

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
THOMASVILLE
JANUARY 18, 2024**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2024 in Thomasville. President Hopkins called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

The following Board Members were in attendance: President Emily Hopkins, Vice-President Aundi Lesley, Past President Jeffrey Fowler, April Norton, Ms. Velinda Hardy, Ms. Tonya Parker, Ms. Kira Harris-Braggs, Mr. Taylor Smith, Ms. Abbey McLaren, and Ms. Abigail Strickland, Mr. Qaijuan Willis, Ms. Suzanne Roberts, Mr. Jason Ford (virtual), and Ms. Kendrick Ward.

Absent: Ms. Cassidi Kendrick

The following Staff Members were in attendance: Ms. Renée Coakley, Ms. Emily Davenport, Ms. Sharon Collins, and Ms. Cindy Eidson

The following Partners were in attendance: Ms. Jessica Worthington and Mr. Scott Purvis

Review and Approval of Minutes: The November 21st minutes were reviewed. Ms. McLaren motioned to approve. Ms. Strickland seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of the Financial Reports: The September, October, and November financial reports were reviewed. Line items included conference travel for Ms. Coakley, postage for legislative letters, mailing swag mugs, credit card fees for conference and membership. There was one question for Finance under Professional Services Other. Ms. Coakley has asked for clarification on that charge. Mr. Smith motioned to approve the reports as presented. Ms. Norton seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations)

- a. *Ethics:* President Hopkins reviewed the ethics resolution with updated verbiage, which requires a new resolution.
- b. *Georgia Trust:* The director was recommended by Leigh Burns as a partner for the GDA Board. The Georgia Trust is heavily involved in advocacy, specifically for the residential historic tax credits, and would be an asset to the board. The Executive Committee recommends approving the position. Mr. Willis motioned to approve with a second from Ms. Norton. Mr. Smith recommended writing a letter of support. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- c. *Secretary Treasurer:* The Nominating Committee has recommended Mr. Jason Ford as the next Secretary Treasurer. President Hopkins noted the Executive Committee is currently looking at the Nominating Committee in the bylaws. Mr. Willis motioned to approve with a second from Ms. Parker. All were in favor. Mr. Ford abstained. Motion carried.

II. Education and Training

- a. *CDP:* The most recent classes were very positive. There are currently 20 registered for the upcoming classes in Brunswick on March 5&6. 11 registered for DDA law, 18 for Fundraising, 7 for Events, and 2 for Preservation. The Brunswick classes are currently being promoted on all platforms.

III. Marketing & Membership

- a. *Marketing*: Facebook followers are at 2855, up 15 from last month. Instagram followers are at 969, up 55 from last month. The new GDA LinkedIn has 177 followers.
- b. *Membership*: There are 43 paid members, with \$12,5000 in dues collected. There are 35 at the \$150 level, 6 at the \$500 level, and 1 at the \$750 level.

IV. Legislative:

- a. *Georgia State Capitol*: Mr. Smith & Mr. Ford presented at the Capitol to the Rural Development Council. The final report and draft bill included all their recommendations, including the residential tax credit and Rural Zon extension. Mr. Ford plans to continue advocating and visiting in person to see the bill through.
- b. *Cities United*: Ms. Coakley will send out the breakfast registration link for those that would like to attend. Board members will walk to the Capitol after breakfast for a meet and greet. The Ethics and Civility Recognition Lunch will be on January 28th.

V. Policy & Procedures: No report

VI. Staff Updates: Ms. Eidson shared that the Municipal Training Board met in December and discussed a specialty tract to align with our CDP program and was assigned to their Curriculum Committee, headed up by Aileen Harris. We could be asked to come discuss content and GMA could possibly pay a fee if they use our CDP content. The 2024 Renaissance and Starr Awards are open for application with a February 2nd deadline. GMA has issued a call for artists for GMA's new courtyard mural.

VII. Partner Updates:

- a. Ms. Worthington shared that her team is working on Annual Assessments. Third Thursday will be held today at 10:00 am. They are hosting a training in Athens on March 25-26 for board training, strategic planning, conflict resolution, etc. The National Conference will be held in Birmingham in May; registration goes live next week.
- b. Mr. Purvis shared that Georgia Power is restructuring and their regions could change. He is now the Regional Economic Development Manager. Ms. Worthington invited him to come to a Third Thursday when they finalize regions. He shared Georgia Power is expecting continued growth across the state.

VIII. Other Business: N/A

- a. President Hopkins thanked Past President Fowler for his service and dedication over the last year as President.

There being no further business, Mr. Fowler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Willis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 am.