

**Georgia Downtown
Association Board of
Directors Meeting
February 23, 2021
MINUTES**

Attending: Mathew Hill, Ellen Hill, April Norton, Sadie Krawczyk, Kendrick Ward, Ricky Clark, Lynn Brinson, Mercy Montgomery, Christian Hamilton, Monica Mitchell, Trevor Quander, Chris Hall, Jessica Reynolds, Elizabeth Elliott, Tara Bradshaw, Leigh Burns, Chris Higdon, Cindy Eidson Danny Bivens, Kim Carter, Connie Tabor, Amanda Glover, Imani Beckles and Janice Eidson.

Call to Order

President Hill called the meeting to order at 11:30 and thanked everyone for attending.

Review and Approval of the January Minutes

President Hill asked members to review the minutes for needed changes. April Norton made a motion to accept the minutes as written and Christian Hamilton seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Review and Approval of May Financial Statement

President Hill asked Imani Beckles to provide a report on the financial statement. Ms. Beckles noted that it looks like we are approx. 3,000 in the red. Ms. Beckles explained that this report was done just as dues billing had gone out and that the next financial reports will reflect dues collected. Ricky Clark asked if we could do a budget amendment so that the budget does not reflect an overage. Monica Mitchell made a motion to accept the financial statement with the amendment and Ricky Clark seconded. The motion carried.

GDDP Discussion

The Judges joined the meeting and gave the board background knowledge about the program and the process Kim Carter explained that judges all have received the level 3 designation of the test and this helps to maintain the integrity of the test.

Committee Reports

Education: The board discussed whether GDDP should continue. It was suggested that it may be time to begin reviewing the selection of judges, the application, the judging criteria, the marketing of the program. The Education committee decided that they would meet with the judges at a later date.

Monica Mitchell made a motion that the GDDP operating, Education committee and DCA would join forces to become the GDDP program review committee. April Norton seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Legislative: Mr. Clark informed the board that the GDA membership received a correspondence encouraging them to reach out to their legislators in regards to SB118 which increases the weight limits for timber trucks. Mr. Clark highlighted the direct impact these trucks as well as all large trucks have on downtown districts trucks specifically in downtown. He noted that many downtowns including his own have experienced damaged due to the weight of these trucks especially when it is a walkable area. He made mention that while many cities reroute these trucks this legislation would prohibit a city from doing so. Mr. Clark also put HB302 on the boards radar. This bill is specific to regulatory fees and would limit the way general governments take in fees for new developments. he mentioned HB273 this bill would allow governments to take liquor store referendums to ballot no longer requiring a petition to be done allowing it to be decided by popular vote. HB98 is also pertinent downtown associations which speaks to the parameters of virtual public hearings. He also suggested that the board seek to get recognition at the capitol for the organization and all the programs we provide. Janice Eidson informed the group that we have previously done a day at the Capitol. Ricky Clark clarified that he thinks the board should work on getting a proclamation. Trevor Quander agreed that it would be great to do this at the Capitol. Ricky believes that the recognition would help with marketing of the organization. Trevor Quander informed the group that there was a time that the board tallied how much money downtowns generated for the state and presented it as check that highlighted just how important downtowns are. President Hill suggested that we begin working on a proclamation to submit including data that DCA will provide. Jessica Reynolds added that the board may want to follow both HB148, relating to development authorities' directors, officers, compensation, adoption of bylaws, delegation of powers and duties, conflicts of interest, and audits, so as to provide for taxpaying business owners to be appointed to development authorities; to provide for removal of directors from development authorities; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. & HB161 an Act to amend Chapter 42 of Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to downtown development authorities, so as to remove a provision providing perpetual existence to such authorities; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

Membership and Marketing: April Norton highlighted that the committee would like to continue new manager outreach with the help of DCA. The committee believes that sending a message from the President during this outreach would be the best approach. Ms. Norton reported that we have approx. 60 past members with outstanding dues. She would like for the board to split up this list and reach out personally to those within their regions. In regard to marketing the group will be reviewing all sponsors and looking to obtain new ones. The group is still complying swag items. April also noted that she would be working with UGA to get all materials updated. She also pushed for the board to use the hashtag #GADOWNTOWNS. It will allow us to pull information to be used in shared in our newsletter and social media platforms. Ms. Norton called on DCA's support. April Norton informed the board GMA is prepared to refresh the GDA website and that the board should consider picking an alternate logo that is an official stamp of our brand to fit into design pieces for marketing. Ms. Beckles added that there is a file she will review to see if there was an alternate logo that group can use and that the website fee will be approx. \$750. Danny Bivens asked that once everything was figured out to set a meeting with Katlin to get everything updated. President Hill asked that he receives a list with new members so he can reach out new members. Elizabeth Elliot offered to send a new list to both April and President Hill as the information is updated on DCAs side.

Internal: President Hill informed the board that the conference is set to be in person at Brasstown Valley and that the conference feasibility committee would plan to meet in the coming week.

Partner Updates

Jessica Reynolds gave a report from DCA, with input from Elizabeth Elliott. Ms. Reynolds stated that DCA was pleased to announce that Kim Carter would be the new Division Director over Community Development Finance Division effective March 1. DCA has trainings coming up including a joint training with Missouri Mainstreet in March. The National Mainstreet conference is to be held virtually in April. Ms. Reynolds asked if GDA would be offering scholarships this year. Ms. Beckles reminded the group that the plan is to send more managers since the price change allows for it. Ms. Reynolds informed the group that the early bird special ends mid-March. They are also going through GEM resignations and Newnan will be redesignated with the City of Cartersville and Athens being added to the list of GEM cities.

Cindy Eidson gave a report from GCF, with input from Chris Higdon. Ms. Eidson noted that GCF has a The Placemaking Public Plenary Series This quarterly webinar series focuses on tackling social and community issues with place-based economic and community development practices which include "Digital Inclusion in the Time of Coronavirus", "Opportunity for Equality" "Beyond 2020: Rewriting Our Story to Improve Childhood Literacy" Chris Higdon reported that the revolving loan fund is doing great, and they will be working on obtaining more funds for this program. The energy rebate program is a good resource for downtown building owners. Please contact Chris for more information.

Danny Bivens gave a report on UGA they have a lot of Masterplans mostly in Northwest GA this year. They are also doing quarter plans currently a new Quarter redevelopment in Gainesville. There is a new fellowship lined up in Colquitt. They will be working with the City of Monroe for their community brand. UGA will be working on the Jekyll Island masterplan update.

Leigh Burns gave a report for the fox. She updated that they have been working on outreach for GA presenters. They are getting ready for the Save our Stages grant. The Fox will be applying for 10million dollars to offset the hit that they faced during COVID19. They hope to reopen in July of 2021. The Fox will also be holding some stakeholder sessions.

President Hill asked if there was further business, and hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.