

**Downtown Boone Development Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, September 2, 2010
9 a.m. Watauga County Library Conference Room**

Recorded Attendance

Board Members: Sheri Moretz – Secretary, Mast General Store; Dempsey Wilcox – President, Property Owner; Jamie Leigh, Town Council Liaison; Rich Jacobs – Past President, ArtWalk; Greg Lovins, ASU; Linda Smith, Hands Gallery; Jason Berry – Secretary, Footsloggers; Lynne Mason, Town Council Liaison; Andy Stallings, Property Owner; Bob Meier – Vice President, Doe Ridge Pottery

Staff: Mary Baker

Public: John Cooper, Mast General Store; Leigh Jacobs, ArtWalk; Cherry Johnson, Jones House Community Center & Watauga Arts Council; Blake Brown, Town of Boone Public Works Director

General Administration

Dempsey Wilcox called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. A quorum was present at the meeting. Sheri Moretz made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Bob Meier seconded the motion, and it passed.

Approval of the Minutes

Because of a violation of protocol, the minutes from the special meeting held on July 23rd are also a part of this month's meeting packet. Board members in attendance were asked to review the minutes for approval. Jamie Leigh had a couple of changes to the written minutes for the July 23rd meeting including changing the sentence: "At the time of the Council meeting last night, no one had seen the terms of the contract" to read "It was our impression that no one had seen the contract before the meeting last night." She also asked for to remove "The town attorney passed it out to Council members at the meeting." Linda Smith made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 23rd meeting as amended. Jason Berry seconded the motion, and it passed.

Board members were asked to review the minutes from the regularly-scheduled Board of Directors meeting on August 2. Leigh had a couple of changes in these minutes. Under Approval of Minutes, she suggested changing "Town Manager Greg Young may be updating the MSD map by parcel number and building name to ensure there is a clear understanding of where the MSD lines are" to read that "Town Manager Greg Young will be confirming the MSD map. ..." The other change was under New Business. In the section about the Post Office, she would like it changed to read "The Town just received the initial layout of the Post Office from the architect. Public bathrooms have not been approved, but there are efforts to include them." This would replace the first and third sentences in this paragraph and will alleviate possible misunderstandings. Moretz made a motion to accept the minutes from the August meeting as amended. Meier seconded the motion and it passed.

Financial Report

Treasurer Jason Berry indicated that this month's report is a running balance based upon expenditures from the organization's fund balance. The DBDA has not received funding from the Town. Currently, our work has been administrative. Berry made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as submitted. Andy Stallings seconded the motion, and it passed.

UPDATES BY COMMITTEE

Organization

Annual Meeting Review – Dempsey Wilcox

The Annual Meeting was held on Monday, August 16th at the High Country Press offices. There were 66

businesses and property owners represented at the meeting. That is about 20% of the membership. Those in attendance heard from Wright Tilley of the Watauga Tourism Development Authority about plans for promoting the area and avenues for possible coordination. There may also be possibilities for grants from the Boone TDA, which has joined with the Watauga TDA for staffing and promotion, to help with sidewalks, etc. The group voted on board members, officers, and a plan of action for the coming year. John Cooper also presented information on the Doc Watson Sculpture.

2010 DBDA Contract Renewal by the Town of Boone – Dempsey Wilcox

The organization is still in the process of reviewing the contract. The Executive Committee is asking an attorney to review it as well. In order to have it approved before October, it should be presented to this body before September 21; therefore, Wilcox proposed a special meeting on September 20 at 9 a.m. to discuss the contract. This should provide ample time according to our bylaws for notification of members of the meeting. It will be at the library, if the room is available. If it is not, sufficient notice will be provided of an alternate location.

Proposed Plan of Work – Dempsey Wilcox

The Executive Committee is asking for a slight altering of our recently adopted plan of work in order to add the Doc Watson Downtown Sculpture Project formally to the plan. Berry made a motion to add the project to the plan. Meier seconded the motion, and it passed.

Proposed Budget 2010 – July-December – Jason Berry

At the recent Town Council meeting it was requested that the investment in infrastructure be increased to 30% of the budget. This would be in keeping with what the survey results indicated is the desire of the constituency. Funds to accomplish this increase will eliminate the part-time person – wages, payroll tax, and insurance. A few other changes and amendments include \$150 moved to “Travel and Training” to accommodate Mary Baker’s attendance at the Main Street Meeting. Contract Labor was decreased by \$100. Façade Incentive Grants and Sign Incentive Grants were increased and count toward the infrastructure requirement. Some funds were also added to the Pedestrian Signs to investigate making them a bit larger.

A question was asked about Art Crawl participation fees. Under the current contract approved by the Town Council, the DBDA cannot charge to participate in the program. To continue with Art Crawl in the future, the organization may have to pull from the fund balance of other sources of funding to meet the terms of the contract and to continue with this event.

John Cooper asked Leigh why 30% of the budget had to go to infrastructure. He referenced the question on the survey, which would include staff expense. She indicated that it wasn’t just her, it was five Council members that made that decision. Brantz made the motion to come in at a level of 25% of the budget to infrastructure; her’s was a friendly amendment to move it to 30%. She indicated that staff time/expense could be allocated to that. Stallings asked how infrastructure will be defined. It was indicated that the Task Force will decide that. The findings from the Task Force will be done by November 1 and will be presented to the Town Council in November.

Cherry Johnson suggested using program-style budgeting for clarity. That will help in including staff time in different line items, as well as other expenses that are applicable.

