Downtown Boone Development Association

October Board Meeting – October 28, 2025
8:30 a.m. – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Joe Lynch, Megan Kevorkian, Julia Moretz, Suzanne Livesay, Jordan Humler, Ethan Rector, Fulton Lovin and Melody Pineda

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Dale Presnell and Mark Freed

MSD Members Present: Hope Thingelstad (Explore Boone) Liza Mackey (App State) and Olivia McMurray (App State).

Call to Order

While waiting on additional Board members to arrive Kendra asked to take a moment to go around the room for introdutcions.

There was a brief conversation about what may or may not be going into the Our Daily Bread Building.

At 8:35 a.m., Kendra called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Request for Approval of September Agenda

Kendra asked for a motion to approve the September agenda. Lane noted that she had received the Print Distribution contract after the agenda had been published and requested to amend the agenda to include approval of the contract as the first item under Organizational.

Lane also reported that the Student Sustainable Business Association is developing a passport program to highlight downtown businesses that incorporate sustainable business practices. She encouraged Board members to follow up with her after the meeting if they were interested in participating.

Lane further noted that the November meeting is scheduled for the same week as Thanksgiving and asked if the Board would prefer to move the meeting up by one week. There was no interest from the Board in changing the meeting date.

Kendra then asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Suzanne made a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Jordan and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Kendra asked for a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Lane noted that the Board Secretary reviewed the minutes and found no issues. Jordan made a motion to approve the minutes, which Ethan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements

Lane noted that there were a few outstanding items not included in the transaction detail but explained that they were not significant. She informed the Board that the encumbered funds from the AppState rental are expected to go before Town Council next month for approval and, once approved, will return to last year's budget.

Fulton inquired about the year-to-date actuals and confirmed that the DBDA operates on a fiscal year running from July 1 through June 30. Lane added that for the MSD budget, unspent funds do not revert to the Town's general fund but instead roll into an undesignated fund balance maintained within the Town. She estimated the current balance to be between $300,000 and $400,000.

Following a brief discussion about the undesignated fund balance and potential downtown projects, Fulton made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Julia and passed unanimously.

Organizational

Request for Approval of Print Distribution Contract
Lane opened by noting that the contract amount is the same as last year and according to the folks at Print Distribution our brochures are very popular. After a short discussion about the map in the brochures and a request for the promotions committee to review, Ethan made a motion to approve the Print Distribution contract. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion of NC Capital Management Trust

Lane provided an overview of the North Carolina Capital Management Trust (NCCMT), a government investment pool managed by Fidelity for North Carolina public entities. The Trust is designed to preserve capital, maintain liquidity, and earn modest income through investments in high-quality, short-term government and state securities.

She also shared that the DBDA currently holds three accounts at PNC Bank, which are frozen due to inactivity and have a very small annual percentage yield (APY) of 0.01%. Lane added that when she and Kendra met with Terra from the Trust, it was estimated that the NCCMT accounts could potentially earn a rate of 3–4%. Fulton inquired about the liquidity of the funds. Lane noted that funds could typically be withdrawn with one or two days' notice.

During discussion, Kendra mentioned that she believed one of the existing money market accounts with approximately $20,000 represented the perpetuity funds for the Doc Watson statue.

After a short discussion, Kendra made a motion to move forward with moving the funds to the NC Capital Management Trust. The motion was seconded by Fulton and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Horton Hotel Façade Improvement Grant

Lane informed the Board that the Design Committee had reviewed and approved the grant application at its October 14 meeting. She briefly summarized the application and associated costs, noting that the business held its grand opening last week and that it is a beautiful addition to downtown. With no further discussion, Fulton made a motion to approve the grant application. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and passed unanimously.

Discussion of Upcoming Events

Lane opened by noting that she is hopeful for good weather for the upcoming Boone BOO! event and shared that, since it falls on a Friday night this year, she anticipates the potential for higher attendance. She briefly reviewed other events taking place throughout downtown and outlined plans for the costume contest.

Lane then discussed programming for the November First Friday Art Crawl, noting her appreciation that this year's calendar allows for a week between Boone BOO! and the Art Crawl, providing some welcome planning time. She added that she would share more details later in the agenda but was excited to announce that a groundbreaking ceremony for the Southern Terminus of the Northern Peaks State Trail will take place that evening.

