



# Main Street Program / Downtown Development Authority Board Minutes

October 07, 2021 8:45 AM

Dahlonega Square Hotel Meeting Room - 135 N Chestatee Street  
Dahlonega, GA, 30533

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## PRESENT

Chairman Ryan Puckett  
Vice Chairman Tony Owens  
Board Member Amy Thrailkill  
Board Member Joel Cordle  
Board Member Wendi Huguley  
Board Member AC Moore

## Call to Order

Chairman Puckett called the meeting to order at 8:52 am

Ryan also congratulated Ms. Mary Csukas on her new position as MainStreet/DDA Director and introduced the newest Board Member Ms. Wendi Huguley.

## Amendment to the Agenda – no changes

## Meeting Minutes

1. Main Street/DDA Board September Meeting Minutes, Skyler Alexander, Downtown Coordinator

Chairman Puckett called for a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written.

Motion made by Board Member Thrailkill, Seconded by Board Member Moore

Voting Yea: Vice Chairman Owens, Board Member Thrailkill, Board Member Cordle, Board Member Moore, Board Member Huguley.

## Continuing Business

2. 147 Park Street Discussion, Bill Schmid, DDA Director

City Manager Schmid introduced new Main St/DDA Director Mary Csukas and congratulated her on the position.

City Manager Schmid indicated the City Council met and received the letter sent by the MainStreet/DDA Board. The letter was well received.

Board Member Cordle indicated there was no direction to move forward quickly. Council received the letter, and they agree. Whatever takes place with future proposals will be important so the proposer will understand what parameters to work with. The letter indicated a good combination of mixed use, green space, low profile.

Director Csukas indicated there is opportunity at 147 Park Street and the Mayor and Council are looking for direction from our Board at this property. Our Annual Assessment plan is being created with the inclusion of the Strategic Work Plan being spearheaded by Board member Cordle, Interim Main St Manager Ariel Alexander and Downtown Coordinator Skyler Alexander. This property will be part of the final Assessment Plan.

Chairman Puckett stated he was glad to hear letter was well received by Council and asked those present, if you know of people who are looking for places to do the scope identified in the letter, please send us their information. Our short-term vision is to keep the property fluid and he is inclined to use it for parking as it was recently restriped for parking.

City Manager Schmid, Director Csukas and the Board discussed the changes in the job positions and upper movement of the MainStreet/DDA City employees. Director Csukas is looking forward to having the Interim Manager and Events Coordinator grow in their projects and positions.

3. Main Street/ DDA By-Laws, Joel Cordle, Main Street/DDA Board Member

Board Member Cordle indicated the November meeting will have the By-Laws prepared for you to adopt and be presented in your package. Chairman Puckett offered his assistance if needed.

4. Head House Project Update, Bill Schmid, DDA Director

City Manager Schmid reminded the Board the response to questions will be sent to contractors tomorrow. All bids need to be in by October 15th.

Board Member Cordle explained City Councilmember Larson asked at the Council meeting about the completion timeframe. This build is contracted to finish in 180 days. If we get good pricing and 180 days to completion could mean springtime opening date.

5. Independence Day Celebration 2021 – Reconciliation, Mary Csukas, Director

Director Csukas brought the Boards attention to the information in the packet that showed \$21,000 in expenditures for the Independence Day Celebration. She indicated in the future it was not expected to be as expansive and hope the funds will be used for fireworks and draw in visitors. Her vision for the future includes fireworks, a parade, businesses to be on the sidewalk and food trucks to encourage people to stay.

Chairman Puckett and Vice Chairman Owens discussed the opportunity for the funding through community driven donations for the fireworks. Everyone agreed having fireworks make a huge financial impact. It is important to have the University of North Georgia support for a location.

## **New Business**

6. Mural Discussion – Skylar Alexander, Downtown Coordinator

Downtown Coordinator Skylar Alexander presented an opportunity for discussion of Murals on key walls within the downtown area. Vice Chairman Owens suggested the side of his building Corner Kitchen. The wall at the Visitor's Center was another suggestion. Discussion continued about guidelines for Historic Preservation and connection with other cities who have implemented this project to gain insight and possible strategies to implementation. There was great interest and excitement about this possible project.

This discussion opened discussion about sidewalk improvements. There are sidewalk improvement plans that are in the City budget.

## **Main Street / DDA Monthly Report**

7. August Main Street/DDA Financials, Bill Schmid, DDA Director

City Manager Schmid presented the financials in the packet. There were no comments.

8. Main Street – August 2021, Ariel Alexander, Marketing Coordinator

Marketing Coordinator Alexander stated the Annual Volunteer Event was rescheduled to October 19<sup>th</sup>. She is also working on a 24-month work plan and developing a staff and board survey. A retreat is being planned for January to have the MainStreet/DDA Board and staff to come together and have a strategy, goals, and plans. The website, dahlonegadda.org is being reviewed and updated to have more accessible resources. Downtown welcome packets have been created with contact information and information on starting a new business. These packets will be available as a link on our website, as well as a list of properties that are available.

Board Member Huguley let the Board know UNG Alumni are reaching out for information about relocation back to this area and starting new businesses. Director Csukas said Mayor Norton was interested in having a way to link MainStreet/DDA website and the Downtown Development for potential businesses.

**Announcements from Partner Agencies**

- A. City of Dahlonega- City Manager Schmid announced City Marshal George Albert starts on November 5<sup>th</sup> and advertisement will begin for Deputies. The Summit has one proposal for 61 units that has been approved without STR. The Fiscal Year of the City closed September 30.  
Board Member Cordle also alerted the Board the sidewalk from Wimpy Mill to the downtown is complete and open. The sidewalk project between S Chestatee and Convocation Center is moving forward so people can get from downtown to the Convocation Center.
- B. University of North Georgia- Board Member Huguley indicated she has 9 Alumni Classes making arrangements for their reunions and her goal is to assist Alumni in returning to downtown and the city. Alumni are passionate about Dahlonega.
- C. Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Office- Director Sam McDuffie presented that his office is working on their Strategic 1-, 3-, and 5-year plan with \$200k allocated to marketing. New promotional items, pens, and notebooks.
- D. Historic Preservation Commission- presented by City Manager Schmid- The plans for the 1888 House have been approved.
- E. Planning & Zoning Commission- presented by City Manager Schmid- There are more plans for the Summit development, another 90 units are in discussion. Additionally, Planning and Zoning Administrator Jameson has been doing more lighting enforcement for signage and property owners downtown.
- F. Dahlonega Downtown Business Association- no comments

**Adjourn**

Chairman Puckett asked for a motion to adjourn at 10:01am

Motion made by Vice Chairman Owens, Seconded by Board Member Cordle.

Voting Yea: Vice Chairman Owens, Board Member Thrailkill, Board Member Cordle, Board Member Moore, Board Member Huguley.