

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
ATLANTA, GA  
MARCH 21, 2023**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at the GMA Offices in Atlanta. President Fowler called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

**The following Board Members were in attendance:** President Jeffrey Fowler, Vice-President Emily Hopkins, Secretary/Treasurer Aundi Lesley, Past President April Norton, Mr. Mathew Hill, Ms. Velinda Hardy, Mr. Taylor Smith, Ms. Tonya Parker, Ms. Abigail Strickland, Ms. Abbey McLaren (Zoom), Ms. Kendrick Ward, and Mr. Jason Ford. Mr. Ricky Clark and Mr. Qaijuan Willis were absent.

**The following Staff Members were in attendance:** Ms. Renée Coakley, Ms. Cindy Eidson, and Ms. Sadie Krawczyk.

**The following Partners were in attendance:** Mr. John VanBrunt, Ms. Ellen Hill, Ms. Elizabeth Elliott, and Ms. Leigh Burns.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** The February 28 minutes were reviewed. Ms. Hopkins motioned to approved. Ms. McLaren seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**Review and Approval of the October and November Financial Reports:** Ms. Coakley presented the January financial report. She reviewed the January activity on the GDA Board account. These charges were from the board retreat held in Canton and the CDP Train the Trainer class in Lawrenceville. These charges reflect lodging, food, mileage, and supplies. Mr. Smith motioned to approve with a second motion from Mr. Hill. All were in favor. Motion carried.

## **Committee Reports**

### **I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations)**

- a. *Mission/Vision/Goals:* President Fowler shared the Mission and Vision worksheet activity that will be completed over lunch. The worksheet was prepared by Ms. Hopkins.
- b. *Vacant Board Position:* Ms. Coakley received the votes from the board via email. Suzanne Roberts received 7 votes, Denise McKay received 4 votes, and 3 write-ins. Suzanne Roberts will be invited to join the board.
- c. *D&O Insurance* – President Fowler reported on the quotes received. National Trust has a \$1000 deductible with a \$654 premium on a million-dollar policy. The two other quotes were \$1061 and \$1206 premiums. Ms. Strickland made a motion to go with the National Trust quote for \$654 with a second from Mr. Hill. All were in favor. Motion carried.

### **II. Education and Training**

- a. *CDP Update:* President Fowler reported that there will be a Zoom call on Thursday March 23<sup>rd</sup> for those working on content development to drop in and ask questions to the Education Committee. All board members are welcome to attend.

### **III. Marketing and Membership**

- a. *Marketing:* Ms. Strickland reported that the social platforms currently have 2508 Facebook Followers and 829 Instagram Followers. The name of the Facebook page has been successfully updated to reflect the correct year of GDA's inception. There are new cards printed for vendors, exhibitors, etc. to be used for invitations to Conference in Canton. There is a place to write in your name and contact information.
- b. *Membership:* There are 155 paid members and 56 unpaid invoices.

- IV. Legislative:** The committee drafted a letter to adopt as the legislative template explaining our organization, a conference invitation, impact of Georgia downtowns and investments. It was noted to update the numbers with the new 2022 statistics released by Georgia Main Street and emphasize that the stats only include Main Street programs, about 25% of downtowns across the state. Georgia Main Street should also be credited for the data. Mr. Smith will update the template and send to the board for approval. GDA Day at the Capitol has also been discussed for January 26-January 29, 2024. This would be a great opportunity to have face time with our legislators. Mr. Ford updated the board on HB189, which has crossed over to the Senate. He suggested reaching out to Senators to make the regulations equal to federal requirements, so as not to create more burden on state and local roads. Mr. Ford will send out updates after the General Assembly session closes on Friday, March 24, 2023.
- V. Policy & Procedures:** Mr. Hill reported that the committee met to begin work on bylaws revision, which will be done by the July meeting for the board to approve. The bylaws will be put out to membership in August for approval. The policy and procedures manual will not need a membership vote, so it will be brought to the board when it is ready for review.
- VI. Other Business:**
- a. *2024 GDA Board Retreat Facilitation:* Discussion was had about a facilitator for the next board retreat. Whoever is chosen, expectations will be outlined for the facilitator. The consensus was not to confirm dates with Mara Shaw since we do not know the location yet. Ms. Coakley asked for recommendations for facilitators. Angel Jackson, Danny Bivins, Georgia Power, and Georgia EMC were all recommended.

#### **Staff Updates:**

- Ms. Coakley reported that conference forms are complete and ready for review by the board, apart from registration forms to finalize mobile workshops and schedule of events. Education proposals will roll out beginning of April. Spring meetups are ramping up and still accepting registrations. Fox Theater registration has been closed with 30 registrants.
- Ms. Eidson reported on the success of the More Than Murals conference in Thomasville. Chris Higdon will be sending out information on SSBCI funding for up to \$1.25 million per project, up to \$60 million. Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan has dropped back down to \$200k per project.
- Ms. Krawczyk reported that the GEPC will meet in Columbus this week for the spring retreat. April 26-28 will be the retreat for the new Young Gamechangers group. Their six-month program will focus on Columbus.

#### **Partner Updates:**

- Ms. Burns reported that Fox Theatre Institute is excited to host the spring regional meetup in April and are currently prepping for a new grant cycle. They are hosting League of Historic American Theaters conference April 19 & 20. They finished their strategic plan and will roll out new programs with their new fiscal year.
- Ms. Hill reported that annual assessment write ups have been uploaded to dropbox folders. The team is gearing up for the national conference next week in Boston. The Neighborhood Champion Contest is open with a March 31 deadline with five grant recipients. Main Street America has the small business survey open now. The Backing Small Business Grant is open with American Express and Main Street America. They will be awarding 350 \$5000 grants. The State of the Program webinar is uploaded to YouTube with all 2022 statistics.

The board workshopped the mission and vision statements to the following:

GDA Mission – Connect communities and equip professionals through training and networking to strengthen and advocate for Georgia’s downtowns.

GDA Vision – A statewide network of thriving downtowns and equipped professionals that are recognized as Georgia’s most valuable economic engine.

Mr. Ford made a motion to adopt the new mission and vision statements. Ms. Parker seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Norton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:56am.