

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
VIRTUAL
JULY 27, 2021**

Present

Board Members: Abigail Strickland, April Norton, Aundi Lesley, Christian Hamilton, Christopher Pike, Ellen Hill, Emily Hopkins, Jeffrey Fowler, Kendrick Ward, Lynn Brinson, Mathew Hill, Monica Mitchell, Qaijuan Willis, Ricky Clark, Jr, and Sadie Krawczyk

Partners and Staff: Cindy Eidson, Leigh Burns, Steve Foster, Trevor Quander, Chris Higdon, Elizabeth Elliott, Emily Davenport, Sharon Collins

Call to Order

President Mathew Hill called the meeting to order at 11:02 am and welcomed new board members Christopher Pike (South Fulton), Abigail Strickland (Newnan), Emily Hopkins (City of Macon), and Qaijuan Willis (Americus)

Review and Approval of Minutes

President Hill asked if everyone had time to review the minutes. Christian Hamilton made a motion to approve the minutes and April Norton made the second. The motion was approved.

Review and Approval of Financial Report

President Hill asked Emily Davenport to provide the Financial Report. Emily Davenport presented the May financial report and hoped to have the June report soon. No major changes from the March to May, but should start to see changes with revenue coming in as part of the upcoming conference. President Hill asked if there had been any changes between March and May with membership dues. Emily shared that in March there was \$10,350 and in May it was \$12,250 so almost a \$2,000 increase. In addition, as people are registering Emily is letting people know if their dues are current and encouraging renewal if they are past due. Steve Foster was unsure if their corporate dues were current and asked Emily to verify and send an invoice if needed. Monica Rentfrow made a motion to approve the financial report and April Norton made the second. The motion was approved.

Committee Reports

- Internal -

- *Meeting Schedule:* President Hill discussed the upcoming Meeting Schedule and asked the board to be thinking about the upcoming year. Prior to COVID, they met every other month in person at the GMA offices; however, due to COVID they have been meeting virtually monthly and asked Ellen Hill her preference since she is the upcoming President. Ellen shared that she likes meeting in person, but is open to hybrid meetings. Several shared how they have enjoyed meeting monthly, especially as they are planning for the upcoming conference and a recommendation was made to meet monthly and rotate the options of meeting in person and virtually. Steve Foster also suggested the committees meet monthly as well.
- *GMA Conference Booth* - President Hill explained that they normally have a booth at the conference. Plans are to continue this year and needs volunteers to man the booth Saturday 3:15 – 6:00 pm and Sunday from 8:00 – 9:15 am and 11:00 – 3:00 pm. Emily Davenport offered to email the board & partners the dates and times so that times could be scheduled.

- Education -

- *GDDP Exam Update* - Ellen Hill shared that a second meeting (Design Team) was held and it went really well. Mara Register plans to present the final report to the board at our next meeting, which will be held at the GDA conference. Ellen shared that it was a really great process and there was amazing conversation, plus when it's completed, we are going to have a

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- certification program that we can all be proud of and one that others states can use as a model. She also thanked everyone that participated in both sessions. Steve Foster shared that it was a great experience and encouraged everyone to read the report and to be actively engaged.
- *Mentoring Program* – Ellen Hill called on Lynn Brinson to provide a report on the program. Lynn Brinson shared that she and Emily Davenport worked together to update the information and Emily emailed all downtown professionals to see who was interested in participating as a Mentor or Mentee. Several people have responded with their interests, which is building that database. Pairing is currently underway and will kickoff at the conference with the Mentor & Mentee Luncheon. Ellen shared that she would make sure that certificates are prepared for those who completed the program in 2020 so that they can be presented at the GDA conference.
 - Membership / Marketing – April Norton shared a brief update on our website, which included updates to the current website as part of the conference. The complete revamp has been placed on hold until after the conference, but encouraged everyone to review the existing site and send comments to herself or Emily Davenport. April provided statistics on the increases and reaches that have occurred on social media over the past month and encouraged everyone to keep using the #gadowntowns.
 - Legislative – Ricky Clark encouraged cities to look at how the ARP funds are going to be used and discussed best practices.

Annual Georgia Downtown Conference Discussion

President Hill called on Emily Davenport to provide a report on the conference.

