

**Georgia Downtown Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Virtual
February 27, 2024**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, February 27th, 2024. The board met virtually. President Hopkins called the meeting to order at 11:01 am.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Emily Hopkins, Aundi Lesley, Suzanne Roberts, Jason Ford, Velinda Hardy, Kira Harris-Bragg, Abigail Strickland, Taylor Smith, Kendrick Ward, Jeffrey Fowler, Qaijuan Willis, April Norton, Abbey McLaren, Cassidi Kendrick

Tonya Parker was absent.

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

The following GDA Partners were in attendance: Ms. Ebony Simpson, Ms. Leigh Burns, and Mr. Jon McBryer

Review and Approval of Minutes: The January 2024 minutes were tabled and will be reviewed in March.

Review and Approval of the January Financial Reports: Mrs. Coakley presented the February 2024 financial report. Renée reported the third page expenses – travel and entertainment, postage, office supplies, legislative rack cards, name tags, two different version of rack cards, professional services – other which included DMO Insurance and a few other items that has not received clarification at this point. The travel and entertainment information for the conference did not match and she has asked for clarification for next board meeting. Motion to approve the December Financial Report – April Norton, Seconded - Kendrick Ward. All voted in favor to approve.

Committee Reports

I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations)

- a. Edge Scholarship Application:** Renée reviewed and enough funds are available to approve all. – Scholarship fund balance over \$10,911.01. Motion to approve scholarships – Velinda, seconded – Taylor with comments. Discussions were held around adding names of applicant to scholarship application. Renée commented that they are working on making those corrections. Abigail mentioned that we need to watch the two-year period that Danyelle’s application had not met the two-year threshold to reapply. Abbey McClaren mentioned that one applicant has only been in their position for five (5) months, and Blairsville for four (4) months. Emily mentioned there has been lots of discussion in the policy and procedures committee to clean up the process to make sure board members do not have an unfair advantage in application. Currently there is no requirement for length of time in position. April commented that we may want to review having multiple

applications from the same community. Renée suggested voting on each individually. The motion to approve all was rescinded.

- i. Jessica Payne:** Velinda motioned, Kendrick seconded, approved unanimous
 - ii. Alicia Hartley:** Taylor motioned, Allcia seconded, approved unanimous
 - iii. Kristen Bentley:** Jason motioned, Velinda seconded, approved unanimous
 - iv. Chelsea Hill:** Kendrick motioned, Cassidy seconded, approved unanimous
 - v. Jefferey Fowler:** Motion Jason to approve Jefferey’s portion separately from Danyelle’s – Discussion was held that our policy uses the word “and” that you can apply for an in-state scholarship and a national scholarship. Discussion was also held GDA has applied to be an exhibitor at Main Street Now and we receive a free registration to work the booth. Jason restated his motion to approve Jefferey’s scholarship and approve Danyelle separately noting the national conference classification. It was determined through discussion that Danielle would not be eligible to apply for this year’s GDA Conference. Qaijuan seconded the motion. Jefferey and Danyelle approved unanimous (Jefferey recused for vote)
 - vi. Andrew Simpson:** Taylor motioned, Abigail seconded, approved unanimous
- b. Board Positions:** Kira has accepted a new position and has resigned from the board. Emily thanked her for her service and wishes her well in her next position. We will need to elect a new board member. Nominating reviewing potential candidates to fill Kira’s term. Note we have updating bylaws to remove regional requirement – we just have to make sure we maintain a representative board. Abigail commented that we do think it is important to have someone from the Atlanta Metro region. Also, Suzanne Roberts moved positions to local chamber that although this is not a downtown development position – Executive committee reviewed and determined that per bylaws it is ok to remain on the board.
- c. Georgia Trust Partner Position:** We voted to approve the Georgia Trust Position at the last meeting. No updates, Leigh Burns (Fox Theatre Institute) mentioned appreciating bringing them in and was happy to make connections and she thanked the board for approving the position.

II. Education and Training

- a. CDP Update:** Final numbers for upcoming round of classes 22 out of 32 for DDA Law, Event Planning and Marketing 14 out of 32, Funding Resources 30, Preservation and Design 5 out of 32. Based on last sessions, we should be profitable and we’ll know by March meeting. Velinda asked if we will have a cutoff number where we do not offer the class. For now, we will continue to offer the class. It helps that the other classes have high numbers. Renée explained one of the classes was maxed out. A couple of people had a few conflicts and they were rolled over to June. Registration opens March 11. In total we have 71 people

registered across all classes. Emily commented these numbers are exciting for so early in the program.

