

DAHLONEGA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/MAIN STREET BOARD

April 9, 2015

MEETING MINUTES

Larry called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM

Board Members Present: Denson Martin, Donna Logan, Hal Williams, Larry Odom

Board Members Absent: Bruce Howerton, Chris Welch, Tony Owens

Partners Present: Lou Stewart, Doug Parks, Cherie Bates (Representing Chamber of Commerce)

Staff Present: Joel Cordle, Shea Wages

I. Approve March 12 meeting minutes – A motion to approve the March 12 minutes was made by Denson and seconded by Hal. All members present unanimously approved the motion.

II. Approve financial report – Joel asked the board to refer to the March financials included in the board packet, and he detailed the expenditures and revenues. A motion to accept the financial report as presented was made by Denson, seconded by Hal. All members present unanimously approved the motion.

III. Announcements from partner agencies

- City of Dahlonega- Lou announced that the city has addressed signage to direct people to the available free parking. Also, she noted that there have been some lights and banners placed at the old elementary school lot that is now being used as a city parking lot for downtown employees and others. The city has put in signage for the EV Charging Station, and is currently working on the beautification of the site.
- University of North Georgia - No representative at meeting
- Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Office - Cherie Bates representing the Chamber spoke about the Southeast Film Festival. She also reported on her trip to Shreveport, LA where she was promoting Dahlonega to tour bus operators that could increase weekday downtown traffic. Tours are “Mansions, Moonshines, Gold Mines,” “Gardens, Golf, Goldmines, and Shopping.” She also told about the upcoming bus tour of the international VIPs, 39 consulates total, on April 15th.
- Historic Preservation Commission – Joel noted that HPC met in March but only to approve minutes and not to review any applications.
- Dahlonega 2000, Inc. - Joel referred to the Dahlonega 2000 bank statement document in the packet, announcing that there were no new project applications and no need to hold a Dahlonega 2000 meeting.

IV. Staff Report and Event Volunteers Request- Board Members received a copy of the March staff report. Joel highlighted the major projects worked on during the previous month. Shea also noted the high amount of event production occurring during this time period, as well as the numerous upcoming events. Highlights included the booth at the UNG Open House, hosting the Gold Goblets and Galleries National Main Street Mobile Tour, creating and planning the Capturing Downtown Dahlonega Photography Contest, as well as working on the logistics of summer events: Farmers Market, Appalachian Jam, First Friday Night Concerts.

V. DDA-Main Street Four Point Projects

ORGANIZATION

1. Bond Defeasance Escrow Agreement –Doug Parks, city attorney, informed the DDA board that the Board of Regents have changed the way they do residential housing on campus. They are prepaying a number of outstanding revenue bonds. New procedure requires creating an “escrow” account for the Owen Hall project. He explained that a DDA board resolution is needed to permit this “escrow account” and informed the board that there are no negative repercussions from passing the resolution. It does however mean that the Regents and Legislature have privatized student housing, and there will be no new DDA revenue bond opportunities. A motion to approve the resolution as presented was made by Hal and seconded by Donna. All members present unanimously approved the motion.
2. Promote Downtown Safety & Security – There has been no committee meeting to date.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Support Council on Parking Strategies – There has been no recent committee meeting.
2. Support Downtown Job Growth – There has been no meeting to date.

3. Inventory of Available Spaces & Prospects - Joel referred to the Inventory Sheet included in the board packet. He itemized the vacancies. He pointed out that Totally Walking & Running has moved onto the historic public square replacing Great Fynds. There was also the closing of Piazza and Main Street Burger. Although, Joel has given the property owners potential leads for new occupants, no one has leased it yet. Also, Divine Home & Whimsy is officially open. There is a new business coming to 120 South Chestatee UNG building - a clothing store.

PROMOTION

1. Increase Downtown Shopping with Retail Promotion & Advertising - Cherie Bates reminded the board of the Awake until Late kickoff event to be held on Thursday, April 9th.

DESIGN

1. Support Streetscape Construction for Pedestrian Safety & Landscape Improvements– There has been no meeting to date.
2. Conduct Walks with Partners to Pinpoint Issue Areas & Monitor Implementation of Findings - Joel reminded the board of the upcoming walk date – Thursday, April 30th 8 – 10 pm. Shea is in the process of gathering the Action Items list and notes from the previous walk and will email those out to the board and all participating partner groups.
3. Expand Dahlenega Stories History Plaque Program - UNG is still interested in purchasing a plaque for the Chestatee Building. We are waiting for them to send back the application.

VI. New Business - Donna will review the GIRMA DDA insurance policy renewal. Hal has a concern. While talking to new tourism Director, David Zunker, Zunker asked Hal “What are the two main things we need to do to boost tourism in Dahlenega?” Hal noted that there is a need for an upscale hotel; the convocation center location change shouldn’t change the DDA’s efforts to make this a reality. Cherie mentioned a developer is looking at property across from Achasta. There was discussion of potential need for update in demographics market data and for Joel to get a market study price quote.

VII. Adjourn – Hal made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Donna. All present unanimously approved the motion. Larry adjourned the meeting at 9:42 AM.