

**Downtown Development Authority of Augusta
Board Meeting Minutes
February 2022**

The Downtown Development Authority held its monthly board meeting February 10, 2022 at 10 am via ZOOM due to the surge in COVID Omicron cases.

DDA board members and staff in attendance were Jack Evans, Stephen King, Pastor Anthony Booker, Commissioner John Clarke, as well as Executive Director Margaret Woodard, Project Coordinator Katherine Bonner and Legal Counsel Jeb Murray.

Guests and presenters in attendance were Tony McNeil with the City of Augusta, Jaci Wilkerson with Paceline Ride, Daniel West Cohen with SOOFA and Joe Hotchkiss with the Augusta Chronicle.

Chairman Jack Evans called the meeting to order at 9:01 am and welcomed everyone.

Stephen King asked if there were any questions on the consent agenda items, the January 2022 Meeting Minutes and the Financial Report as of January 31, 2022 that were distributed prior to the meeting for board review. Hearing none, Mr. King made the motion to approve with a second by Pastor Booker. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Evans directed attendees to the new business section of the agenda to take action with a quorum in place. Mr. Evans stated the Imperial Theater update will take place at the DDA March 2022 meeting.

City of Augusta Economic and Innovation Manager Tony McNeil introduced himself and expressed excitement regarding the DDA's ongoing projects and opportunities for collaboration.

Ms. Woodard presented the façade grant application for 211 10th Street where the Hive and Bees Knees are housed for discussion and approval. Eric Kinlaw spent \$13,000 on external paint updates and is requesting \$5000 in façade grant monies. Kinlaw decided to make the improvements due to the new façade improvements at the old Blue Sky building located across the street and wanted his building to look fresh and new. Mr. King and Chairman Evans expressed appreciation and excitement about the façade improvements. Mr. King made the motion to approve with a second by Pastor Booker. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Woodard introduced Daniel West Cohen of SOOFA to speak about solar powered information kiosks for potential installation in downtown Augusta. The DDA partnered with the Mayor's office to have solar powered benches installed on the Riverwalk behind the Cyber Center a few years ago. These benches were provided by SOOFA.

Mr. Cohen explained that the kiosks require no connection to an electrical grid, operate through cellular data, are 100 % sustainable and can easily be installed and moved. They work through applets that showcase local information, and the information can be easily changed by the DDA for real-time updates. Cellular impressions track pedestrian data to help businesses optimize their operations. The

kiosks can act as wayfinding signage as well. The signs cost \$25,000 each and \$6200 each per year for maintenance. Maintenance includes insurance, repairs, cleaning, cellular updates, data tracking and system updates.

Ms. Woodard asked the board to approve 3 kiosks, two to replace the existing metal kiosks on Broad Street and one location to be determined. The DDA has SPLOST funds that will pay for the kiosks and she will put together a plan for maintenance costs and possible partners to collaborate with. Mr. King made the motion to approve Ms. Woodard to move forward with a funding plan with a second by Commissioner Clarke. The motion passed unanimously.

Jaci Wilkerson of Paceline Ride spoke about an EDA grant opportunity for sports tourism funding. It would create non-construction infrastructure projects through downtown and into the Choice Neighborhoods grant application areas. The request would be for \$7-8 million over a five-year period. The DDA would be tasked with creating bike-related infrastructure, bike trails, and other sports tourism opportunities. The grant is due March 15, 2022 and the costs of a grant writer is \$6000. Paceline would contribute \$3000 and the DDA would contribute \$3000. The DDA would be the primary grant application and the funds would flow through the DDA. Mr. King made the motion to partner with Paceline and approve the funding for grant writing with a second by Pastor Booker. The motion passed unanimously.

In the Director's Report, Ms. Woodard updated the board on the following:

Economic Development:

Marketing Company referred by Mrs. Lilley Pounds has signed a lease at 1028 Broad Street. Escape Room has rebranded and expanded. New Name is Broad Axe Throwing. Ribbon Cutting is 2/18. Flowers on Broad is expanding to a new location at 1030 Greene Street. Groundbreaking for the Standard on Telfair was held February 3 at 4 pm. 2021 statistics are underway with completion by February 28.

Design:

Riverwalk arches had 2 bids submitted to procurement with the low bid at \$314,000. We have written procurement a letter to proceed with low bidder.

Promotion:

Instagram:
565 accounts reached, 75 accounts engaged and 40 new followers.
Facebook:
3854 post reach, 413 post engagements, 50 new likes and 57 new followers.

Organization:

Auben Realty Presentation 1/13.
LA Presentation on 1/13.
Customer Journey presentation to Chamber on 1/25.
ED partner meeting with Tonny McNeil on 2/2.
Meeting with CVB and sound stage prospect on 2/10.

Mr. Clarke made the motion to accept the director's report as information with a second by Mr. King. The motion passed unanimously.

In closing, Chairman Evans wants to discuss potential meeting time changes to accommodate board member schedules.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephen King
Secretary-Treasurer