Downtown Boone Development Association
November Board Meeting – November 28, 2023
8:30 am – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Nikki Brown for Michelle Novacek, Kendra Sink, Vanessa White, Renee Boughman, Wayne Miller, Fulton Lovin, Megan Kevorkian and Mike Forrester

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

MSD Members/Guests present: Bob Sneed and Alyssa Hasty

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

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

Request for Approval of November Agenda
Renee made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mike and had a unanimous vote.

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

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Lane noted during this review of the financial statements that not all the copies of the statements were included in the agenda. Mark asked if copies were needed and then made copies of the missing pages of the financials. The Board paused for a moment while Mark made copies. After a short pause, Renee made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Fulton and had a unanimous vote.

Organizational

Review of Audit
Lane noted that the Board had another good audit. She added that this audit only covers the funds that the DBDA has in their PNC accounts. Kendra inquired about the purpose of the accounts. Lane stated that one account is perpetuity funds for the Doc Watson Statue and the other is a business checking account that, to her knowledge, is unrestricted.

Discussion of Budget Workshop
Lane opened by stating that the Board needs to set their budget workshop and have an approved budget by March 19. After a short discussion, the Board chose to set their Budget Workshop on Tuesday, February 6 at 8:30 am.

Discussion of Website Upgrades
Lane opened by stating that she recently met with Overmountain Studios to lay out a game plan for website upgrades. She stated that they are currently working to set everything up in Raven Tools by January 1 and they have created a separate and generic DBDA Google account. She continued that they

will work on new layouts for pages and will dial in things with Kendra and Suzanne before bringing them before the board to expedite the process. She added that the Board will need to have headshots done and work on a small paragraph of information for each Director. She continued that they will also be working on ADA compliance. Fulton requested the addition of a photo gallery to the website. The Board discussed the need for an updated parking page and expanded pages for historical information.

A short discussion about parking ensued, reviewing the recent changes to AppState parking and any impact that was having on downtown.

Update on 501(c)(3) Status

Lane updated the Board that after some back and forth with the Town Auditors and the Town Attorney, she had submitted the IRS Form 1023 for retroactive reinstatement of the DBDA's 501(c)(3) tax status. Lane gave a brief history of the confusion regarding the submission of the 990 Forms. She noted that there was also a $600 payment that had to be submitted. She finished up by stating that while she is waiting to hear back from the IRS she would work on a review of the tax history of the DBDA and create a standard operating procedure moving forward.

Discussion of NC Main Street Strategic Planning Session/Work Plan

Lane opened by noting that Sherry Adams, Program Manager with NC Main Street has asked that we confirm that we are good with our economic position statement as well as our mission statement. After a short discussion, the Board decided to move "outdoor recreational adventures" before "entertainment" in the economic positioning statement and then approved both the economic positioning and mission statement. There was also a short discussion about the parks that are close to Downtown and possibly inviting Jordan Sellers with Blue Ridge Conservancy to update the Board about the Northern Peaks Trail.

Discussion of December Board Meeting

Lane opened by noting that the next DBDA Board meeting is scheduled for the day after Christmas. After a short discussion, the Board set a Main Street Work Plan follow-up session for Dec 12 at 8:30 am at the Jones House and canceled the December Board meeting.

Mark gave a brief update about the bench project that he had been brainstorming over the last few years. Noting that he would like to replicate the spirit of the Doc Watson bench throughout downtown, however, he would like to highlight other impactful community members. He finished up by adding that it was his understanding that a group was coming together to propose a bench honoring Joe Miller downtown.

Promotional

Discussion of Festive First Friday Programming

Lane passed around a schedule of events that had been planned for the evening. She stated that she was still working on hemming up some of the details but wanted to get everyone on the same page. There was a brief discussion about the evening before the Board moved on to the next item.

Discussion of "A Simple Gesture" Partnership

Lane stated that she had been working with Kayla Lasure who is the program coordinator for the A Simple Gesture Program at the Hunger and Health Coalition, to promote and support the food drive during Festive First Friday.

Design

Discussion of Funding Amount for Town Hall Public Restrooms

Lane opened by stating that roughly two weeks ago she, along with Town Manager Amy Davis and Public Works Director Todd Moody, had requested funding from the TDA for the Public Restrooms project. She continued that the TDA happily approved using $27,000 in leftover TDA funds to support the project. Lane stated that the Town did estimate the cost to be roughly $85,000 dollars. There was a short discussion about the potential designs for the bathrooms and promotional ideas. Lane added that the Town was continuing to submit for grant funds for the project as well. The Board also discussed safety concerns with the restrooms and the plan to secure them. Then Kendra made a motion to spend up to $60,000 on the Town Hall public restrooms. The motion was seconded by Mike and had a unanimous vote.

Request to Order New Live It Up Banners

Lane noted that some of the banners were looking pretty ratty and needed to be replaced. Lane asked if the Board would be willing to allocate funding to replace those banners. Fulton made a motion to spend up to $5,000 on new Live It Up banners. The motion was seconded by Vanessa and had a unanimous vote.

Update on Howard Street

Lane opened by giving a brief history of the Howard Street project noting she wasn't able to speak to the issues within the timeline, but thought that a report on the past progress would be helpful. She continued that in October of 2015, the Town Council approved moving forward with the design phase of the Howard Street project. In March of 2018, an addendum to the design services was approved for additional geotechnical, lighting, and photometric plans. In July of 2018, there was consensus among the Town Council to seek funding from the USDA for the project. In July 2021, Town Council announced that the USDA approved funding the project. In February of 2023, Town Council announced that they had secured all easements for the project. In June of 2023, the Town of Boone, through their engineers, submitted plans and specifications to the USDA and in August of 2023, the Town received comments from the USDA and are working on responding. Lane paused and noted that she would now move into reviewing the next steps for the project. She continued that the Town and its engineers are currently working on securing Water and Sewer Permit Applications and Sedimentation and Erosion Control Forms from the state. Once Rural Development signs off on the site plan and specifications as well as the permits, the Town can move forward with an authorization to bid. The bid process will include an advertisement period as well as a pre-bid meeting, bid opening, and recommendation of award. Town Council will then need to approve the bid as well as the Local Government Commission. Once Town Council and the Local Government Commission approve the bid it will be sent to USDA for their approval. A discussion ensued that noted the importance of moving forward with factual information and not speculation, the discussion highlighted the role the Project Manager will play and briefly touched on concerns over the funding of the project.

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