

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

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, June 27th, 2024. The board met virtually. Emily Hopkins called the meeting to order at 11:03.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Emily Hopkins, Aundi Lesley, Suzanne Roberts, Velinda Hardy, Abigail Strickland, Abbey McLaren, Taylor Smith, Jeffrey Fowler, Qaijuan Willis, April Norton, Cassidi Kendrick, Tonya Parker, Lequrica Gaskins

The following GMA/GDA Staff Members were in attendance: Ms. Renée Coakley, Cindy Eidson

The following GDA Partners were in attendance: Ebony Simpson, Scott Purvis, Jon McBrayer, Clark Stancil Thomas

Review and Approval of Minutes: The May 2024 minutes were reviewed. Abigail motioned and Cassidy seconded to approve. All in favor.

Review and Approval of the “to date” 2024 Financial Reports: Note that GMA has not provided GDA with financial reports. Renée Coakley provided the update. Highlights include \$44,350 in membership. Expenses for the board, we are under travel and entertainment. Renée’s travel has been absorbed by GMA. We are over budget on commercial printing costs because of “swag” we have purchased for conference. One we sell at conference; we will be back in line. Our scholarships are well under budget with one more to payout for the National Main Street Conference.

No expenses have rolled in for conference yet. Registration is looking good for conference and sponsorships are in a good place.

Under CDP, we are at \$51,075 including the Atlanta classes. UGA facilitation has two invoices in so far. All financial reports are available upon request. Jeffrey motioned to accept the financial report and April seconded. All in favor.

Action Items: - Approve 2024 Award Slate – Process update: We had GDA partners review applications with Emily as the only board member on the review team. Each reviewer had the applications within their category and submitted a rubric for score tallying.

Design:

- Best Placemaking Project
Monroe – The Monroe Town Green
Thomasville – African American and the Arts
- Best Façade Rehabilitation
Tifton DDA – 122 East Fifth Street Rehabilitation
- Best Public Improvement Project
Canton – Harmon Park Revitalization

Economic Development:

- Best Adaptive Reuse
Canton – The Jones Building
- Outstanding Community Transformation/Downtown of the Year
Revitalizing Bainbridge: A Journey of Resilience and Renewal

Organization:

- Premier Partner
Thomasville – Thomasville Center for the Arts
- Main Street Hero
Gainesville – Dr. Jeffrey Payne
- Best Creative Fundraising Effort
Toccoa DDA – Tugalo Street Greenspace Engraved Brick Campaign

Promotion:

- Premier Special Event
Hahira Father & Daughter Dance
City of Lawrenceville – CULTURA: Fiesta Latina
- Creative New Event
City of Lawrenceville – Lawrenceville Boogie
- Outstanding Promotional Campaign
Lavonia – Lavonia’s Kindness Initiative

Emily asked for a motion to approve the slate of winners. Jefferey made a motion to approve. Lequrica seconded. All in favor. Prospective winners who are on the board did not need to recuse themselves.

Approximately 47 total applications came in.

Committee Reports

- I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations) – Emily Hopkins**
 - a. CDP Contract** – Emily thanked the board for approving the CDP contract.
 - b. Internal Operations** – Restructuring the annual board meeting to make the meeting more presentation focused.
 - c. Expectations of Board Member during Annual Conference** – The Downtown Conference is our signature event. Everybody is required to attend the conference Sunday through Thursday. We have a draft of a signup for the volunteer positions that will be sent out soon. Everyone will need to take at least one shift during conference. Board members are required to attend the social and networking events.
- II. Education and Training – Jeffrey Fowler**
 - a. Committee Update** – There will be CDP sessions at the conference.
 - b. CDP Update:** Jeffrey shared a different budget review. We are only ~\$41 under income projections. There has been 40% growth since the last courses. Looking for next year’s sponsors.
- III. Marketing and Membership – Abigail Strickland**
 - a. Social Media Update:** 3005 Facebook followers, 994 Instagram followers, LinkedIn – 255 Followers

- b. **Membership Invoices:** 152 paid members
- c. **Swag for Conference:** Preselling some of the swag in order to facilitate a reorder like last year.

IV. Legislative – Taylor Smith

- a. **Committee Update:** Taylor spoke at GMAs annual convention. We are going to have conversations with Noah at GMA to try and bring back a downtown breakfast as part of Cities United. We are having some conversations about how to reimplement the Rural Zone going forward.

V. Policy & Procedures – Abbey McLaren

- a. **Update of Phone Script** – When contacting new board members, we will have the information about and expectations of being a board member.
- b. **Proposed Changes to Bylaws** – Getting ready for August update at conference.

VI. Conference Committee – April Norton

- a. **Conference Registration** – The Marriott reserved the entire hotel for the conference.
- b. **Founding Members** – We will be able to have founding members present and they will be recognized with a small gift
- c. **CDP** – Second classroom has been added to the schedule.
- d. **Keynote Speaker** – Kennedy Smith – Former Director of National Main Street – She will be sharing an encouraging message on our roles as downtown professionals.
- e. **GMA Update** – As of meeting, 117 people are registered. 82 are full conference. There are 18 sponsors totaling \$28500. We currently have one RFP for next year's conference. We will be recognizing the founding members.

Question about Thomasville Board Meeting in July – What will the board be doing during the July board meeting? We will have a walk through of the sites. Make sure you book your room quickly.

VII. Other Business: Silent Auction info to come out soon. Renée thanked everyone for supporting the GMA convention.

VIII. Staff Updates: None

IX. Partner Updates:

Ebony Simpson – Encouraged everyone to push the Disaster Preparedness Training Workshop. Ebony thanked everyone for being able to participate in the award selection.

Clark Stancil – No updates just thanked the board for putting the conference together.

Scott Purvis – Scott was able to participate in the GMA convention and felt GDA was well represented.

Jon McBayer – No update

Cindy Eidson – Conversation with training board and is hoping to include CDP in a specialty track. We hope to have all of the CDP sessions tied to a track.

Adjourn: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.