**Downtown Development Authority of Augusta**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**January 19, 2023**

The Downtown Development Authority held its monthly meeting on January 19, 2023,, at 10 am at the DDA offices, located at 922 Ellis Street, Suite 100.

DDA members and staff in attendance were Jack Evans, James Heffner, Phuong Nguyen, Pastor Anthony Booker, Commissioner Jordan Johnson, Executive Director Margaret Woodard, Project Coordinator Katherine Bonner, and Legal Counsel Jeb Murray.

Chairman Jack Evans called the meeting to order at 10:03 am and welcomed everyone back after the new year. He then introduced new board member Commissioner Jordan Johnson. Commissioner Johnson spoke about his shared vision to continue evolving downtown into an attraction and to lead growth and support.

Ms. Woodard introduced the consent agenda, which included the November 2022 minutes and November and December financial reports. She thanked the City of Augusta and Commission for the operational budget increase and noted that the DDA budget would be presented at the next board meeting. There were no questions or comments. Mr. Heffner made a motion to approve the consent agenda, with a second by Pastor Booker, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Woodard directed the board to the Director’s Report, noting the following:

**Economic Restructuring:**

Several ongoing and new investments are under contract or sold in the Central Business District. DDA staff are working diligently to connect developers with resources and creative financing solutions, including Historic Tax Credits, Georgia Cities Loans, TADs, bonds, and facade grants. Ms. Woodard noted that there is a housing crisis in Georgia and that all cities are in need of more completed housing units.

Paul King has finished renovations on the Force Jackson Home at 922 Ellis Street, adding 12 new housing units and a $1.6M private investment in downtown Augusta. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for February.

Mark Donahue and Peach Contractors have completed their updates to the Prontaut Henry House at 407 Telfair Street. The DDA is hosting a ribbon cutting on Thursday, February 9, at 11 am.

Many of the current projects in-process are midsize, so the DDA is working in conjunction with the City of Augusta and the local state delegation to ensure that local legislative priorities include expanding state historic tax credit availability for mid-tier projects.

The Microenterprise Center had its $2.35M funding approved by the US Congress and signed into law by President Biden in December. Stakeholder meetings, building purchase, preliminary architectural plans, and a business plan are underway. Staff are meeting with Senator Warnock’s office in February to confirm details and processes for appropriations allocation.

**Design:**

Soofa kiosks are installed, and Augusta is one of two pilot cities for the Facebook applet. Security Federal is sponsoring one of the sign wraps, and Azalea Outdoors has additional sponsorships and ad sales in process.

Riverwalk Arches are in fabrication, and we are waiting on a final ship date for light poles. Our most recent update has the light poles arriving in March 2023.

5th Street Wi-Fi is underway, and cable installation is completed at 699 Broad Street.

We have submitted the DDA and ACE quarterly report to the City and received our second installment payment from our MoU with the City for downtown maintenance in the amount of $275,000.

**Promotion:**

The DDA actively supported and sponsored holiday events, collaborations, and promotions in downtown Augusta. These were a great success.

**Organization:**

A dinner with the Cyber Center and Dayton Enterprise Center was held 12/7/22.

The DDA Co-Chaired Leadership Augusta Economic Development Day on 1/12/23.

As Ms. Woodard wrapped up her remarks, Chairman Evans noted that an organizational goal for 2023 will be to dampen things that get in the way of progress.

Under New Business, Chairman Evans brought forth a request for the Executive Director to approve operating expenses up to $2,500. Pastor Booker motioned, Commissioner Johnson seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

In the Chairman’s Remarks, Mr. Evans expressed pride in the major 2022 accomplishments of the staff and organization, to include increasing the number of buildings filled downtown, creating jobs, establishing the MoU with the City and ACE for enhanced collaboration and problem solving, using the Soofa kiosks to modernize and increase means of engagement with the downtown community, and prioritizing relationships throughout the year. With the spirit of collaboration over competition in mind, Mr. Evans also spoke on his excitement for the Downtown Augusta Microenterprise Center, which will help shape what should be downtown, turn great ideas into revenue and businesses, establish a modern community presence, and build both an internal and external design for people who are already located in Augusta.

Mr. Evans asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Heffner made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Nguyen, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:49 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen King

Secretary-Treasurer