

DAHLONEGA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/BETTER HOMETOWN PROGRAM

September 8, 2011 Meeting Minutes

DDA members present: Mac McConnell, Denson Martin, Chris Welch, Larry Odom, Donna Logan, Tony Owens

DDA members absent: Hal Williams

Staff members present: Rebecca Shirley, Joel Cordle

Partners present: Amy Booker, Jay Markwalter, Bill Lewis, Gary McCullough

Partners absent: Gayle Jones

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

A motion to approve the August 11 meeting minutes was made by Tony and seconded by Donna. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

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

DDA Task Force Reports

ORGANIZATION

1. *Support of Park Street Area Historic District designation & Downtown Historic District expansion (HPC, Joel, Chris Head, Bill, council)* – There was no report on this item.
2. *Master Plan Implementation; convene Master Plan Core Team to refresh & energize the program; work with council and staff on implementation items (Hal & Tony)* – There was no report on this item.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. *Apply updated market data for local decisions and actions (Denson)* – There was no report on this item. The item has been completed.
2. *Support city council in Parking Study & Management Plan issues; explore BB&T site strategy (Hal, Donna w/Bill Lewis)* – Gary reported that Ricky Stewart has created some parking solutions on N Park Street and the Choice Street parking lot that will be implemented in the upcoming weeks. Spaces will be added.
3. *Develop downtown arts strategies engaging arts groups; support new NGCSU arts facilities on S. Chestatee (Hal)* – Joel reported that NGCSU's development office is looking into a feasibility study for fundraising approximately \$20 million for a visual arts 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)* – At 8:50 a.m. a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the future acquisition of real estate was made by Tony and seconded by Chris. All members present unanimously approved the motion. There was no formal action taken during the Executive Session. At 9:03 a.m. Tony made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Chris and all members present unanimously approved the motion. A motion to reconvene the regular meeting was made by Chris and seconded by Larry with all members present unanimously approving the motion. The regular meeting reconvened at 9:04.
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)* – Chris reported that Joel and Ricky will be in Atlanta tomorrow to meet with GDOT and Robert & Co to review streetscape designs.
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 p.m. Meet in front of the Fudge Factory.

3. *Bronze historic plaque program; target key property owners; incorporate property owners meeting with master plan meeting (Denson)* – Letters to the remaining property owners went out. The committee should have an update at the next meeting.

PROMOTION

1. *Retail promotion & advertising workgroup layout specific plans and implement (Tony & Chris)* – Rebecca, Jay, Chris, and Tony have a meeting scheduled to discuss plans. The group should have an update at the next meeting.

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 reported the storm drain work under Corkscrew may be postponed until after Gold Rush. There have been a few delays in these projects because of the recent weather conditions.
- Reporting for the Chamber of Commerce/CVB, Amy distributed copies of their current work plan.
- There was no report from NGCSU.
- There was no report from the Historic Preservation Commission. Joel distributed a copy of last month's HPC meeting minutes for the board to review.

Tony made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Donna. The vote to approve was unanimous, and Denson adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

STAFF REPORT ON AUGUST ACTIVITIES

DIRECTOR

ORGANIZATION

- Completed Ga. Forestry Commission \$10,000 grant final report package & reimbursement request
- Received \$975 sponsorship for Appalachian Jam from Bear on the Square Committee
- Arranging Ga. Trust for Historic Preservation's Dahlonega October Ramble details
- Attended Chamber of Commerce meeting and provided DDA activity report
- Prepared and submitted monthly economic activity report for Ga. Dept. of Community Affairs
- Organizing Merchants Association membership survey into work plan list items
- Preparing items for TIGER 3 grant application; arranged partners meeting for matching funds
- Worked on Ga. Downtown Association conference, membership meeting, awards nominations, board meeting, and agency partnership issues
- Attended city council's partner reception for NGCSU President Dr. Jacobs and assisted planning
- Handled DOT contracts and payment request materials for TE streetscape grant with Chris Austin
- Attended Gov. Deal's Economic Development Competitiveness Initiative survey meeting
- Attended Merchants Association meeting and provided DDA activity report
- Advised Cornelia DDA on reorganization and budget issues
- Arranged DDA news and master plan program for Women in Lumpkin Leadership meeting
- Advised Jefferson Better Hometown on façade grant guidelines and application
- Advised UGA Fanning Institute on collecting downtown economic development data
- Attended Lumpkin County Historical Society meeting to request volunteers and report on Ga. Trust Ramble
- Attended DOT's final partners meeting for Hwy 52/MM Parkway study
- Assisted Appalachian Regional Commission's James Thompson with resources for Howard Finster folk art economic development projects
- Assisted committee with planning tour arrangements for China's Liaocheng University visitors

