



Main Street Program / Downtown Development Authority Board Minutes

February 03, 2022, 8:30 AM

McCullough Council Chambers – City Hall

PRESENT

Chairperson Amy Thrailkill
Vice-Chair Joel Cordle
Board Member Tony Owens
Board Member A.C. Moore
Board Member Wendi Huguley
Board Member Donna Logan

Call to Order

Chairperson Thrailkill called the meeting to order at 830 am.

Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Thrailkill asked for the approval of the Agenda. Motion made by Board Member Moore, Seconded by Board Member Owens.

Voting Yea: Vice-Chair Cordle, Board Member Owens, Board Member Moore, Board Member Logan

Approval of Minutes

1. Main St/Downtown Development Authority Meeting Minutes, January 6, 2022
Danna Foster, Assistant City Clerk

Chairperson Thrailkill called for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion made by Board Member Moore, Seconded by Board Member Owens. Voting Yea: Vice-Chair Cordle, Board Member Owens, Board Member Moore, Board Member Logan

Design

- a. Design Projects Report – February 2022, Mary Csukas, DDA Director

Director Csukas explained one of the reasons for the Annual plan was to come up with the four points as the reason we are here. In our contract with DCA, we are called Downtown Dahlonaga. Director Csukas outlined that streamlining the name Main Street/Downtown Dahlonaga Authority to Downtown Dahlonaga may make it simpler to identify ourselves. We still would have the Main Street and Downtown Development programs -they would be housed together under this umbrella, Downtown Dahlonaga. She added it might help us to head in a direction and make it easier for the public to understand us. She asked if that was something the board was interested in. Board members did not indicate an objection.

Director Csukas explained she is focusing on beautification in the design project and has been approved to bring additional benches down Grove Street, East Main Street, and Head House areas. Referencing the maps provided, she explained she would like to enlarge the areas. The focus would be to add benches, trees, greenery, and additional green spaces to make the areas more welcoming. She is working with Troy and Mark to identify where additional welcoming items can be put.

Director Csukas asked the board for thoughts of designers, consultants, and contractors who would be interested in developing the 147 N Park Street property. The Mayor has requested this information for the Council Retreat on April 8th and 9th at Camp Glisson. It's important that this Board and the City Council agree about the direction of 147 N Park Street. What do we want? Parking garage, condos, retail, shopping? One of the most desired items is multi-family housing. She asked for some thoughts from the board to bring to the next meeting.

Director Csukas indicated we may want to work with partners to connect with successful restoration contractors to make the fund balance available in grants and need to have a plan for grants. Applicants need to understand they need to work through the submission and approval process prior to submitting an invoice for payment. Currently, there are vacancies in the Historic Preservation Committee and there is not an opportunity to bring grants forward. We need to work together to identify areas where we can support businesses and work with Council, especially regarding 147 North Park St.

She also explained the City is responsible for the restoration of the Head House project, and with that, there is an opportunity to put the Head House back under Downtown Development if desired, when the time to rent the 800 sq ft space on the bottom arrives. It will be 6 months before the renovation is done. Keep that in mind and we will bring it forward to another meeting for discussion.

Manager Alexander detailed the items in the packet for reference. Included there is a map of the DDA boundaries and Historic District as a reference to see the properties we will work with over the next year. There is also the final work plan and individually assigned tasks for committees. Chairperson Thrailkill explained the purpose was to take the responsible areas and give tasks aligned to help streamline and build ownership as we move forward and help us stay on task and focused.

Manager Alexander explained the team will stay in contact with resources and advice from the board. These projects will develop over time.

b. Arbor Day Proclamation

Skyler Alexander, Downtown Coordinator

Coordinator Alexander announced that Arbor Day is February 24th. She is working with the tree committee and Public Works. Once a location has been selected, she will email everyone the details.

Economic Vitality

a. Economic Vitality Projects Report – February 2022

Mary Csukas, DDA Director

Director Csukas discussed the development of the list of properties or areas that can be developed. She is in contact with the County to work on this. She reiterated how important it is that we all be the eyes and ears in the Community. This is the 5-year plan. Working with the County and University together to ensure Economic Development. As part of the Comprehensive plan, we need to know what square footage needs a new tenant. She feels working with Community Development regarding new permits and interest in properties helps develop our plan.

Board Member Moore detailed that he has been working with a restaurant group that has an interest in Dahlonga. Director Csukas indicated these connections are exactly what she is talking about and directed him to contact Coordinator Alexander.

b. Community Activity Reports

Ariel Alexander, Interim Main Street Manager

Manager Alexander indicated all items were submitted and all requirements are met.