Next, Lane reported that she had applied for and been selected as a Neighborhood Champion for the American Express Shop Small Campaign. She is coordinating with the local radio station to promote the Shop Small initiative and working with the Chamber of Commerce to support the campaign. Lane noted that this year's event coincides with a home football game on September 28, which could affect downtown activity, and she anticipates extending Shop Small promotions beyond just that Saturday. The Board briefly discussed past experiences with Appalachian State University home games that fall on the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Lane added that Festive First Friday Art Crawl is scheduled for December 5, and planning will begin following Boone BOO!. She also noted that the Holiday Parade will once again be a nighttime event, taking place on December 13 at 6:00 p.m.

Ethan mentioned coordinating with the Howard Street construction team to tidy up the area in advance of Boone BOO! Lane noted that the construction crew had been helpful with request in the past and she would reach out.

Discussion on NC Main Street Storyville Training

Lane opened by noting that at the last DBDA meeting, the Board discussed the potential of bringing Phil Eich to Boone in light of the current level of activity downtown. The Board had previously instructed Lane to gather additional details regarding costs and deliverables.

Lane shared that when she contacted NC Main Street staff for Phil's information, Sherry encouraged her to lean on the Board to assist with conducting interviews. She provided a brief overview of the Storyville training, describing its purpose as a storytelling-based marketing campaign. Lane distributed impact information supplied by Phil and reported on Mount Airy's success in incorporating Storyville into its social-media strategy. She noted that the cost would be $5,000 per day, excluding travel, and would include 12 interviews per day.

Suzanne inquired whether there might be an opportunity for Phil to train the Board and whether ARC grant funds could be used to cover the expense. Ethan suggested that this could be an initiative undertaken directly by Board members. Kendra mentioned the idea of utilizing an interviewer for a Boonerang recap video. Additional discussion followed regarding the potential to use Board Development grant funds for the training or to explore more cost-effective options.

Lane summarized that she was hearing interest from the Board in pursuing a training opportunity that would enable Board members to conduct interviews themselves and that she would explore whether the grant funds could be applied to such an initiative.

After a brief discussion, Kendra noted that while funds were available to support the initiative, she had concerns about how it would integrate with the existing social-media strategy. The Board discussed DBDA's social-media efforts and acknowledged some confusion surrounding the current strategy.

Lane shared that the topic of DBDA autonomy from the Town had arisen during the recent Board Development trainings. Echoing Suzanne's comments, she suggested that a portion of the grant funding could be used to create a clearer marketing or social-media plan to better communicate DBDA's role in relation to the Town. Suzanne asked whether DBDA had its own social-media account. Lane confirmed that a separate @downtownboonenc account exists, though it is currently administered by a Town staff member.

The Board briefly discussed the account's content and messaging. Lane offered to inquire with ARC representatives about whether developing a more defined social-media strategy could be covered under the grant funding.

Further discussion followed about social-media collaboration. Kendra stated that she liked the concept of the Storyville strategy but emphasized the importance of organizing existing efforts first to ensure all content aligns and complements one another before making a significant financial investment. Jordan recommended obtaining additional quotes from potential interviewers, while Megan highlighted the strong social-media presence of Explore Boone and questioned why DBDA was not collaborating with them more closely.

Lane reiterated that she understood the Board's desire for a formalized social-media strategy and would follow up on the possibility of including that within the grant scope. She also mentioned an upcoming Google training, scheduled for early next year, that could assist downtown businesses with Google SEO and online visibility.

After a short discussion, Kendra concluded that the Board would "put a pin" in the Storyville training for now. Lane added that she would contact NC Main Street to determine whether any existing Storyville training materials could be adapted for Board use.

With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Discussion of Bats In Boone Installation

Lane opened and encourage Kendra to chime in as needed. Lane noted that in Greenvile, NC they have the Mice on Main installation and in Hendersonville, NC there are downtown Bears. Jordan added that in Tulsa, Oklahoma there are penguins dotted through out town. Lane added that these attractions were very popular in other communities and there is an effort to do the same in Boone celebrating bats in our downtown. Kendra added that Lisa Cooper has teamed up with a woman who writes childrens books to support the endeavor, which could also serve as the basis for a scavenger hunt. A brief discussion followed about the appearance of the ducks and similar installations in other communities across the country.