Moretz made a motion to approve the proposed budget. Smith seconded the motion, and it passed.

Town of Boone Downtown Task Force – Lynne Mason

The Task Force had its initial meeting on August 26. There is still one position to be filled. The person filling that vacancy needs to be from east of Depot Street and be non-retail and service oriented. Applications are available on the Town of Boone website and can be approved at the next Task Force meeting. A restaurant could qualify. Meetings are held at 5:30 p.m. on September 14, 27, October 6, 13. The meeting space has yet to be announced. These are public meetings, so anyone is welcomed to attend. John Cooper raised a question about Janet Pepin being the facilitator of these meetings. She is a former Town Council member who made a motion in May of 2009 that the DBDA use 15% of its budget for administrative costs and the remainder could go for infrastructure, etc. Rich Jacobs also had similar concerns.

Mason expressed that she had had similar concerns. Pepin has been charged with being fair and unbiased in her facilitation of these meetings. The first meeting included historical and factual information. Stallings feels that she had a good start, and we will all have to see how everything proceeds once it gets to the nitty-gritty.

By-Law Changes, Personnel Policy, and Time Sheets – Sheri Moretz

These matters are not to be taken lightly. The subcommittee has met three times to discuss the by-laws and personnel policy manual. There are some topics that we felt were so changeable that they didn't belong in the personnel manual but would instead become office policies. There have been two bylaws-only meetings and have only made it through the first three pages. Much time was spent on definitions and what impacts the definitions may have on the outcome of the organization, its goals, and how the downtown is represented. Although they are not ready to present everything, the committee has made good progress having spent about seven hours together as a group.

Committee Chairs – Dempsey Wilcox

It is the suggestion of the Executive Committee that we keep the same committee chairs through this calendar year because we wish to maintain a sense of continuity. Mason made a motion to reappoint the same committee chairs for this calendar year. Greg Lovins seconded the motion, and it passed.

Design

Downtown Pedestrian Sign Update – Mary Baker

The sign print-outs are being created, and it has been requested that we pay 50% of the fee up front. During the discussion of signs, it came up that there may not be 2 hour parking signs on Howard Street and validation signs are needed on Depot Street.

Jacobs asked that Blake Brown take a look at the sidewalks in front of his business. The winter was rough on the concrete and there are spots that are dangerous to pedestrians. Some of our guests downtown have tripped on the uneven surfaces.

Thank you to Lynne Mason and Jamie Leigh for implementing the two-hour parking on Saturdays. Ironically, the DBDA is getting complaints from service businesses that schedule their longer clients on Saturdays. As the program is better understood, these complaints will likely work themselves out.

Facade and Sign Grant Policy and Application Information – Mary Baker

The DBDA is working to update the FIG and SIG policies and applications. The initial proposal is to have two grant cycles each year. One would be in the fall and the other would be in the spring or early summer. We would do a minimum of 4 grants for signs and 3 grants for facades. All of these are reimbursement grants.

Economic Restructuring

Parking Update and Question and Answers from McLaurin Parking – Rita Jackson

Jackson pointed out that the signs on Howard would be on the wall, not on poles or stakes. On Saturday, the King Street lot was not very busy. It brought in \$132. Eleven vehicles pulled up then back out, when they saw that it was a pay lot. There were a couple of drive-throughs. Seventy-eight citations were given with the most issued being on Queen Street at the meters. She hasn't heard too many complaints thus far, but the most of those that have been shared are from hairdressers. Parking employees begin their rounds at 8 a.m. Tire marking is a little confusing right now. When the new ordinance goes into effect, it will allow for better tracking. As always, we all need to educate business owners and customers on pending changes in the parking rules.

MSD Tax Expenditure Policy – Mary Baker

This will be developed for approval.

Promotion

Next Art Crawl – September 3 – Mary Baker

The next Art Crawl is tomorrow, Friday, September 3. There is also a Concert on the Lawn along with Feasting on the Lawn by EarthFare.

Doc Watson Sculpture – John Cooper

At present, \$10,000 has been committed toward this project. John Cooper needs help in fund raising and soliciting people to make contributions. Johnson from the Art Council indicated that she would be happy to help distribute flyers.

Website Changes – Mary Baker

Parking information is updated on the website. You will also find information about the annual meeting. Please be sure to check your listing. When the student intern starts links will be added to the site.

New Business

Mason reported that Walk Boone maps are now available. One of the highlights is a 2-mile route in downtown. The idea behind the maps is to promote healthy lifestyles and alternative transportation. It is the culmination of a two-year project and was done with grant funding.

Promotional Seminar – Moretz reported that she would be putting together a promotional seminar to help businesses see cost effective opportunities to build and promote their businesses through Facebook, Twitter, and even traditional means. This is a requirement for her to achieve her Travel Marketing Professional certification.

New Board Member Handbook – Baker mentioned the board member notebooks. They have copies of enabling legislation, by-laws, etc. It also has a volunteer log that she asked all board members to keep up with.

Meier asked Lovins about the forecasted Beasley Broadcasting building and what plans ASU has for it. Lovins reported that the original plans were to keep the facade and add on to the building in the parking lot next to Cafe Portofino. As demolition started, they discovered many issues that required more work. So, they have had to do a redesign. They will keep the current facade and hope to get approval on new plans in October. Meier asked that some “stronger netting” be put up to keep those seeking accommodations out of the building.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.
Minutes respectfully submitted for your approval

Sheri J. Moretz