

DAHLONEGA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/BETTER HOMETOWN BOARD

June 9, 2011 Meeting Minutes

DDA members present: Donna Logan, Tony Owens, Denson Martin, Hal Williams, Larry Odom, Chris Welch

DDA members absent: Mac McConnell

Staff members present: Joel Cordle, Rebecca Shirley

Partners present: Bill Lewis, Doug Parks

Partners absent: Gary McCullough, Amy Booker, Gayle Jones

Guests present: Lee Creef, George Butler, Ellijay Better Hometown representatives

Meeting called to order at 8:45 AM by Chairman Denson Martin

A motion to approve the May 12 meeting minutes was made by Chris and seconded by Hal. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Joel presented the financial report. A motion to approve the report was made by Tony and seconded by Donna. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

DDA Task Force Reports

ORGANIZATION

1. *Hear DDRLF loan sponsor request from Back Porch Oyster Bar* – George Butler reported on the DDRLF application for the proposed new Back Porch Oyster Bar property (Conner Storehouse). The restaurant will be open 7 days a week, the 2nd floor will be used as an event facility space, and there will be over 40 jobs created (currently the restaurant has 6 full time jobs). Right now, the concern is there is no permanent funding for the project. DCA has a site visit scheduled for Wednesday, February 15, 10 am. The estimated completion date of the project is August 1. Hal made a motion to table a loan sponsorship decision until after the DCA site visit (to determine if it is a qualified project) and after the historic preservation and design matters have been settled. At that time, a called DDA meeting could be scheduled to consider action on the loan sponsorship request. Tony seconded the motion. All members present unanimously approved the motion. Doug requested George and Lee provide an authorization letter so the DDA is able to communicate with Jennifer (BB&T) directly.
2. *Explore upcoming NGCSU construction projects & need for bonds sponsorship (Mac & Larry)* – There was no report on this item.
3. *Support of Park Street Area Historic District designation & Downtown Historic District expansion (HPC, Joel, Chris Head, Bill, council)* – Hal reported that the city council recently had received a briefing on the process from project consultant Ken Kocher. The council approved moving forward with the process which includes mailing notices to property owners and holding public meetings. Chris Head will be coordinating that process for the city.
4. *Master Plan Implementation; convene Master Plan Core Team to refresh & energize the program; work with council and staff on implementation items (Hal & Tony)* – Joel reported that a meeting of the Master Plan Core Team is scheduled for June 14, 5:00 PM. He encouraged all DDA members to attend.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. *Obtain an update of the Master Plan market data section from Ken Bleakly Consultants and apply updated data for local decisions and action (Denson)* - There was no report on this item.
2. *Support city council in Parking Study & Management Plan issues; explore BB&T site strategy (Hal, Donna w/Bill Lewis)* – Bill reported that it is premature for council to move forward until more information is available from a private investor whose potential project might include a major parking structure. Joel added that he has been contacted by a person interested in a development project with a parking structure. The person is currently working on a feasibility study. Hal suggested that as the project unfolds, putting a taskforce together for the citizen involvement component. Joel added a

taskforce would be beneficial as a communication tool and possibly taking the pressure off the elected officials. The recommendation would ultimately be coming from a parking taskforce/stakeholder group.

3. *Develop downtown arts strategies engaging arts groups; support new NGCSU arts facilities on S. Chestatee (Hal)* - Hal reported that the work group will be meeting the following week. Joel reminded the group of the Rodin exhibit current at NGCSU Library Tech Center.
4. *Support master plan catalytic real estate projects; support property owners development and/or redevelopment of strategic sites; develop a list of property owners for discussions (Denson and Chris)* – There was no report on this item.
5. *Keep current inventory of available spaces & businesses seeking spaces (Denson)* –Denson and Joel reported and commented on the inventory list provided in the meeting package.

DESIGN

1. *Support design & construction of Main St. & S. Chestatee streetscapes (Chris)* – Joel reported that the City has received another TE grant award of \$500,000 for construction. The design costs will be covered by Tiger II. GDOT has given Robert & Co notice to proceed on the TIGER II funded design work.
2. *Hold walk-arounds with partners to pinpoint areas of need, monitor implementation of findings (Denson and Donna)* – The nighttime walk is scheduled for September 15, 10:00. Please meet in front of the Visitor Center.
3. *Bronze historic plaque program; target key property owners; incorporate property owners meeting with master plan meeting (Denson)* – Joel reported Dale Solomich's plaque was installed last Saturday. The Scanlin plaque text is still under construction. Donna said she will approach Norman Adams about a plaque for the Crawford House (Cotton States Insurance building).

PROMOTION

1. *Retail promotion & advertising workgroup layout specific plans and implement (Tony & Chris)* – Rebecca reported about an upcoming meeting once the new CVB Director gets settled in.

