

# Georgia Downtown Association

## Board and Membership Meeting

January 21, 2020

### Minutes

Attending: Mathew Hill, Ellen Hill, Lynn Brinson, April Norton, Courtney Harcourt, Tara Bradshaw, Elizabeth Elliot, Ricky Clark, Mercy Montgomery, Monica Mitchell, Sadie Krawczyk, Aundi Lesley, Christian Hamilton, Michael Cahill, Cindy Eidson, Danny Bivins, Stephanie Russell, Imani Beckles and Janice Eidson.

#### Call to Order and Review of Minutes

President Hill called the meeting to order and asked if everyone had taken the opportunity to review the minutes from the January meeting. Ricky Clark noted that his name needed to be corrected. April Norton made a motion to accept the minutes as written, and Ellen Hill seconded the motion. There were no objections.

#### Review of Financial Statement

President Hill had Ms. Beckles the financial report. She noted that we are still collecting dues. Following the report, Sadie Krawczyk motioned to accept the report, and April Norton seconded the motion. There were no objections.

#### Committee Reports

**Internal:** President Hill noted that the committee discussed the Association's presence at other conferences. COVID made that hard in 2020, and conferences in 2021 are still questionable. Mr. Hill reported that he would tentatively attend GMA's Annual Convention in August. He will get with Imani and Janice to review the budget. Christian will be over the Nomination committee. President Hill noted that the group still would like to collect membership and other payments online vs. via fax. A conference super committee will figure out dates and deadlines to keep the conference committee on track. The board needs to start thinking about 2022. President Hill then called on Sadie K to talk about the Mainstreet scholarship. Sadie noted that the group would like the scholarship money to be awarded to more managers since the price has decreased to \$100 to attend. The budget allows for 15 potential scholarships and any remaining funds to be offered later for any National MainStreet training. The Edge Scholarship will be available for instate training, further increasing professional knowledge. President Hill let the group know that Board meetings will likely continue to be virtual. He posed the option to resume more frequent meetings should we go back to in-person meetings. President Hill suggested a hybrid possibility where the group would meet quarterly in-person meetings and continue using virtual meetings in-between. Sadie informed the group that the internal committee thought that the best approach would be to host three in-person meetings, one being in Atlanta at GMA, one during the Annual Conference, and the last one being the planning retreat. The other nine meetings will be held online. President Hill mentioned the vacancy in the Secretary/ Treasurer position and that April Norton was interested in filling it. Ellen Hill made a motion to appoint April Norton to Secretary/ Treasurer. Lynn Brinson seconded the motion. With that, April Norton was appointed to the executive committee.

**Education Committee:** Ellen Hill reported that Lynn Brinson offered to take over the Mentor/Mentee program now that Ellen has been appointed Vice President. Ms. Hill noted that she, Lynn, and Elizabeth would work together to be sure they reach out to all new hires. The Education Committee would like to continue to have Regional Meetings with a board member as a host. Should the group host its annual conference, there would be a big in-person meeting there. Ms. Hill also mentioned that the group discussed the GDDP (Georgia Downtown Development Program) exam and would like for the board to have a chance to discuss and give input to the Exam Committee. Ms. Hill suggested that the board collect anonymous feedback regarding the program giving more insight into any comments, concerns, or suggestions. Ms. Hill shared that the Education Committee thought that the exam could use an Educational component to help those interested in taking the exam. She called on Elizabeth Elliot, who explained that this would create more of a certification process, adding another layer of value to the program. Ms. Hill would also like to talk to the Exam board to see if there is a way to get more representation from the board. Mr. Clark then asked what percentage of membership had the certification through GDA. Ms. Hill said that we could use a survey monkey to ask the Association and collect that information. Ms. Eidson informed the group that we do have a list and that it is updated periodically. Mr. Clark noted that it is a very important analytic to capture and ask those who are not certified why to ensure any improvements to the exam and its process are not made in vain. Sadie suggested increasing memberships' knowledge of the exam and its benefits.

