Downtown Boone Development Association

November Board Meeting – November 25, 2025
8:30 a.m. – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Mike Forrester, Renee Boughman, Joe Lynch, Megan Kevorkian, Julia Moretz, Suzanne Livesay, Jordan Humler and Melody Pineda

Ex-Officio Members Present: Eric Plaag

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

MSD Members Present: Hope Thingelstad (Explore Boone) Elizabeth Auer (App State) and Annie Jones (App State).

Call to Order

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 shared that she had a few quick updates to review and noted that future agendas may include a standing section for general updates.

Lane informed the Board about the upcoming Mountaineer 10-Miler race hosted by Capstone Events. She explained that the race will begin and end at the App State football stadium and will come through downtown Boone on Sunday, June 14. She added that there will be a variety of engagement opportunities connected to the event and that she will share additional details as they become available.

Lane also shared that she is currently working on the NC Main Street Assessment and hopes to submit it before the Christmas holiday, despite the January 8 deadline. She noted that it has been several years since NC Main Street assisted with the strategic plan and said she would reach out to them for guidance. Lane then distributed the updated Board Matrix required for the assessment and asked all Board members to complete and return it to her.

Lane added that she will be updating committee agendas and rosters and plans to share those with the Board by the first of the year.

Mike made a motion to approve the November agenda. The motion was seconded by Melody and passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of October Meeting Minutes

Kendra asked for a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Jordan made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mike seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements

Lane opened by informing the Board that the funds encumbered during the last budget cycle had been approved by Town Council and moved into the current year's budget. Jordan asked about an item listed under the advertising line. Lane explained that funding for a façade grant had been taken from the incorrect line item and that she would ensure it was corrected.

Melody inquired about NC Capital Trust Management accounts and Lane noted that she was working on getting those accounts set up and will keep the Board updated about the progress.

With no further discussion, Jordan made a motion to approve the financial statements. Renee seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Organizational

Discussion of December Meeting Cancellation

Jordan opened by making a motion to cancel the December meeting. Lane noted that the meeting date would fall on December 30, between Christmas and New Year's. Kendra commented that this is typically a very busy time and seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Setting Budget Retreat Dates

Lane opened that since the next meeting would be towards the end of January she thought it would be a good idea to go ahead and get a date on the books. She noted that in the past the Board has usually chosen a date within the first two week of February. As a short discussion, the Board set the Budget Retreat for Tuesday, February 10 at 8:30am.

Update on ARC Non-Profit Board Development

Lane opened by noting that she and Monica would be meeting with the ARC training team next Thursday and would continue developing a game plan for the use of the grant funds associated with the completion of the training. She shared that she had attended two meetings with ARC staff to review how the funds may be spent and the requirements attached to them.

Lane added that she is hopeful the grant will provide an opportunity to develop a new marketing and communications campaign for the Board, along with additional trainings for Board members and economic development training for staff. She concluded by noting that the funds cannot be spent before next summer and encouraged Board members to share any training ideas they believe would be beneficial.

Promotion

Discussion of Festive First Friday Art Crawl

Lane opened by noting that Festive First Friday was shaping up to be another fun and festive one. She shared that the first item she wanted to address was whether any Board members would be interested in helping judge the Holiday Window Decorating Contest. Lane briefly reviewed the participating businesses, the contest categories, and the time commitment involved, noting that it was a fairly light lift. After a short discussion, Julia, Jordan, and Kendra volunteered to serve as judges.

Lane then reviewed the events she is coordinating, including the letter-writing to Santa at the Post Office. Kendra confirmed that Santa would once again be at Mast General Store and offered to work on securing volunteers for Mrs. Claus and an elf. Lane added that Trish Daniels would be offering face painting inside the Post Office. Kendra noted that the Post Office has been extremely busy in recent years and expressed concern that face painting may be too much for the space. Renee offered to check with F.A.R.M Café to see if they might be able to host the face painting instead.

Kendra asked whether the Grinch would be returning this year, and Lane confirmed that Shane Hillman would again be participating. Lane also provided an update on the snowball fight planned for the Hope Center parking lot and reviewed the logistics for that event.

Mark shared a brief overview of the programming at the Jones House and mentioned that he had an additional Sasquatch costume available if anyone wished to borrow it. Kendra suggested checking in with the Watauga County Public Library regarding their plans for the evening, and Lane agreed to follow up.