Staff Reports (attached at the end of these minutes)

New Business – No new business items

Announcements from partner agencies:

- Reporting for the City of Dahlonega, Bill asked everyone to look at the changes to the Warwick/N Park Street intersection. You are now able to turn left off of N Park to access the parking lot. City Council has approved a notice to proceed for creating a sidewalk from J&J to the Walmart intersection. The city is beginning a storm water rehabilitation project on E Main Street between Carusos and Porterhouse. The parking on N Chestatee Street (beside Hall's Block) has been restriped and are angled more to allow cars to pass through easier.
- There was no report from the Merchants Association.
- There was no report from the Chamber of Commerce/CVB.
- There was no report from NGCSU.
- Chris Head provided a copy of the minutes from the recent Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Tony made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Hal. The vote to approve was unanimous, and Denson adjourned the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

TODAY'S STAFF REPORT

Director's Report (May activities)

ORGANIZATION

- Received notice of \$500,000 DOT TE grant award for streetscape construction
- Arranging details of Ga. Trust for Historic Preservation's Dahlonega October events
- Producing first report session for Downtown Master Plan Core Team
- Prepared quarterly report for Ga. Forestry Commission grant

- Took written exam, presented case study, and achieved designation as Level 2 GDA Downtown Professional
- Attended Chamber of Commerce meeting and provided DDA activity report
- Prepared and submitted monthly economic activity report for Ga. Dept. of Community Affairs
- Attended National Main Streets Conference
- Arranged Dahlonega DDA visits by Cornelia and Ellijay Better Hometown leaders
- Updated diving bell ARC grant application with GMRC and composed letters of support for local and state leaders
- Arranged kick-off meeting for TIGER II streetscape design project with Ga. DOT and partners
- Prepared Ga. Downtown Association presentation for GMA conference

DESIGN

- Worked with Sargent Building owner Dale Solomich for bronze history plaque
- Arranged arborist services with Hulsey Tree and Greg Sheppard
- Arranged downtown flower replacement with Premier Landcare and renewed contract
- Arranged paint color options for Mason Family, Jerry Butler and Battle Branch Building
- Assisted with streetscape design contract development for Robert & Company

PROMOTION

- Processed First Friday Concerts payments, assisted with production, marketing
- Processed Appalachian Jam payments
- Completed "Shop Your Dahlonega" local shopping campaign with Amy Booker & chamber staff
- Arranged and approved downtown ads for Mountain Vacations magazine
- Handled Farmers Market vendors, customer inquiries, and booth arrangement issues
- Processed DDA's \$500 sponsorship for July 4 celebration; advised on event production issues
- Negotiated traditional jazz jam program concept for downtown with local jazz group

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Assisted local bank and Back Porch, LLC on loan sponsorship for new downtown location
- Assisted Mississippi couple (Bredoskys) with local business startup information preparing for their relocation
- Assisted California couple (Burnells) with local business startup information preparing for their relocation
- Assisted and existing local business with significant expansion project plans
- Assisted local business start-ups in search for location (Karen Glass Garden Shop, Pam Chadwick retail, local artists guild)
- Prepared concept for Third Thursday shopping event with Rebecca

Program Coordinator's Report (May activities):

PROMOTION

- Updated Facebook pages for Appalachian Jam, Farmers Market, Friday Concerts, DDA
- Sent Jam, Farmers/Artists Market, & First Friday info to be included in Chamber email blasts
- Sent Jam & First Friday press releases to media list
- Distributed Appalachian Jam, First Friday, & Farmers Market posters to community businesses
- Assisting with on-site coordination of Farmers Market, First Friday, and Appalachian Jam
- Assisting with 4th of July production
- Drafted & submitted Father's Day ad to Nugget
- Drafted concept outline for a Third Thursday retail event
- Submitted Farmers Market, First Friday, & Appalachian Jam info for Chamber/CVB's Events & Entertainment guide
- Researched additional locations for Chamber county signage promoting downtown

EVENT COORDINATION

- Coordinating details for GA Trust for Historic Preservation Ramble (October 2011)
- Production & promotion of "Historic Preservation Month" and "Georgia Cities Week" activities with Lumpkin County High School art exhibit and essay contest
- Assisting with Youth Leadership movies under the stars series

ORGANIZATION

- Took exam and achieved Ga. Downtown Assoc. Level 1 Downtown Professional designation
- Organizing Master Plan Task Force meeting
- Assisting with development of Lumpkin Youth Leadership program
- Assisting with development of Dahlonega Young Professionals Group monthly event planning & volunteer outreach
- Designing DDA note cards with historic downtown photos
- Organized photo shoot and story for façade grant participants and sponsors (Worley B&B & WOW building)
- Attended National Main Streets Conference
- Produced May newsletter "Business Tips" and sent to downtown businesses
- Began preparation for NGCSU new faculty lunch (August)

DESIGN

- Finished downtown lamp post banner order
- Assisted Dale Solomich with installation of historic plaque

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Working with Chamber Economic Development Committee to develop strategies for “Dahlonge Passport” (frequent shopping card/ customer appreciation card)
- Updated inventories of downtown properties and businesses