

**Downtown Boone Development Association
Special Board Meeting – May 23, 2023
8:30 am – Webex Virtual Meeting**

Board Members Present: Michelle Novacek, Wayne Miller, Denise Lovin, Kendra Sink, Megan Kevorkian, Lisa Flanigan, Austin Northern, and Suzanne Livesay

Ex-Officio's Present: Edie Tugman

MSD Members/Guests present: Amber Bateman and Zack Hill

Town Staff Present: Amy Davis, Allison Meade, Lane Moody, Geoff Hayes, and Mark Freed

Call to Order

Denise called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Discussion of Downtown Vendor Policy

Allison opened by stating that she had given it some thought and believed that the best place to begin would be to clearly identify the issues the Board is wanting to address and start from there. She advised that it would be ideal to regulate as little as possible to address the issues and not adopt policies or procedures that might be overly burdensome. She continued that, as an example, there had been complaints about vendors not sharing the space, she suggested limiting the area a vendor could occupy instead of adopting a complicated permitting process. She then stated that the concerns she noted were: available vendor spaces, unfair competition among vendors, food handling concerns, and competition with brick-and-mortar businesses and asked the Board if that was a complete list. Edie noted that she had received numerous complaints regarding the proximity of vendors setting up, concerns about food safety, the "yard sale" feel, and the direct competition with brick-and-mortar businesses. Lane added that she had concerns about the sidewalks being blocked and/or closed by vendors. Amber inquired if there were any liability issues and added that she had heard complaints about people avoiding the area because it was too crowded and as a result, people were missing out on visiting other businesses. Lisa expressed concern that the process might be overly burdensome from the get-go if this is all being done for only 3 potential vendor spaces and discussed additional spaces that could be utilized for vendors. Allison stated that it was her understanding the goal was to temper the competition with brick and mortar and not expand it and gave some examples of procedures in different areas. She continued by stating the need to clarify if the goal is to expand vendor opportunities or to limit them. There was general discussion about where and what properties this policy would regulate. Allison clarified that it would be for Town-owned spaces and sidewalks. Allison then reiterated the need to clarify where street vending would be allowed. Amber suggested that the space in front of the post office might be a good area for vendors. She commented that it would remove some of the safety issues that were occurring next to Town Hall and has plenty of space to accommodate vendors. There was general discussion comparing the different spaces downtown and the caliber of art that was being vended.

Megan K. inquired about the permanence of the regulation and if it is something that can be revisited in the future. Allison stated that it could absolutely be revisited and encouraged the board to update Town Council as to the successes or needed improvements of the policy.

Edie inquired how to delineate the available vending spaces to avoid confusion. Allison stated that Lane could potentially measure and use masking tape to mark the spaces. She also stated that it would be a good idea to incorporate those markings as a part of a communication plan with the vendors. Edie mentioned putting the new vendor policy in the glass cases on the front of town hall.

The discussion then returned to comparing the different vending spaces downtown specifically in front of Town Hall, in front of the rock planter, and potentially in front of the post office. Kendra then inquired how many spaces the Board is looking to create for vendors. Discussion ensued regarding the area in front of the post office and the pros and cons of that space. After a short discussion, Lisa stated that she thought that Kendra's question is a good one- is the Board looking to add spaces or not, highlighting the Board's charge to represent the brick-and-mortar businesses? After a short discussion, Denise called a vote to see where everyone on the Board stood.

Denise asked that Board members who are in favor of moving vending to in front of the Post Office only to please raise their hands. Kendra, Michelle, Wayne, Lisa, Suzanne, Austin, and Denise all voted in favor of only having vending in front of the Post Office.

Denise asked that Board members who are in favor of having vending in front of Town Hall only to please raise their hands. No Board members voted for this option.

Denise asked that Board members who are in favor of having vending in front of both Town Hall and the Post Office to please raise their hands. Megan K. voted in favor of having vending at both Town Hall and the Post Office.

Allison then asked that Lane measure the Post Office space and report those results back to Allison. Denise inquired about what the process was moving forward. Allison stated that the policy would need to be recommended by the DBDA and then would go to the Town Council for final approval.

Allison then asked the Board if there were any times when exceptions would be needed. After a short discussion, it was generally agreed that parades, Boonerang, Busker's Fest, Boone BOO, First Friday, or as determined by the discretion of the Town would need to be exceptions. Megan K. suggested that consulting with a vendor about the space needs would be a nice gesture. Lane stated that she would be happy to touch base with Mike Brown if he is available to assess the space. Edie mentioned that she would be happy to help Lane during their meeting in the morning. Lane confirmed and said that she would get the report back to Allison by the end of the week.

Suzanne then made a motion to adjourn. Megan K. seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.