- *Registration, Sponsors & Exhibitors* – Emily shared that as of today there are 142 registered and 4 sponsors, which include Artificial Ice Events and EarthPlanter at the Bronze Level, Georgia Cities Foundation at the Gold Level, and Georgia Power at the Platinum Level. Emily has emailed sponsor & exhibitor information to the contact list of 100 potential sponsors and 30 have come back as undeliverable, so efforts have been made to obtain updated contact information and resend. In addition, there are 4 exhibitors, which include Georgia Safe Sidewalk, Universal Concepts, 365 Total Marketing, and Georgia Cities Foundation.
- *Keynote Speaker* – Emily Davenport welcomed Sharon Collins who is the new GMA Director of Conferences & Management Services and provided an update on her efforts in regards to a keynote speaker. Of the 4 potential candidates, two are unavailable, one is available virtually and one is available virtually and in person. Aundi Lesly shared that her preference would be to have someone in person and several other board members & partners agreed. Elizabeth Elliott provided a recommendation and will follow up with contact information. Steve Foster also suggested reaching out to the existing corporate sponsors. Trevor Quander asked if the conference was sold out and Emily Davenport shared that typically attendance is anywhere from 150-200, so there is still room with 142 attendees; however, the hotel is now full Monday – Wednesday and only has availability on Thursday and Friday.
- *Concurrent Sessions* – All sessions are filled (6 session on Tuesday and 9 on Wednesday). Emily Davenport has confirmed timeslots with each speaker and followed up with an email requesting their name, title, session title, description for program, etc. by this Friday.
- *Awards* – Emily Davenport recognized the committee that reviewed the 45 nominations. Each winner has been contacted and will receive up to 3 free tickets for the awards dinner. They are submitting high resolution pictures now that can be used in the powerpoint presentation and Emily is currently

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requesting prices for the awards that will be presented. In addition, at the awards ceremony the newest members that have passed their GDDP certification will be recognized with the Mentor & Mentees.

- *Silent Auction* – Currently a few have submitted their forms and additional emails will be sent encouraging more participation. As last
- *Mobile Workshops* – The original plans from last year are being used as the foundation; however, modifications have been made due to COVID. Transportation will not be provided so that people will have to drive themselves to the locations. Mobile Workshop #1 – Train Ride & Blue Ridge and Mobile Workshop (\$25 fee) #2 – Explore on Your Own / Treat Yourself (Free). There was discussion on whether or not to have a fee for the mobile workshop, registration process, transportation (carpool vs buses) and comfort level stickers for name badges (red, yellow or green).
- *Hotels* – With Brasstown Valley Resort being sold out Monday – Wednesday, it was recommended to have secondary hotel options added to the website.
- *DDA Training* – Elizabeth shared that she had been contacted by some who want to do the DDA training ONLY and could not find that on the GMA site or CVIORG and only saw the conference registration. Emily shared that when you log in, there is an option to select DDA training only, but would verify the sites.

Staff Update

- Emily Davenport provided an update on social media and the positive feedback from communities, membership, and a donation was received by the City of Cordele in honor of Adam Edge in \$350.

Partner Updates

- Georgia Power – No update
- Fox Theatre – Reminder that their grants are due August 15th (e.g. preservation, technical assistance, urgent emergency and planning grants). The Fox is now officially opened 2 days ago.
- DCA – Office of Downtown Development – Carmine is leaving to open his own business and encouraged us to wish him well. September training focusing on housing & downtown.
- Georgia Cities Foundation – They are looking at ways to get information out in regards to ARP. Shared information on New Market Tax Credits, upcoming GMA conference and Placemaking session, upcoming Development Sessions.

Other Business

- Board Retreat – need to pick a location and could be at next year's conference location. It typically occurs in November and several dates were discussed. Steve Foster suggested having Mara Register facilitate the meeting since she did such a great job in Macon. Kendrick Ward suggested having it in January when events slow down for cities. President Hill offered to send a Doodle poll to see what dates would work best for everyone and took look around January.
- GDDP Certification – a city reached out to see if GDA could provide the certificate so that they can receive their raise since all they have is the email that Janice sent. The board approved to email their certificate.

Adjourn

- With no further business, President Hill adjourned the meeting at 12:19 pm.