

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. via teleconference. President Norton called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

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

**The following Staff Members were in attendance:** Ms. Renée Coakley.

**The following Partners were in attendance:** Ms. Sharon Collins, Ms. Ellen Hill, Ms. Cindy Eidson, Mr. Chris Higdon, Ms. Sadie Krawczyk, and Ms. Kaitlin Messich.

No new items were added to the agenda.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Upon a motion made by Ms. Rentfrow and seconded by Ms. Parker, the August 23, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Review and Approval of Financial Report:** Ms. Coakley provided the Financial Report for July. She stated that there was a continual increase in membership dues over previous months and that sponsorship revenues were coming in. She also discussed charges relating to the conference phone application and travel to the GMA conference. Ms. Coakley stated that there was a minor error in the report showing a \$33.96 charge under Gifts & Awards that would be corrected for the August report. Upon a motion made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Rentfrow, the July 2022 Financial Report was unanimously approved.

## **Committee Reports**

### **I. Internal.**

- a. **Update.** President Norton thanked the GDA Board and Partners for hosting a successful 2022 Annual Conference.

### **II. Education and Conference.**

- a. **Regional Meet-Ups.** Vice-President Fowler stated that registration was going well. He reported 11 registrants in Canton, 9 registrants in Hartwell, 11 registrants in LaGrange, 22 registrants in Moultrie, and 12 registrants in Vidalia.
- b. **Mentoring Program.** Vice-President Fowler stated that everyone who had signed up for the program had been emailed and that assignments had been delegated. He added that he had asked all mentors to reach out to their mentees within two weeks. President Norton asked for any photographs of mentors and mentees together for site visits be forwarded to Ms. Lesley for promotional purposes.
- c. **CDP Update.** Vice-President Fowler stated that the review committee had met at conference and that the next item scheduled was the "Train the Trainer" seminar scheduled for January 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the UGA Gwinnett Campus. He also said that most trainers had been selected to develop the course curriculum.
- d. **2022 Conference.** Ms. Hopkins thanked all board members and partners for their participation. She stated that 49% of all attendees were first-time conference-goers. She also stated that 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the conference met expectations. 98% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the conference was worthwhile to attend. All (100% of) survey respondents would recommend the conference to others. She stated that the feedback received showed that conference-goers enjoyed the conference being both walkable and downtown. Ms. Coakley added that future initiatives included

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having plans for first-time attendees to better connect, perhaps by including them with the mentor/mentee programming. There were also suggestions to combine the welcome reception with the opening reception. Other suggestions included putting vendor applications online, placing the silent auction area in a high-traffic environment, and providing a more atmospheric awards ceremony. Ms. Coakley added that she had requested expense payouts for the Main Street 101 and HPC training courses. Ms. Collins followed from Ms. Coakley by stating that, despite the higher turnout, the conference was on budget with past conferences. Staff was looking for a more intuitive mobile application for the future, perhaps with gamification accessibility, which should help with garnering analytics. Staff was also looking into utilizing RFID QR Codes for future use.

**III. Marketing and Membership.**

- a. **Marketing.** Ms. Lesley stated that the “swag” items sold well at conference, with 81 shirts sold, 34 hats sold, and most tumblers sold. The giveaway items also did well. She reminded members to please upload their upcoming events to the official GDA Website.
- b. **Membership.** Ms. Lesley stated that 10 new members joined in August and 5 new members joined thus far in September. She stated that many of these members came from the Stockbridge, GA DDA.

**IV. Legislative.**

- a. **Update.** Mr. Smith stated that he had no new update. He said that once the General Assembly was back in session, he would keep the board up-to-date on downtown-related matters. Ms. Krawczyk stated that the State Senate had developed a special study committee on Development Authorities. While it primarily related to Industrial Development Authorities, DDAs would potentially be wrapped into proposed legislation. A brief discussion was held regarding tax abatements at the DDA level.

**Staff Updates**

- I. **No Updates were provided.**

**Partner Updates**

- I. **Department of Community Affairs.** Ms. Hill stated the grant writing training would begin soon in Fayetteville, GA. She added that the 2023 Training Calendar was mostly set and that the assessment process for Main Street communities had begun.
- II. **Georgia Cities Foundation.** Ms. Eidson stated that she enjoyed the conference. Ms. Krawczyk stated that the next round of Placemaking applications was online, and that the Gamechangers Program was also coming up, too. Mr. Higdon stated that GCF funding is going well and that the program needs projects.

**Other Business**

- I. **Board Retreat.** Ms. Coakley stated that she and Ms. Collins would be attending the Canton Fall Meet-Up to address some conference planning initiatives prior to the retreat. Dates to consider for the retreat were either January 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> as a two-day retreat. She stated that staff would confirm with facilitation by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government as to which two dates would work best.

There being no further business, upon a motion made by Ms. Parker and seconded by Ms. Strickland, the regular meeting of the Georgia Downtown Association Board of Directors was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.