

**Downtown Boone Development Association
Annual Budget Retreat – January 9th, 2018
5:07 pm – Historic Downtown Post Office – Conference Room**

Board Members present: Denise Lovin, Tucker Deal, Angela Kelly, Dave Walker, Victoria Potter, Monica Caruso, Kendra Sink, Alex Hooker, Anna Roseman

Ex-Officios present: Lynne Mason, Loretta Clawson

MSD members present: Lee Sanderin (Watauga Democrat)

Staff present: Brittney Clark

Handouts: Agenda packet, Assets worksheet

GENERAL BUSINESS

Kendra called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

Agenda

Victoria made a motion to approve the minutes; Angela seconded. All approved.

Minutes

Anna made a motion to approve the minutes; Kendra seconded. All approved.

ORGANIZATION

Brittney started a discussion regarding goals that the DBDA would like to achieve in 2018. The Board was presented with the Work Plan template provided by NC Main Street as a starting point for planning. Tucker reminded us that our vision statement is not our mission statement, and that the goals/work plan should follow our vision statement. Brainstormed goals together, which included: Streetscapes, Parking in Downtown Boone, a Community Image Building campaign, increase Children's programming downtown, and Wayfinding signage downtown.

Discussion regarding streetscapes included telephone poles and electricity poles and the inconsistency among the poles – some are wooden, some are leaning, etc. Want to wait until the poles look better before adding snowflakes. The Town is the only one with “teeth” to get the power companies to fix the poles, but the DBDA can make a recommendation to the Town to do so.

Discussion around an Image Building campaign included focusing on activities after dark downtown, having 4 seasons, not just football in the fall. Parking can fall under this image building campaign, rather than being its own economic strategy. Another strategy that would fall under this is having Boone being a starting point for outdoor adventure – this was desired last year, but did not make it into the Work Plan. An assets worksheet was passed out as an example of how we would start the image building

campaign. Also talked about having cohesive image/logos among all of the Boone entities (Town of Boone, TDA, Chamber, DBDA, etc), at least starting a discussion where we come up with something that looks similar to one another.

Wayfinding signage was identified as a potential “freebie” economic development strategy, since we have already talked to the Watauga County TDA about partnering in the Wayfinding project they are doing, and that DBDA would take on the Downtown portion.

The Board decided to preliminarily focus on a Community Image Building, Children’s Programming downtown, and Wayfinding signage in Downtown as our three economic strategies for our Work Plan. Brittney will work on fleshing out the action items from the goals and objectives and will bring the work plan back to the Board in February.

FINANCIAL

2018-2019 Budget Overview – explained the different columns, discussion of tax distribution. Kendra asked about Façade grants; discussed upcoming applicants (Hope Pregnancy, Horton Hotel, Ransom, PNC bank, Winkler building). Applicants apply before work is completed; award is granted after work is complete.

Shared two financial requests from the Jones House: one is \$3,000 for Summer Concerts and another \$9 to \$10,000 for staffing to keep the Jones House open on the weekend. Board members wanted to know what the traffic is like in the Jones House on the weekend (usage), as well as what the hours will be – they would like the hours to extend past 5 pm. Need to advertise this. Does the TDA help fund this because of the public restrooms aspect?

Advertising options – suggestion of a rack card to replace the brochure, less text, push people towards the website for additional information. Include a QR code. Website is live – need feedback from the Board.

Anna presented about billboard options – two billboards that get the most traffic on your way up to Boone (421 near Food Lion, 321 before Mystery Hill) – both digital. Zero production cost, change messaging as needed; 23,000 impressions between the two boards. \$750/mo; \$9,000/year for a 12 month contract. A 12 month contract gives us the best rate.

We will need to increase marketing budget – want to keep some print media, online advertising, radio advertising, etc. Promotions committee will come back with a recommendation.

Partnerships – Foggy Pine Books – Where’s Waldo - \$500.00. Also Watauga County Library, First Friday Programming, \$300/mo. Will build these into the budget.

PROMOTION

First Friday – Brittney wants to have themes for each month, and build in programming to encourage families and others to visit downtown.

Free parking days for Downtown – open to suggestions. Town Holidays are marked on calendar; suggestions are the Saturday prior to each holiday. Question was asked regarding what the loss in revenue is for not having parking enforced on a Saturday – Brittney will ask for revenue and find an average.

DESIGN

Sidewalk improvement options – will start with bulb at Appalachian Street in March, according to DOT timeline. Will start next on sidewalk in front of Mountaineer Mania and Boone Saloon. Will be meeting with John Ward and Public Works department heads to talk about making sidewalks downtown a priority. Will disrupt business, but could knock it all out at once. Board requested not during the month of July. Would like to start as early as possible, and go as far and as fast as possible. Tucker asked about using an outside contractor; Brittney will check on this feasibility. Board is willing to take out a loan to finance over years if needed. Tucker would like to see bike racks. Kendra would like to see additional or updated trash cans and additional recycling bins. Unified trash cans and recycling bins.

OTHER BUSINESS, COMMENTS, OR CONCERNS

Appalachian Theater won award for Façade grant – can't release information to the media yet, but award will be presented at Main Street Conference in March.

Change in auditor – John Ward encouraging DBDA to use the same auditor as the town for private DBDA funds. Would cost less than the private auditor (Close to \$3,000 for Priscilla Norris; \$2,400 for town auditor, which is Coombs, Tennant and Carpenter). Will send the contract to the board for review and will vote on it at our next meeting in February.

Call for Adjournment

Denise motioned for the meeting to adjourn at 7:18 pm.