

CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
APRIL 13, 2023 – 8:00 A.M.

The Downtown Development Authority met for their regular meeting.

Those Present:	Lisa Reynolds Anderson	Chairman
	Meredith Malcom	Vice-Chairman
	Andrea Gray	Secretary
	Whit Holder	Board Member
	Wesley Sisk	Board Member
	Chris Collins	Board Member
	Myoshia Crawford	City Council Representative
	Lee Malcom	City Council Representative

Those Absent:	Ross Bradley	Board Member
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Staff Present:	Leigh Ann Aldridge, Logan Propes, Beth Thompson, Beverly Harrison, Kaitlyn Stubbs, Chris Bailey, Sara Shropshire, Chris Croy, Les Russell, John Howard
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Visitors:

I. CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call

Chairman Anderson noted that all Committee Members were present except Ross Bradley. There was a quorum.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

a. March 23, 2023 Minutes

To approve the minutes as presented.

*Motion by M. Malcom, seconded by Gray.
Passed Unanimously*

3. Approval of Financial Statements

a. February Financials

To approve the February 2023 Financials.

*Motion by L. Malcom, seconded by Sisk.
Passed Unanimously*

II. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no public comments.

III. CITY UPDATE

City Administrator Logan Propes explained he is waiting on each Council Member to give him their input concerning the Alcohol Ordinance Update. There is also some other Alcohol Ordinance cleanup to do. There are some conflicts concerning brewery distribution volumes; they are going to look at closing times, and there are some technical definitions that are going to be cleaned up. The Town Green should be finished by August 1. The staking for the Bypass is being done, and construction will begin in the next couple of months.

Committee Member Chris Collin discussed how Council Members disregarded the recommendations from the DDA. He stated that not one of the Council Members have talked to the business owners in Downtown; they do not care about the owners or their businesses. He questioned whether it would be best for the DDA to request Council to go ahead and call for a vote, because it was pretty clear the vote was not going to pass. Mr. Bradley wants to spend thousands of dollars in attorney's fees, time, and salaries to rewrite parts of the Ordinance that are going to get turned down. He questioned wasting money doing this when there was a clear call for help concerning housing and homelessness in the minority community. Those serious issues could be dealt with, instead of something that has not had any issues. He stated the DDA should write another letter expressing that it is not appropriate to spend that money. If Council truly believes it is causing alcoholism and DUIs, then it should be called for a vote now before people die of alcoholism.

Committee Member Meredith Malcom stated her agreement. She does not feel that it is an issue; it is just a cup. The restaurants will still be selling alcohol. The cups have just gotten blown up into a bigger issue. Closing times for restaurants that serve alcohol should be addressed to make sure that they are appropriate, but the cups are not promoting anything. The cups are only allowing businesses to help each other be successful. It needs to be figured out quickly. She thinks it is very wrong for the personal opinions to be dictating the meetings. There was a roomful for people standing for two hours in support of the one issue.

Council Member Lee Malcom stated the children that are with their parents drinking and see it every day or at least every weekend at home. The cups are not corrupting young people.

Chairman Anderson stated the young people are not going to start drinking because of seeing someone walking down the street with an open container.

Mr. Collin stated that the City is opening the door for litigation and will get sued for going back on their word.

Committee Member Andrea Gray stated it does not serve a substantial government purpose; it serves one person's personal religious conviction.

Ms. Meredith Malcom stated there are way bigger issues that the City needs to address which were brought up at the meeting.

Mr. Collin stated it would be more powerful if Ms. Crawford, as the Council Representative to the DDA, could be present and read the letter at the next meeting.

Mr. Propes explained it would be better if the discussion could be put to bed one way or another at the next meeting, because the Ordinances for the cleanup take two readings. The City started having conversations back in 2017 about the alcohol cups, but they came about due to the events. The cups and branding have allowed there to be more control of the alcohol situation. In 2017, the events were getting out of control. People were bringing in giant coolers filled with alcohol, which was no longer going to be allowed. That situation was much better in 2018.

Chairman Anderson discussed how people buying their alcohol from the local restaurants have increased the sales tax dollars.

