called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Request for Approval of September Agenda
Lane asked to amend the agenda by adding a discussion about possibly rotating public art in the planter next to the Town Hall. Lane continued that it could be added at the end of the general business section of the agenda. Kendra made a motion to amend the agenda to add the discussion and approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Michelle and had a unanimous vote.

Lane briefly spoke about the new Board books she provided, as well as a request for help from the Directors for additional photography downtown.

Request for Approval August Meeting Minutes
Kendra made a motion to approve the August meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mike and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Lane opened by stating that in the current budget, $500 is allotted for breakfast for Public Works (as a thank-you for their hard work downtown). Lane continued that typically money left is over from that and she asked if she could use the leftover funds to do a similar breakfast or treat for parking staff. There was consensus from the Board to support that request. Austin then made a motion to approve the financial statements. Michelle seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Lane also inquired with the Board about the scheduling of the October meeting, which currently falls on Halloween. The Board thought it would be best to move the meeting up a week, to avoid scheduling around Halloween, and set the meeting for Tuesday, October 24.

Lane then reminded the Board that the Main Street Work Plan session is scheduled for Thursday, November 16, and will likely be a morning meeting.

Request for Approval of Resignation of L. Flanigan
Lane opened by stating that the Board does not have to approve the resignation but did want to make them aware. The Board discussed that they would miss Lisa and her thoughtful input. Lane added that Lisa had expressed to her, her desire to still be active on the promotions committee.

Request for Approval to Rotate Public Art

Lane stated that she heard from Zach Smith-Johnson, the artist whose sculpture is currently in the planter next to Town Hall. He stated that "Iris" needs to have some repairs made and inquired if the Board would like to rotate the art. After a short discussion, the Board asked to rotate out the art and keep it until the spring, when we submit a new call for submissions.

Organizational

Requested Approval for Bid for Website Upgrades

Lane opened the discussion by reviewing the bids in the packet, acknowledging that they were quite varied. Renee inquired about who would be working on the website creation. Lane stated that she thought it would be a combination of herself, the promotions committee, and the full Board. Sarah asked what the goal of our website is. Lane stated that there were some contractual obligations with the Town and the need to advertise properties for lease/sale and the business directory. She continued that in her experience the general public does not associate the downtownboonenc sites, with the Downtown Boone Development Association. Sarah expressed that she did not think that the DBDA needed the extensive SEO that was listed in the Lazarus bid. The Board did express the desire to work with a company that is responsive and local. After additional discussion, the Board asked that Lane reach out to Lazarus and see if there are any areas of the bid that can be dialed in to reduce cost and reach out to Overmountain to see if they could provide additional details about what they are proposing.

Discussion of Vendor Ordinance Updates

Lane stated that she thought that the vendor ordinance rollout had gone smoothly and that the issues discussed were no longer a problem. She said that there were a couple of vendors who had been vocal about their frustration with the new ordinance. Finally, she reminded the Board that she is still working on Special Event and First Friday Art Crawl plans. The Board did acknowledge that it looked much better downtown.

Election of Officers

Lane opened by stating that in the past there haven't been any monthly tasks assigned to officers, but she had some ideas for a few tweaks to increase engagement. She stated that for the President/Vice-President she would like to touch base with both before the meeting to review notes. For the Secretary, Lane stated that she was okay doing the meeting minutes but asked that the Secretary take notes in the meeting and review the final draft. Finally, for the treasurer, she would share her budget worksheets with the treasurer, before the meeting to keep them in the loop. After a short discussion, Sarah made a motion to nominate Kendra Sink as President, Suzanne Livesay as Vice-President, Michelle Novacek as Secretary, and Austin Northern as Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Renee and had a unanimous vote

Discussion of Adding Directors to PNC Accounts

Lane opened by stating that currently Paige Henderson and Austin Northern are signers on the PNC accounts. After a brief discussion, Suzanne made a motion to leave Austin Northern on the accounts, remove Paige Henderson, and add Downtown Development Coordinator Lane Moody to all DBDA PNC accounts. Mike seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Promotional

Discussion of Downtown Event Criteria

Lane opened by stating that over the past few months, there have been many discussions about events downtown and what criteria make for a successful event. She also suggested that post-COVID there might be some events that need to be reassessed. She thought that it might be wise to start the conversation at the promotions committee, get additional feedback from Main Street Staff, and bring it back to the Board. There was consensus among the Board for this plan.

Design

Discussion of Potential Partnership with Town of Boone for Public Restroom

Lane opened by reminding the Board that Town Hall recently underwent a security assessment by the Town's insurer the League of Municipalities. She reported that the assessment found that Town Hall was very unsafe and access controls needed to be implemented, continuing that the Public Restrooms in Town Hall would no longer be available. Lane continued that there is an opportunity for the DBDA to partner with Town to turn the vault in Town Hall into a public restroom that can be accessed from the sidewalk. She went on to say that the Town is currently looking for grant funding for the project and additional partners to cover the cost. Sarah suggested that the Board explore possible tax credits for businesses that are willing to offer public restrooms downtown. After a short discussion, Kendra made a motion to support the partnership with the Town for the public restroom while also exploring partnerships and/or grants to help offset the costs. Renee seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Potential Partnership with Historic Preservation Commission for Dana Folk Way

Lane opened by informing the Board that the Town Council has asked that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) explore naming the alleyway next to Alumni Hall "Dana Folk Way" and installing some sort of archway to commemorate the designation. Lane stated that there had been some discussion in the past about the DBDA's desires to possibly add additional lighting in the alleyway as well as any other small infrastructure that could be used to expand First Friday Art Crawl Programming in the alley. Lane continued that she spoke with Jessica Mitchell in Planning and Inspections and they both agreed that there could be a potential partnership between the DBDA and HPC for upgrades to the alleyway. Megan inquired about the potential for a mural in the space. Lane stated that while the bulk of the alley is unpainted brick, which is ineligible for murals, there is a painted area that could potentially house a mural. After additional discussion, Sarah made a motion to move forward with a partnership with the Historic Preservation Commission to seek additional lighting and assess the space for additional public art opportunities. Suzanne seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Proposed Hellbender Mural

Lane opened by stating that her update was brief, stating that she heard back from the property owner and there was initial interest in hosting the mural. Becca added that it might be nice to possibly include other species within the mural. Edie added that it would be wise to make sure that when discussing public art and/or entering into an agreement there is clarity regarding how the artist is chosen.

Renee inquired about the best way to submit the photos of downtown. After a brief discussion, Megan offered to set up a Google Drive that can be shared with the Board.

Austin asked for a moment to inform the Board about a recent scam that had impacted his business and warned the other business owners to be on the lookout for people pretending to be law enforcement asking to have tax debts paid by purchasing gift cards.

At 10am Kendra made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Michelle and had a unanimous vote.