

DAHLONEGA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/MAIN STREET BOARD

January 9, 2014

Meeting Minutes

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

Board members absent: Mac McConnell

Staff present: Joel Cordle, Shea Wages

Partners Present: Gary McCullough, Bruce Georgia

Guests: Larry Sorohan, Donna Gessell

Chris called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM

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

II. Approve financial report – Joel asked board to refer to the financials included in the board packet. He detailed the December expenses and current balances. A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Denson and seconded by Larry. All members present unanimously approved the motion.

III. DDA 2014 annual meeting

- 2013 summary - Chris highlighted key projects and achievements from the 2013 year
- Present 2014 Work Plan Update – Chris requested DDA board members to review the 2014 work plan draft included in the board packet. He will ask the board to formally adopt the Plan at the upcoming February meeting.
- 2014 Officers Election – Joel provided an overview of the term limits provided in the DDA bylaws and presented the slate of officers for 2014 (Chairman Chris Welch, Vice-Chairman Denson Martin, Treasurer Tony Owens, and Secretary Hal Williams). All 2013 officers have agreed to serve the second year of eligibility. There were no additional nominations from the floor. A motion to accept the slate of officers as presented and reelect them for another one year term was made by Larry and seconded by Donna. All members present unanimously approved the motion.

IV. DDA Task Force Reports

ORGANIZATION

1. Support City Council in Park Street Area Historic District designation & Downtown Historic District expansion and design guidelines – Hal announced that the design guidelines have been finalized by HPC and dispersed to partners for review and comment before handing them over to council for approval.
2. Assist council with implementing Downtown Master Plan - Hal reported that the Ga. Mtns. Regional Commission continues to work on the updated zoning ordinances draft and aim to present to council in March.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Explore Univ. of North Georgia bonds sponsorship; support convocation center – Joel reported that Univ. of North Georgia staff will be presenting their capital projects list (including the “Regional Center for Business & Innovation) to the Board of Regents later in January. Regents’ response will be pivotal to the proposed project at the former Mohawk property.
2. Support city council in parking management plan – Donna reported on the DDA parking work group has an updated 2014 work plan and feels that the projects will be beneficial to managing parking in the downtown district.
3. Develop downtown arts strategies, support facilities - Hal reported that the 4th quarter art partners meeting was held recently. The Arts Council reported a renewed focus on the Mountain Flower Arts Festival.
4. Support master plan catalytic real estate projects, property owners development/ redevelopment of strategic sites – Chris referred to the 2014 work plan and highlighted the extensive action items pertaining to catalytic real estate projects.

5. Keep inventory of available spaces & businesses seeking spaces - Joel asked the board to refer to the board packet with the inventory sheet of properties and prospects. He addressed the potential for new businesses due to the closing down of Caruso's.

PROMOTION

1. Plan and implement retail promotion & advertising - Chris reminded members that the Comcast HGTV ad campaign is coming to an end next week. Tony called attention to a new idea for retail promotion & advertising – a gift card program for the downtown merchants to use. More details will be presented at the February meeting.

DESIGN

1. Support design & construction of streetscapes – Joel reported on an upcoming meeting with University of North Georgia to discuss the relocation of overhead utility lines in the West Main Street streetscape project.
2. Expand Dahlonega Stories historic plaque program - Denson had no new updates to report.

V. Staff Report (5 minutes)

Board members received a copy of the Staff report and Joel reported on the major projects worked on during the previous month.

VI. New Business

- Request to renew Holly Theatre rental agreement/funding – On behalf of the Holly Theatre board, Larry Sorohan requested to reinstate the same event rentals contract from 2013 with the DDA and Holy Theater. Hal abstained from discussion due to his relationship with the Holly Theater. Denson made a motion to table the request until the DDA's February meeting. The motion was seconded by Larry Odom and all members present unanimously approved the motion.
- Annual Business Reception & Investment Awards Night – Joel reminded board members of the upcoming event to be held in February.
- UNG Strategic Plan – UNG Representative Donna Gessell reported on the work going into creating the strategic plan for the University of North Georgia. The UNG Strategic Plan is expected to be finalized by the end of 2014. She offered to hold a SWOT analysis session with DDA. Joel added that UNG VP Andy Leavitt has offered to attend upcoming DDA meetings to update on the UNG plan as relates to downtown Dahlonega.

VII. Announcements from partner agencies

- City of Dahlonega (2 minutes) – Bruce reported that the city employees have done excellent work during the recent cold weather. Gary reported that the City is endorsing a bill to be presented in the Legislature. It would provide point of sales tax information. He also endorsed the Renaissance Act coming up in the new legislative session.
- Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Office (2 minutes) – No report
- University of North Georgia – (2 minutes) – No report
- Historic Preservation Commission (2 minutes) – Donna Gessell reported that the Historical Preservation Commission has updated their guidelines book and will be presenting soon to city council for approval.

VIII. Adjourn

- Denson made a motion to adjourn, Larry seconded the motion, and all members present unanimously approved the motion. Chris adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.