

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL  
APRIL 26, 2022**

**Present**

Board Members – Virtual: Matthew Hill, Jeffrey Fowler, April Norton, Aundi Lesley, Emily Hopkins, Abigail Strickland, Ricky Clark, Tonya Parker, and Qaijuan Willis

Partners - Virtual: Ellen Hill, Danny Bivins, Cindy Eidson, Sharon Collins, Chris Higdon, Elizabeth Elliott, and Sadie Krawczyk.

Staff – Virtual: Renee Coakley, and Emily Davenport.

**Call to Order**

President April Norton called the meeting to order with a quorum present at 11:00 am.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the March meeting were reviewed and approved with a motion from Aundi Lesley. A second was provided by Matthew Hill. The minutes were approved unanimously by the Board of Directors.

**Review and Approval of Financial Report**

Emily Davenport shared the Financial Reports for March and went into detail for any new members present. There were no comments on the financial reports. The financials were approved with a motion from Abigail Strickland and seconded by Ricky Clark. The financials were approved unanimously by the Board of Directors.

**Committee Reports**

Internal – April Norton welcomed to Renee Coakley to the team, noting that Renee brings a wealth of knowledge in the downtown world and we are very excited to have her through GMA for the Georgia Downtown Association. President Norton then moved to share the election ballot results for the Secretary/Treasurer position and all open board member slots as follows. 11/12 board members voted in the election.

- Secretary/Treasurer: Christian Hamilton
- Region 3 Board Seat: Velinda Hardy (filling Christopher Pike)
- Region 11 Board Seat: Abbey McClaren (filling Ellen Hill)
- At-Large Board Seat: Taylor Smith (filling Sadie Krawczyk)

The Bylaw Review was then discussed, and Ricky Clark asked to step down from the Bylaw Review Committee. Matthew agreed to discuss with Christian, who was unable to attend, and would proceed with the review and provide an update to the board at the next meeting. Emily Davenport then provided information on the GMA/GDA Contract with explanation of general annual contract review for this signing period and will provide back to the board upon any revisions needed. The National & Edge Scholarships were then discussed. No applications were submitted for either scholarship by the deadline. It was discussed to combine the scholarships in the future under the name of Adam Edge to streamline the process. Many board members spoke in favor of this move and there were no naysayers. With no further discussion, we will move forward with combining the scholarships and present this back to the board at the next meeting.

Education & Conference – Jeffrey Fowler showcased the Regional Meetup success and gave examples from his community's meeting. Others shared their perspectives on the meetings all with high praise. Jeffrey also gave a brief update on the mentoring program as of the board meeting everyone was on track and mentors and mentees reported monthly communications and many site visits had been completed. April Norton provided an update that the GDDP Memorandum of Agreement has been sent

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back to CVIOG for review and final signature will be given in the coming week. April reviewed the process the board has taken on this Work Plan item thus far including: The total cost of service with CVIOG for this Development is estimated at \$52,000 with secured partnerships among Georgia Power and CVIOG to each cover one third (1/3) of the cost. A unanimous vote was made in the January 2022 board meeting for us to move forward with this program in signing the agreement and in February 2022, Georgia Power's sponsorship of 1/3 of the cost was shared. Updates on the need of involvement in each stage will be reviewed as provided, upon CVIOG's timeline. Emily Hopkins gave a conference update, reviewing that Sharon had recently visited the conference venue and had some concerns. It was suggested to move the conference to downtown Macon and utilize mostly downtown hotels. The board was very excited for this change and felt it would provide a very walkable restructuring of the event with more exploratory downtown options. Emily and Sharon will move in this direction and provide updates back to the board.

**Membership / Marketing** – Aundi Lesley gave a quick membership report and showcased features of the website. She gave a shoutout the Christian for showcasing events in Toccoa, GA. It was discussed how the events get approved on the website and Emily explained that it was handled on the backend of the site. The PowerPoint was discussed that April updated, and it was highly effective in the education committee meetings. It was asked for everyone to continue to utilize #gadowntowns. Emily announced with excitement that the Facebook page had attained over 2000 followers. It has grown significantly since the conference last year. All forms for the Conference should be ready to go by next week.

**Legislative** – A brief legislative updated was presented with the exciting news of the Historic Tax Credit bill passing. This will enable our state to continue to utilize the beneficial tax credits in our downtowns.

### **Staff Updates**

Emily Davenport gave a quick update about the calendar link being updated from her calendar to Renee's soon. Please expect for all the board meetings to be cancelled and then resent. Christian will be approving all expenditures soon to be transitioned from April along with the taking of the minutes to be transitioned from Jeffrey.

### **Partner Updates**

Danny Bivins showcased some cool facts about the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Vidalia Onion Festival held in Vidalia, GA. Tonya Parker also gave a few examples of the festival. Chris Higdon spoke to upcoming loan programs through the Georgia Cities Foundation noting that they are fully funded and welcoming new applications. Chris also highlighted their energy rebate program. Sadie Krawczyk shared updates on the GMA Placemaking Collaborative and the GameChangers program that is starting soon. Ellen Hill spoke about upcoming trainings through the Georgia Main Street program and shared a new Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant opportunity. Elizabeth Elliott shared that the 5 Levels of Leadership program will be held in Thomasville, GA in June and applications are available online.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business at this time.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned with a motion from Matthew Hill and seconded by Jeffrey Fowler.