

MINUTES
DOWNTOWN NEWTON DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

January 15, 2015

The monthly meeting of the Downtown Newton Development Association Board of Directors was called to order by our Chairperson, Josh Cummings, on Thursday, January, 2015 at 6:03PM.

Members Present:

Teresa Blalock, Walt Cranford, Joshua Cummings, Melinda Herzog, Summer Jenkins, Jessica Setzer, Dean Shepherd, Anne Stedman, and Anne Wepner.

Staff Present: Rob Powell

Guests Present: Collette Touchette (Appearance Commission), Lisa McCoy (State Cinema), Jerry Hodge (BAC), Zara Saine (Human Relations, Promotions DNDA), Bo Teague (CCHA), Judy Early (Marie and Twannette's), and Melissa Early.

Absent: Ott Dillingham, Telesia Cloninger, Sean Hovis

There was a quorum present.

Anne Stedman moved and Dean Shepherd seconded that minutes of the December meeting be approved. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

The December bank statement shows a balance of \$5,866.58. There are two outstanding checks - \$1,500 to Little Magnolia Properties (façade grant) and \$147.50 to the Focus Newspaper (Shop Local ad). That leaves the actual balance at \$4,219.08.

Melinda Herzog announced that she has accepted a new position with the Iredell Museum as the Executive Director and will no longer be participating with the DNDA. Josh Cummings and Anne Stedman thanked her for her service and work on both the DNDA and Streetscape Committee. Melinda has encouraged the DNDA to remain in contact with her as a potential volunteer.

Old Business:

Rob briefly discussed the Streetscape meeting with designer Allison Platt and how she was asking for input from the public. He stated she really was interested in the public's thoughts. He believed there was a good turnout at the meeting with 68 in attendance. Anne Stedman mentioned she would like for it to be a requirement that the DNDA attend the next meeting on March 23rd. She stated the design is paid for, but we needed participation and support from the public to keep it moving forward to construction. She encouraged everyone to share the city of Newton's Facebook post. Dean mentioned

that the PowerPoint on the city website was very informative if you were unable to attend.

Josh discussed that the City of Newton has dissolved the Events and Festivals Committee. DNDA will now be in charge of events like Spooktacular and Light up the Town. He mentioned he would be meeting with the Events and Festival Committee on January 23rd to discuss the transition. Anne Stedman made a motion and Walt Cranford seconded to accept the Events and Festival Committee into our Promotions Committee under the DNDA. All were in favor.

Josh and Rob discussed the new board meeting schedule for 2015. Rob passed out a sheet with the scheduled dates and times to each member.

Jerry reminded the group that the BAC would be holding their annual meeting on Thursday, February 19, 2015 at 5PM. All businesses are encouraged to attend to recognize their employees.

Rob asked the group to let him know if they were interested in attending the Mainstreet Conference. He stated there was money available to send interested board members to the conference, and he would like to send a large group for as many days as possible. He stated 300-400 people from North Carolina usually attend. Jerry said he was very impressed with last year's conference and workshop, and that a lot of great information was provided. Anne Stedman mentioned it was great to see what was going on across the state and to get new ideas. Early bird cost to attend the conference for all three days is \$140. After February 20th the cost is \$160. He stated the Stivers would be recognized that Friday morning at breakfast, and that Carolina Vines won an award for their project, but we could not publicize that until after the Conference.

Zara Saine stated we needed to renew our domain name(s) (.org) by February 23rd and (.com) by March 11th. She also mentioned she would like to change our current webpage to a Squarespace site. The cost to upgrade to Squarespace would be \$192 for the entire year. Dean Shepherd made a motion and Melinda Herzog seconded to renew the godaddy domain names and to purchase the annual plan for a new Squarespace site. All were in favor. Rob stated he would work with Zara on payments. Anne Stedman asked what type of pages would be included on the sites. Zara mentioned business listings, map of the historical district, etc. Dean asked if the BAC was doing anything about available property lists. Jerry stated that the City was working with Electricities to update their website with enhancements to include Newton listings other than the EDC/Dept. of Commerce industrial listings.

Josh discussed the five goals for the DNDA to focus on for 2015:

1. Implement a new Downtown Incentive Program
2. Revisit the decision to eliminate the MSD tax and seek other revenue forms
3. Create a new festival or event and coordinate the events calendar
4. Investigate a public art program to enhance downtown
5. Use Electricities to help with branding, logo, and professional marketing materials

Anne Stedman made a motion and Jessica Setzer seconded to accept these five goals to focus on. All were in favor. He encouraged all members to take the sheet home to figure out the job tasks to accomplish these goals. He asked everyone to bring their ideas back to the February meeting to help develop a work plan. Melinda encouraged the group to reach out to cities who have been successful with art and visit with them and find out what problems they faced. She stated it was always important to get to know the artist before they do any work. She also mentioned for the incentive program to have a business consultant to help businesses be more successful.

New Business:

Rob discussed that he has been looking into tax credits and the petition that is going around. He stated he would send out an email with the website for everyone to review the petition. Jerry said the BAC has sent a letter to the legislature and he would provide the DNDA with a copy of that letter for us to review.

Josh introduced that Lisa McCoy with the State Cinema is applying for a DNDA façade grant in the amount of \$1,500 for her \$6,800 project to restore the façade and marquee of the cinema and some of its original items. Lisa provided members with a copy of the grant application and a photo of the work she plans to do. Teresa Blalock made a motion and Dean Shepherd seconded that we accept the grant application. All were in favor. Josh encourage Lisa to let the DNDA know when she would hold a work day.

Josh asked the group to consider Telesia Cloninger as a new Co-Treasurer. Dean Shepherd made a motion and Anne Wepner seconded that Telesia become one of the DNDA Treasurer's to handle finances. All were in favor. Jessica Setzer has submitted a letter asking to be allowed to step down as Treasurer so she can concentrate on the work of the Promotions Committee.

Anne Wepner provided an update on the DNDA office space. She stated she was working on getting it all going, but she is waiting on electrical, etc. She will have more details soon.

Rob reminded the group that there would be a ribbon cutting on Friday, January 16th, at 3:00 pm at Liberty Tax Service in the Bi-Lo Shopping Center. All were encouraged to attend.

Anne Stedman made a motion, and Walt Cranford seconded that the meeting be adjourned. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:02PM.

Minutes submitted by Summer Jenkins

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, February 19, 2015 at 4:00PM.

Approved by DNDA Board 