

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Brasstown Valley Resort – Annual Conference
August 19, 2021**

Present

Board Members: Abigail Strickland, April Norton, Christian Hamilton, Christopher Pike, Ellen Hill, Jeffrey Fowler, Lynn Brinson, Mathew Hill, Qaijuan Willis, and Sadie Krawczyk

Partners and Staff: Emily Davenport, Sharon Collins, Cindy Eidson, Leigh Burns, Steve Foster, Elizabeth Elliott, Jessica Reynolds, Tara Bradshaw, Danny Bivins, Stephanie Russell, Carmine Fischetti

Call to Order

President Mathew Hill called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. Mr. Hill welcomed new board members Christopher Pike (South Fulton), Abigail Strickland (Newnan), Emily Hopkins (Macon), and Qaijuan Willis (Americus).

Review and Approval of Minutes

President Hill asked if everyone had time to review the minutes. Mr. Hill noted one update made to the drafted minutes, noting the discussion allowing a returning Mentor to the Mentor/Mentee Program. Sadie Krawczyk made a motion to approve the minutes and Christian Hamilton made the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

- Internal – Mr. Hill presented an overwhelming thank you for attending the conference, reporting an attendance of 168 Georgia downtown leaders. Mr. Hill also reported a successful silent auction program.
- Membership / Marketing – April Norton reported that through the GDA Facebook page, the board has been sharing GDA Member Spotlights. Mrs. Norton asked by show of hands how many attendees in the room have had their communities spotlighted. Many raised their hands and gave support for this initiative. Mrs. Norton added that this is a great incentive for being a member of GDA and has resulted in an increase of followers of our program. She also shared that Mrs. Emily Davenport has been reaching out to all communities that have been spotlighted to let them know they were, including a tag on the post. That personal relationship building has been a great initiative. Mrs. Norton asked for communities to please send their community projects and success stories to Mrs. Davenport or Mrs. Norton to highlight in addition to the Member Spotlights. It was also noted to tag #gadowntowns with all community posts so that we can expand our reach and also gain new content. The final report shared for Marketing and Memberships was that at the conference, we did reach and surpass our goal of 1000 followers.
- Legislative – Mr. Hill gave a great big thank you to Sharon Collins and Emily Davenport for their leadership of this event. A clap of hands and support went out for their leadership and the success of the week-long conference.
- Education – Ellen Hill called on Lynn Brinson to provide a report on the Mentoring Program. Mrs. Brinson shared that the program had a great kick off at the conference and encouraged additional mentor & mentee participation.

Ms. Hill led a report on the Georgia Downtown Development Professional (GDDP) Program, congratulating all GDDP Award Winners. Ms. Hill introduced Mara Shaw to provide an update on the GDDP Facilitation. Ms. Shaw joined the meeting in presenting the final report completed by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) through the UGA. Ms. Shaw is the founding president of the GDA, established in 1998, serving a 360 role in Downtown Development. Ms. Shaw spoke to the importance of the program having a professional development foundation and that with strategic navigation, organically addressing the program, and building a program design that can be valued for

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years to come. July 8th was the Strategic Navigation session. Ms. Shaw shared the Combined Preferred Future Statement, including Affirmative Goal Statements: Elevating the Profession and the Professional, Communications & Marketing, Impact to GDA Organization, GDDP Program Structure, and Credibility. July 22nd was the Design Process, sharing with the group the seven strong points for review and the level of focus. The ultimate goal is to have Certified Downtown Professionals, developing inclusive programs that reflect the people that live in our communities. Next steps were identified as: Danny Bivins and Mara Shaw will continue to work with the board to give it a lateral approach to the reinvention of the program for a successful conclusion. Matthew Hill thanked Mara for her presentation.

- Organizational – Ellen Hill announced that today is Matthew Hill’s birthday. This announcement led to an organization-wide singing of the Happy Birthday song.

2022 Georgia Downtown Association Conference Announcement

President Hill provided a report on the conference.

Partner Updates

- Georgia Power – Steve Foster shared their partnership, assisting GDA with the GDDP Program. April Norton shared a thank you for Georgia Power’s Sponsorship to the program and continued partnership.
- DCA – Office of Downtown Development – Jessica Reynolds thanked GDA for the successful conference.
- Fox Theatre – Leigh Burns shared that 2029 will be the Fox Theatre’s 100-year-anniversary. Mrs. Burns shared info on the ‘Fox in a Box’ program. Mrs. Burns shared a thank you to those who purchased Hamilton tickets recently, stating that this support allows the theatre to return the efforts to our Georgia communities.
- UGA – Danny Bivins thanked the conference and recognized Carmine Fischetti for his years of service to our program, wishing him the best in his new endeavors.
- Georgia Cities Foundation and Georgia Municipal Association – Cindy Eidson shared the success of the loan program. Mrs. Eidson introduced a new member to the organization, Monica Thornton, for fundraising options. Also thanked Mara Shaw and Connie Tabor for their efforts to the GDDP Program. Emily Davenport was also thanked for her leadership of this conference.

Other Business

- Matthew Hill introduced next year’s President, Ellen Hill.

Adjourn

- With no further business, President Hill adjourned the meeting at 9:10 AM.