III. Marketing and Membership

- a. **Social Media Update:** 2888 Facebook followers, Instagram 988 followers, LinkedIn 221 followers, 92 paid members \$28,300 in membership dues and Renée said she had three more on her desk, currently have 63 invoices pending. Membership is looking good.
- b. **Membership Invoices:** Past due invoices will be emailed next week.
- c. **25 Year Anniversary Logo:** Logo presented with and without color and all of our swag will have the logo this year. Suzanne motioned to approve the logo, Velinda seconded – Taylor thinks it's great, invite GDA members over the last 25 years. We are currently in talks with founding members to attend. Approved unanimous.
- d. **Marketing Videos:** At March 26th meeting in Atlanta, the suite has been booked to record marketing videos on the following topics: benefits of membership, CDP, and Conference. If anybody is available and willing to stay after. Jefferey, Abbey, Taylor, Velinda, Emily, Kendrick, and April agree to assist with the video.

IV. Legislative

- a. **Legislative Breakfast:** Participated in January – Taylor, Kendrick, Jason, Emily, Renée, Cindy – want to grow that into 2025. Would love to have a GDA booth again at Cities United next year.
- b. **HB 1197 Rural Zone:** Jason gave brief on what is in the bill – All recommendations included in the bill including extending sunset day from 2027 to 2032, residential tax credits, extend the designation – voted to leave ways and means committee – must make it off the house floor to crossover to the senate by the 29th.
- c. **HB 1266 Choice Act:** legislative package to provide state-based incentives to adopt local ordinances that support the development of more housing options – menu of reforms that can be included. See Gold Dome Update for details.
- d. **HB 1044 Public Works Bidding:** Increase bidding from \$100,000 to \$250,000 which will open doors to get work done without bidding.
- e. **HB 514 Housing Regulation Transparency Act:** State is looking at restricting moratoriums on residential developments. Restrictive as to how long they can exist and why you can extend. See Gold Dome Update for Details.
- f. **SB 435 Community Development Districts:** Could create ability for local development districts for infrastructure regulated by local government.
- g. **HB 1232 Sunday Wine Bars:** This would allow wine bars to be open on Sundays.
- h. **Gold Dome Update/Friday Focus Calls** –Join via Zoom Meeting ID: 882 1580 2630, Passcode 894938)
- i. **Lobbying 101** – Conference: Met with GMA team – would be happy to have a class at conference on what the process is at the capital, Kendrick thought this

may bring in elected officials. This is a popular class. Taylor will reach out to Noah at GMA.

- j. **Rural Development Council Presentation (Quarterly)** We would like to present about downtowns with our members and partners.

V. Policy & Procedures

- a. **Committee Member Onboarding** – We received names of people who were interested at last conference. The president would send an email to individuals to see if there is still interest, asking members who expressed interest in multiple committees to rank their preferences. Invite three interested members to each committee. Must adhere to same requirements of board members and attend 80% of meetings. Committee member terms was discussed. One-year terms – January to December on the following committees: marketing, conference, legislative, and education. Discussed an onboarding timeline. At conference the application for committee members will open. Committee chair will extend those selected. This will be sent out to the group.

VI. Other Business

- a. **Upcoming 2024 Board Meeting Dates:** March – GMA Office, April – Virtual, May – Vidalia, June – Virtual, July – Thomasville, August – Thomasville, September – Virtual, October – Macon, November – Virtual, December – No Meeting
- b. Emily and Abigail recognized our board members who are working through some difficult personal situations, and we are keeping them in our prayers.

Staff Updates: None

Partner Updates:

Ga Main Street – Ebony reported Strategic Plan Workshop coming up.

GMA –Cindy passed over to Sadie – We have Young Game Changers starting in April, GA (Taylor Smith will be participating) Georgia Economic Placemaking Collaborative has three new cities – Perry, Warner Robbins, and Union City. The Creative Placemaking Summit will be in Atlanta March 6-8. Single day registration available. SSBCI is still available as well as revolving loan funds through GCF.

ECG –Jon no updates but shoutout to legislative committee and thanks for working on HB 1197 and supported the lobbying 101.

Fox Theatre Institute –Leigh – On March 12 is expanding and rebranding. They will add two new programs - High School Performing Arts and another Grant Program – Will be sending out more information after the 12th. Fundraising concert coming up on April 28th.

Emily thanked Kira again for her work. Introduced Cassidy on the call for the first time and excited to have her on board.

There being no further business, Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Qaijuan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:05.