Ms. Lee Malcom stated she never has to pick up cups in front of her business after an event.

Chairman Anderson stated she finds beer bottles and cigarette butts in the planters all the time, but has only ever found one cup there.

Mr. Propes discussed changing the closing hours to midnight instead of 2:00 am. He will have a bullet point list of changes at the next Council Meeting that could be approved.

Ms. Lee Malcom stated that Council Member Boyce suggested that the City should legalize marijuana, which is a State issue.

Ms. Crawford stated this is a small issue that has gotten blown out of proportion, and it is all just crazy. There are much bigger issues.

Committee Member Whit Holder stated that Council Member Bradley did not want to vote, at the Council Meeting, because he knew that he did not have enough support for the vote to pass.

The Committee, Mr. Propes, and Ms. Aldridge further discussed Ordinance cleanup items, the cup branding, and the process of getting the Ordinance changes done. The Committee discussed the letter which will be written from the DDA.

Chairman Anderson stated maybe the issue can be done and over with next month, instead of paying more and more attorney fees. She would rather see the board working on helping with housing and other more important issues in the community.

IV. COUNTY UPDATE

There was no update from the County.

Ms. Leigh Ann Aldridge stated that John Ward has indicated that he would like to start attending the meetings.

V. COMMUNITY WORK PLAN & REPORTS

1. Downtown Design

Chairman Anderson stated the planters will be done this weekend.

Ms. Leigh Ann Aldridge stated that she ordered new banners to replace the damaged ones.

2. Redevelopment Projects

City Administrator Logan Propes stated there will be a subdivision of the property for the Blaine Station area at the new Police Department, which is still in accordance with the Master Plan. This will get the housing component out front, probably off the ground in a separate RFP. He stated everything with the old Police Department is still on track for closing in a couple of months, and the lettering will be removed from the building within the next few weeks.

3. Entertainment Draws

Ms. Leigh Ann Aldridge stated Unicorn Day will be on Saturday, April 15. The First Friday Concerts will be starting on May 5.

The Committee, Ms. Aldridge, and Mr. Chris Bailey discussed the details and time frame on getting the planters done, cleanup around town, and new flags put up.

VI. PROGRAMS

1. Farmers Market

Ms. Leigh Ann Aldridge stated that the Farmers Market will open on May 6. There will be a vendor reception on May 29 at the Criswell Agriculture Center.

VII. FUNDING

1. Sponsorship

a. 2023 Sponsorship Update

Ms. Leigh Ann Aldridge discussed sponsorships for the year. She stated they have collected more than ever before. The collections have come in from emails, letters, and brochures that were sent out.

The Committee and Ms. Aldridge discussed the vendor sponsorships and amounts in detail.

Committee Member Andrea Gray requested a list that isolates who has not given that usually do, so the Committee can reach out to them.

The Committee discussed in-kind sponsorship donations.

City Administrator Logan Propes explained the Christmas lights that were donated by Reliant Homes have gone through their estimated useful life and have been replaced.

Council Member Lee Malcom stated someone should reach out to Reliant Homes, because they will probably want a banner.

2. Façade Grants

Committee Member Whit Holder recused himself.

a. Pleasant Valley Assets for 600 South Broad Street, C-120

To approve the grant request for the American Trilogy Formal building.

*Motion by Sisk, seconded by Collin.
Abstaining: Holder.
Passed.*

b. Pleasant Valley Assets for 600 Broad Street, C-100

To approve the grant request for the Walton Mill Storage building.

*Motion by M. Malcom, seconded by Sisk.
Abstaining: Holder.
Passed.*

3. Community Event Grants

a. Team Up Mentoring – A Cause to Celebrate

To approve the grant request for Team Up Mentoring.

*Motion by L. Malcom, seconded by Sisk.
Passed Unanimously*

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

Chairman Anderson requested the Committee to think about a replacement for Ross Bradley.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Spring Retreat – April 17, 2023 at 8:00 at Synovus Bank

2. Next Meeting – May 11, 2023 at 8:00 am at City Hall

X. ADJOURN

*Motion by Holder, seconded by Collin.
Passed Unanimously*