DESIGN

- Arranged Hulsey Tree arborist services for downtown trees
- Arranged downtown flower maintenance with Premier Landcare
- Provided wiring grant application package to Masonic Lodge/Paul Hanson

- Wrote letter of recommendation for summer intern Natascha Curbow upon completion of her projects
- Edited letter to property owners to promote bronze history plaque incentive program

PROMOTION

- Prepared draft of 2011 Old Fashioned Christmas committee budget
- Processed First Friday Concerts and Appalachian Jam payments, assisted with production
- Arranged partners meeting to plan local information kiosks at NGCSU South Chestatee Building
- Advised on advertising choices, designs, and expenditures
- Attended NGCSU downtown block party to welcome and develop student shoppers

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Assisted business start-ups in search for location (Bredoskys, Smiths, Pellerins, Curtiss)
- Updated inventory of business spaces for sale and lease
- Met w/ Gee Furniture partner; provided list of buyers seeking downtown property; notified buyers of availability
- Assisted potential new business startup (Pierce) with planning resources
- Held partners group meeting for arts and economic development planning
- Arranged meeting with church leaders regarding future of S. Chestatee property; researched RFP models and updated downtown project developers list
- Attended NGCSU ribbon cutting events for bookstore building and dining hall

PROJECT COORDINATOR

EVENT COORDINATION

- Assisted with coordinating details for GA Trust for Historic Preservation Ramble
- Produced welcome event for Dr. Jacobs
- Assisting with Old Fashioned Christmas planning, merchant outreach, advertising
- Assisting with 6-Gap Ride & Criterion planning & vendor setup
- Assisted with on-site coordination of Farmers Market, First Friday, and Appalachian Jam
- Partnered with Chamber of Commerce for NGCSU Welcome Back Students Block Party

PROMOTION

- Meeting with Chamber/CVB for advertising opportunities (Comcast & GPB)
- Updated Facebook pages for Appalachian Jam, Farmers Market, Friday Concerts, DDA
- Sent Jam, First Friday, & Farmers Market info weekly to be included in Chamber email blasts
- Sent press releases for Appalachian Jam weekly
- Sent First Friday Concert press release (Remember When Band)
- Drafting press release about façade grant program
- Finalized NGCSU Saint advertising for Fall & Spring semesters
- Updated other items on the website as needed
- Partnering with NGCSU & Chamber/CVB for new kiosk at NGCSU bookstore building
- Ordered additional downtown promotional ink pens for upcoming events
- Drafting ad design for the Vacation Guide & Smoke Signals Fall-Winter issues

ORGANIZATION

- Completed DDA August meeting minutes
- Drafted DDA September “Business Tips” newsletter; researched articles from sources
- Sent news bulletins to downtown businesses as needed
- Provided brochures to CVB for updated walking tour information
- Finalized travel details for Ga. Downtown Association Conference (Rome, GA)
- Compiling data from merchants association survey
- Drafted marketing internship job description & shared with university to find NGCSU student

DESIGN

- Coordinating placement of additional downtown shopping banners; pricing new decorative banner poles
- Redesigning detailed sheets for bronze history plaque program
- Printed & mailed updated bronze history plaque letter to property owners

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Updated available properties list

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