There was a brief discussion about the carriage rides, and the Board reached a general consensus to revisit the carriage ride option and associated insurance considerations in the future. With no further discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Discussion of 2026 First Art Crawls

Lane opened by noting two items she wanted on everyone's radar for the 2026 First Friday Art Crawls.

First, the April Art Crawl will shift to an Earth Third Art Crawl due to the Easter holiday, with an emphasis on Earth Day and the potential ribbon cutting for the Northern Peaks State Trail at the Rivers property.

Second, the July Art Crawl will need to be held on Thursday that month because of how the Fourth of July holiday falls on the calendar.

Discussion of Shop Small Saturday

Lane opened by sharing that she had applied for and been approved as a Neighborhood Champion for American Express's Shop Small campaign. She encouraged attendees to take some of the promotional materials provided to support the initiative. She noted that, while she is excited to participate in this important campaign, the upcoming home football game typically reduces foot traffic for downtown businesses.

Lane added that, with this in mind, she hopes to extend the Shop Small effort throughout the entire month of December. She has partnered with WATA for additional radio programming and with the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce for expanded promotional support.

Kendra noted that when football game days are cold, she often sees an uptick in downtown foot traffic and sales, and that businesses should be prepared for increased activity if temperatures drop.

With no other discussion the Board moved on.

Design
Discussion of Potential Hellbender Mural Expansion

Lane opened by noting that, as part of the Howard Street Revitalization Project, there is an exposed concrete end wall that is an unusual size and shape. Because it is not an ideal canvas, she suggested it might be a good opportunity to expand the existing Hellbender mural and asked the Board for their thoughts.

Jordan asked about the planters currently in that space, and Lane confirmed that they are temporary. Renee asked whether the opportunity would be opened to other artists through a public call for submissions. Lane responded that, given the challenging dimensions of the wall, she was unsure whether there would be strong interest from artists.

Amber Bateman asked whether both sides of the end wall would be painted, and Lane referred that question back to the Board. There was general agreement that painting both sides would be beneficial to help deter graffiti. Renee added that she felt the space could be a fun opportunity for public submissions. Kendra stated that she preferred to see the Hellbender mural expanded first to cover more of the building it is currently on, and then open the end wall to a public call for submissions.

After brief discussion, the Board reached general consensus to move forward with expanding the current Hellbender mural in its existing location and to develop a public call for submissions for the concrete end wall.

Lane added that her goal is to have the HPC Certificate of Appropriateness application completed for the Off the Rack alleyway by the end of December to keep that project moving. She also noted that she would bring updated budget estimates to the Board's budget retreat. Kendra suggested that it may also be a good time to consider purchasing permanent public art for downtown. Lane recommended including potential public art locations in the bench and trash can walking field trip planned for early next year. Kendra added that it might be fun to consider opportunities for interactive art downtown and revisit the Queen Street stairs project.

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

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project

Lane opened by noting that she is excited the project has moved into the next phase, transitioning to the section of Howard Street between Appalachian Street and Depot Street, where sewer line improvements are now underway. She explained that construction will follow a similar sequence to the work completed on the opposite side: sewer line installation will be followed by stormwater improvements and then water line upgrades, all occurring within roughly the same area for each phase.

Lane added that crews are working to reopen the intersection of Appalachian and Howard Streets as soon as possible, though progress continues to be affected by weather. She noted that while the water issue that occurred the previous week was understandably frustrating, there have also been positive moments during construction—including successfully navigating and parking a tour bus through the work zone.

She continued by sharing that, due to ongoing safety concerns and various parking issues, additional No Parking signage has been installed from Depot Street to Burrell Street. She acknowledged that the transition has required adjustment but emphasized that these changes are essential for safety. Lane also noted that a loading zone has been incorporated at the end of Howard Street to support business needs.

Lane stated that, to her understanding, the project remains largely on schedule. She added that at the last Promotions Committee meeting she was excited to begin discussing plans for a celebration in early August to mark the project's completion. She suggested that this event may also be a good opportunity to conduct a trial run of a social district, as discussed in previous meetings.

Suzanne then provided a brief update to the Board on an upcoming pub crawl she is planning and expressed her excitement for the event.

Lane encouraged the Board to make use of the events calendar on the website.

Suzanne also shared an update on the Theatre's plans for Festive First Friday Art Crawl, and the Board congratulated her on the Theatre being designated the Finest Theatre in North Carolina.

Megan inquired about the status of the arcade removal at the Fire Station. Lane responded that, to her understanding, the project is currently stalled due to funding issues.

With no further discussion, Kendra made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and passed unanimously.