Downtown Boone Development Association
September Board Meeting – October 24, 2023
8:30 am – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Michelle Novacek, Kendra Sink, Vanessa White, Renee Boughman, Wayne Miller, Fulton Lovin (virtually) Austin Northern, and Suzanne Livesay

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

MSD Members/Guests present: Monica Caruso, Bob Sneed, Morgan Murray, Jessica Archer and Naomi Camel

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

Call to Order
Kendra called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Request for Approval of October Agenda
Lane asked to amend the agenda by adding a discussion about downtown photography at the end of the promotional discussion, as well as a short discussion regarding the upcoming Main Street Work Session at the end of the organizational section. Kendra made a motion to amend the agenda to add both discussions and approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Renee and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval September Meeting Minutes
Michelle made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Vanessa and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Kendra made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Wayne and had a unanimous vote.

Organizational

Request for Approval of Partnership with Watauga Housing Council
Lane opened by stating that Kelli Ashcraft from the Watauga Housing Council has reached out about a potential partnership between the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, Watauga Housing Council, and the DBDA to continue conversations with hospitality industry folks, specifically focusing on restaurants, to discuss housing issues in Watauga County. Lane let the Board know that per her discussion with members of the committee, the specific ask would be that the DBDA host the third in a series of facilitated conversations discussing workforce housing. After a short discussion, Michelle made a motion to approve the partnership. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Requested Approval for Bid for Website Upgrades
Lane opened by noting that at the last meeting, the Board had requested that Lane follow up with Lazarus to see if there were any opportunities to scale back what Lazarus was offering, in an attempt to reduce the cost and then ask the folks at OverMountain if they could list more details of what their scope of work would be. Lane noted that Lazarus did not alter their bid packet but did knock $1500 off the price. Lane

also noted that since no changes had been made and due to the length of the packet she did not include it in the agenda packet, but did have a copy on hand if there was a desire to review. Lane then pointed the Board to the additional detail that OverMountain had provided. Lane continued that it was her understanding that Lazarus would be revamping the entire website, while OverMountain would be dialing in on the specific requests of the DBDA. There was consensus that there wasn't a need to revamp the entire website and a general desire to reduce costs. After a short discussion, Renee made a motion to approve the OverMountain bid. The motion was seconded by Michelle and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Vendor Ordinance Updates

Lane stated that she only had a brief update, continuing that she had approved 2 additional permits and one person had picked up a vendor packet. Lane also noted that work is still happening to identify additional areas for First Friday Art Crawls and special events. Lane spoke briefly about the success of Buskers Fest. Edie inquired if there had been any feedback. Lane stated that she heard complaints from a few vendors that the post office was lacking in foot traffic. Lane added that there had been requests to promote the new spaces on social media, but she was having trouble doing that because vendors were not always present in the spaces, which could be due to a variety of reasons. Geoff added that there had been two incidents that occurred last week that had been handled. One was a complaint about the religious groups set up next to Town Hall, as well as two individuals that set up over the weekend that were asked to leave. Two vendors in attendance asked to speak. The first vendor's name was Jessie, she added that she believed that the biggest reason people were not setting up was because of the lack of foot traffic. She requested that the Board consider curating the space and possibly giving it a name. Jessie inquired what First Friday Art Crawl was without the vendors and the Board briefly discussed First Friday Art Crawl programming. Becca added that she anticipated additional foot traffic in the post office area once the county parking deck was complete.

Becca added that she has previously discussed the potential for additional vendor spaces along Howard Street. Wayne then inquired if there would be any way to get a presentation on the Howard Street project. Edie said that would be no problem and said she would discuss it with Town Manager Amy Davis.

Request for Approval of Movie License with Watauga County Library.

Lane opened by referring the Board members to a letter from the Library that is included in the packet and noted that Caleb Sigmon aka The Grinch would not be coming to the library for Festive First Friday Art Crawl. County Librarian Monica Caruso was in attendance and gave an overview of the additional family programming that could be utilized with the movie license. Kendra suggested that an outdoor movie would be fun. After a short discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve splitting the cost of the movie license with the Watauga County Library. The motion was seconded by Renee and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of Main Street Work Plan Session Request from Main Street Staff

Lane opened by stating that Sherry Adams with the NC Main Street program has requested that the Board work in advance of the work plan session, and take a few minutes to identify Community assets and Economic drivers for the area. The Board then took a few minutes and developed a list of assets and drivers. (The list can be found in the work plan session documents.)

Promotional

Review of Buskers Fest

Lane opened by stating that she and Mark met with Watauga Arts Council folks for Buskers Fest debrief last week. She noted that there had been some discussion about placement issues that need to be tweaked for next year and discussed the possibility of additional programming with the Appalachian Theater. She inquired if the Board had any additional feedback. Suzanne offered that it might be worthwhile to develop a one-page sheet of promotional ideas to leverage the foot traffic for these events.

Discussion of Boone BOO! Programming

Lane noted that she has included a basic outline of the programming that is scheduled for Boone BOO!. She continued that the folks at App Rhythm were working on another surprise dance that would happen shortly after the costume contest. She also added that she purchased window clings and temporary tattoos with the new logo. There was a short discussion about trying to keep up with the candy demand during the event as well as the timing of the event. Lane finished up by mentioning that there was going to be extra effort to keep people from leaving their parking spaces during the event (when King Street is closed), she noted that additional signage would be put on meters and cars letting folks know about the road closure. There was a general agreement that if people wanted to help with Boone BOO! To be at Town Hall at 4:30 pm.

There was also some discussion about the need to consider adding some photo release language.

Discussion of Downtown Photography

Lane stated that she reached out to Megan Sheppard about her availability for upcoming events. Lane continued that during the discussion with Megan, Megan mentioned that she would like to revisit the amount she is paid by the DBDA for covering the events. Lane stated that Megan did not indicate a certain amount that she would accept, but noted that she did emphasize that she would like to continue working with the Board. Lane stated that she was at a loss for how to move forward and suggested that we could potentially have a reverse bid process. Lane stated that Megan did agree to photograph Boone BOO! For $500. After a short discussion, Michelle made a motion to approve paying Megan Sheppard $500 to photograph Boone BOO! And asked that Lane come back with bids for the photography Festive First Friday and the Parade. Kendra seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Design

Update on Town Hall Public Restroom

Lane let the Board know that Appalachian Architecture had recently completed two renderings for the proposed bathrooms in Town Hall. Lane continued that one rending was a one-stall option and the other a two-stall option, these options were discussed among staff and it was decided to move forward with the two-stall option. Lane noted that this option would come with a cost increase. Lane continued that Interim Grants Coordinator Laney Wise has applied for a T-Mobile Hometown grant for the project and that Town Manager Any Davis was working on identifying additional TDA and Town funding for the project. Lane finished up by stating that she hoped to come back in November with more concrete details to discuss.

Update on Dana Folk Way

Lane reminded the Board that the alleyway being discussed was in between Alumni Hall and what was previously Practical Magic. There had been a discussion among the Historic Preservation Commission, at the direction of the Town Council, about naming the alleyway and adding signage. Lane noted that per the past discussion of lighting in the alleyway, this could be a nice partnership between DBDA and the HPC. She continued that the Town Council recently gave its approval to move forward with the project. Lane finished up by stating that she would be meeting with Advanced Planning Specialist Jessica Mitchell later this week to develop a game plan for the project.

Discussion of Proposed Hellbender Mural

Lane noted that they are still waiting to hear back from the property owner about setting a time to meet and discuss further.

With no other items to discuss Michelle made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Austin and had a unanimous vote.