Organization

a. Organization Projects Report

Ariel Alexander, Interim Main Street Manager

Manager Alexander indicated a lot of the Vacant properties list was completed. It is available at www.dahlongadda.org under resources and then available properties.

Interested parties can then be directed to the website. Manager Alexander reminded the Board this was one of the items on the worklist to have the Board assist with notifying Manager and Coordinator Alexander with the information.

Director Csukas described how Administrator Kinley is working with them for a long-term plan to develop a virtual map. Director Csukas and the board discussed options for gathering information about building owners, especially those in transition. Director Csukas wants to use this as a tool to connect vacant properties with owners to assist in the development and revitalization of Downtown. She also detailed the City Manager and Administrator Kinley were working with the County on the development of the GA 400 area and how it relates to traffic flowing into Downtown Dahlongega.

b. December 2021 Financials

Mary Csukas, Director

Director Csukas indicated nothing huge is happening and the budget is on track. She noted to expect increases in training and yearly updates. She also advised there may be some purchases of electronics.

Promotion

a. Promotion Projects Report – February 2022

Skyler Alexander, Downtown Coordinator

Coordinator Alexander stated one of her tasks was to revive and update walking tour promotional materials which she is working on. She presented an idea to do a Mother's Day crawl this year and coordinated with Sam McDuffie to work together on this. She is taking suggestions and is thinking of a passport-style event where there is a raffle drawing as the final award.

Board Member Huguley offered that might be Commencement weekend. Discussion with Board and Staff ensued about opportunities to draw families in town. Restaurant limitations were discussed with the possibility of adding Food Trucks. Board Member Owens offered it is nice to have something happening the first week of the month for the retailers. There was a suggestion to give the Restaurants a heads-up to give them time to prepare and awareness of extra activity downtown.

Partner Agencies

1. City of Dahlongega- City Manager Bill Schmid announced progress is being made on the Head House renovation. Council's retreat is happening in April instead of March.

2. University of North Georgia

Board Member Huguley added that Bear on the Square weekend is the same weekend as parents and alumni weekend. They have lots of partners on campus and will have

live music at Hansford Hall, helicopters, and tanks on the drill field. She will assist in cross-marketing.

3. Chamber of Commerce/Tourism

Director McDuffie updated the Chocolate Crawl will occur March 1-6 and approximately 10 businesses may be participating. He also returned from a conference and made connections which he will share with the DDA. The Visitor's Center had approximately 200,000 people come through in 2021, with over 31,046 in December. The Chamber is working on new commercials which will be coming out soon and filming businesses participating in Chocolate Crawl. He is also working with several organizations for conferences and tournaments and working on the sign changes.

Board Member Huguley announced they were bringing the world series trophy through, and it is to be housed at the Coleman Field House area. She will provide more information.

Director McDuffie also discussed changes in his Board to 11 participants.

4. Historic Preservation Commission

Administrator Kinley announced the Commission would meet on Wednesday, discussing training and looking for 3 new members. He discussed the Comprehensive Plan which looks 30 to 50 years out where DDA/Main St has a significant impact, and the preservation of historic downtown, trails, and sidewalks.

He discussed the Historic Preservation District Survey referring to a provided map and indicated the red-lined areas, and possibly outside those, as more buildings may be identified in the survey to be added to the Historic District. This would include the Central Business District and B-3 areas. The Survey is done every 10 years, there may be some homes that meet the qualifications.

5. Planning & Zoning Commission

Board Member Logan questioned Administrator Kinley on the new Elementary School which led to a discussion on that area being developed. Administrator Kinley indicated these were County projects in the City. A discussion was had regarding the intersection and roads which have no changes.

6. Downtown Dahlonga Business Association

Board Member Moore announced a social event on February 17th at Canopy and the Roots with comedy night to encourage other businesses to join this group.

Board Member Owens announced the Fudge Factory's 40th anniversary. They have a renovation reopening this Friday and will be working on the outside as the weather warms.

Adjourn

Chairperson Thrailkill reminded Board members that Manager Alexander had shared individual responsibilities to help everyone be more involved. She thanked everyone for their reports and called for a motion to adjourn at 9:25 am

Motion made by Board Member Huguley, Seconded by Board Member Owens.

Voting Yea: Vice-Chair Cordle, Board Member Owens, Board Member Moore, Board Member Huguley, Board Member Logan