**Membership/Marketing:** Courtney Harcourt asked April if she would manage this committee as she rolls off the board due to her resignation. Ms. Harcourt noted that the group would continue to review sponsorship information and forms are updated and make periodic suggestions to Danny's team to update the marketing materials. Regarding membership, the group would like to keep a current list of previous GDA members by year so that there is a list to reference when sending information to potential new members. This group will continue the new manager outreach. The group suggested that President be the one to send out that welcome. For marketing, the group will continue to update all membership, conference materials and make sure they are submitted and added to the website. In the future, the group will create a file with potential swag items with pricing to make it easier to decide what to give away at future meetings. The group will use a shared drive as a place to collect stories for the newsletter and website. The group will also go through the website to make sure it only has current and perinate information. Ms. Harcourt informed the board that the marketing group will be investigating using web base software for registration, membership, and social media syncing for post schedule. The committee would like to increase the Association's social media presence and encourage #GADOWNTOWNS. Ricky Clark asked if the newsletters would continue to be sent out via email or will all information be delivered via social media. Ms. Harcourt explained that the group would keep its newsletter format and pull data from it to share on social media. Elizabeth Elliot shared that DCA will be sending out their Annual Managers survey that will ask about GDA's mentor/mentee program as well as the certification, and she will share the data with the board.

**Legislative:** Stephanie Russel reported Ricky Clark would continue to attend GMA's Legislative Policy Committee and attend the weekly call. This will allow him to deliver any critical updates to the membership. The two of them will continue to keep up with anything specific to the Association and deliver any concerns the membership has before crossover day. Ricky mentioned that the group might want to look at regulatory things that were changed due to COVID-19. Stephanie then said that the committee might take on best practices for local legislation, particularly when it comes to COVID-19 and relaxing local ordinances and codes. Stephanie also urged the group to

reach out if they ever need model ordinances or codes that she can share on the Community Development/ Economic Development listserv. President Hill encourages the board members to subscribe to that listserv.

### **Partner Updates**

Tara Bradshaw with DCA reported that they would be announcing their 2021 training schedule and updating a few training programs. Elizabeth added that they are updating Main Street 101 as well as their website. Please submit any pain points or positive feedback in the Managers Survey comment section.

Michael Cahill, with ECG, reported that Mill Graves had taken a new position with Retail Strategies. They will be looking to hire a Community Development Project Manager.

Danny Bivins advised that UGA is working on Master Plans and setting up summer fellowships. They are also working on designs with the student and officially doing community branding. Give them a call for any design assistance.

Cindy Eidson gave updates from GMA and the Georgia Cities Foundation. Ms. Eidson advised that the GMA new building and old buildings renovation are still underway. The mural will be installed soon. GCF is still taking loan applications and working with partners to bring more money into the cities.

Stephanie Russell gave an update on The Placemaking Collaborative. They have added six cities, one Atlanta neighborhood, and a 7-city county. Making a total of 14 communities with populations ranging from 2,000-75,000. They have added three new facilitators. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion were added to the curriculum last year. This year they will be partnering with GMA's Georgia Cities Solutions to host quarterly plenaries to tackle social and community issues with place-based economic and community development practices. The plenaries run in conjunction with their retreats. The first one will be in March. Stephanie also noted that she ran a Development Authority Consultation pilot last year with 14 Georgia cities ranging in sizes. From that pilot, Development Authority Consultation Services were created. They do anything from helping the city create the Development Authority to taking their existing one and working them through a Place-based Economic Training Strategy. Please contact Stephanie if you need more information. There will be at least one Development Session a month with state and national panelists.

President Hill asked if there was any further business; Ricky Clark asked if our training could count towards GMA credits. Ms. Russel informed him that he would want to reach out to Allen Dickerson. She also noted that GMA has a partnership with UGA CVIOG, and they handle the credits. Eidson also stated that elected officials get credit for Basic and Advanced GA Downtown Development Authority training. Mr. Clark also asked President Hill if he thought it would be good to send out a letter to the entire membership or elected official to give information about the Association. President Hill agreed and informed the group he has been thinking about this as well.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.