Kendra explained that this was an initial introduction to the project and shared her hope that, as the program gained popularity, additional programming could be incorporated. Lane added that collaborative projects like this are typically well received by NC Main Street staff.

Kendra also mentioned that there is a special connection between bats and the Boone area, though she could not recall the specific details at the moment. A short discussion followed about other related events. Fulton and Ethan both expressed that they thought it was a unique and fun idea.

With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Update on Rotating Public Art in Alleyway and Request for Additional Funding

Lane opened by noting that this project was discussed at the Design Committee meeting on October 14 and that she has also met with Planning and Inspections staff to review requirements and next steps.

She provided a brief overview of the project's progress, noting that since the last meeting, she received tentative permission from the property owner on the Alumni Hall side of the building to install infrastructure for additional lighting in the alleyway. Lane added that she has reached out to Matt Long with Capehart Construction to assist in finalizing the specific infrastructure details required as part of the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Lane explained that part of the current delay involves timing, ensuring that both the infrastructure and public art components are ready to install immediately after the wall is cleaned to prevent additional graffiti.

She also noted that while the Board previously approved $15,000 for the project, she had not included a stipend for the rotating public art component. A brief discussion followed regarding the stipend and the details surrounding the size and rotation of the art pieces. Amber suggested the possibility of auctioning off the art once it rotates out of the display cycle to help offset stipend costs.

There was additional discussion about public art opportunities downtown, including other mural locations and the potential for a designated graffiti wall. The Board agreed that more concrete details would be needed before setting a stipend amount.

Lane concluded by stating that she will continue coordinating project details with the Design Committee and will keep the Board updated as progress continues.

Discussion of Downtown Benches

Lane opened by noting that at the last meeting, the Board was not able to reach a consensus regarding the Noble Wins benches and was tasked with identifying additional bench options. No new benches were presented for consideration; however, Lane shared that she had spoken with Mark Freed about a large Burley tobacco scale that there is growing interest in displaying downtown. The scale is reportedly still functional and can weigh up to 1,000 pounds. Lane noted that there had been discussion about placing it near the Queen Street parking area, close to Depot Street, with the possibility of adding benches alongside it. Mark confirmed that Council Member Plaag had suggested this location because it is near where a tobacco scale once stood and added that, ideally, the scale would have some type of covering for protection. Kendra mentioned that there are several other areas throughout downtown that could benefit from additional benches. After a brief discussion, the Board reached consensus to plan a walking field trip to assess potential bench locations throughout downtown. Lane noted that she would add this topic to an upcoming Design Committee agenda and schedule the field trip for after the holidays. Megan asked that trash receptacles also be included in the discussion, and the Board agreed.

Update on Southern Terminus of the Northern Peaks State Trail

Lane noted that since Megan had brought up social districts during the trash receptacle discussion, she wanted to inform the Board that she would prepare a one-page summary of information gathered from the committee assignment survey and recent Board discussions. This summary will be used to guide future committee agendas, with the goal of being more purposeful about committee work beginning in the new year.

Lane then shared that the groundbreaking ceremony for the Northern Peaks State Trail parking area is scheduled for November 7. She noted that, based on her discussions with Jordan, the trail work is expected to take approximately four to six weeks to complete, though the timeline may extend slightly due to the upcoming holidays. Lane added that Public Works has already begun work on the trail parking area. There was a short discussion about the history of the property and potential future uses. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next item.

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project

Lane opened by noting that the section from Depot Street to Burrell Street has been particularly exciting, as the new curbing and base layer of asphalt provide a glimpse of what the finished project will look like. She added that, weather permitting, crews hope to complete the asphalt work this week before shifting to the opposite side of Howard Street, from Appalachian Street to Burrell Street, beginning with the closure of the intersection to start underground utility upgrades. There was a brief discussion about the logistics of the remaining hardscape work, including comparisons to Wall Street in Downtown Asheville. The discussion concluded with a short review of potential plans to extend Appalachian Street through to Rivers Street and other future improvements in that area.

With no other discussion the Board adjourned.