

Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia
Meeting Minutes
August 14, 2014

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia was held on August 14, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. at the DDA office located at 936 Broad Street, Suite 107. Those members in attendance were Sanford Loyd, Natalie McLeod, Cameron Nixon, Scylance Scott, Jr., Dennis Welch, Commissioner Marion Williams, Executive Director Margaret Woodard, and Legal Counsel Byrd Warlick. Guests and observers included DDA Office Manager Roxanne Walls, Brenda Durant of the Greater Augusta Arts Council, Kevin Laird of Comcast, Mary Beth Robinson of Cranston Engineering Group, P.C., Camille Price of Augusta Tomorrow, local citizen Linda Bourassa, Bryan Haltermann of Haltermann Partners, Jenna Martin of *The Augusta Chronicle*, Augusta-Richmond County Interim Deputy Administrator Steve Cassell, and Barry White of the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Mr. Nixon called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

In the absence of Mr. Hadden, Mr. Nixon presented for approval the previous meeting minutes from June 19, 2014. With no additions or corrections, Mr. Loyd made a motion to approve. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

In the Treasurer's Report, Mr. Loyd presented the financials for June 2014 and July 2014 which also include year-to-date.

Mr. Loyd called attention to the balance sheet as of June 30, 2014 and July 31, 2014. We now earn a higher interest rate on our checking account. Funds have been transferred from savings to checking leaving a \$5,000 balance in savings in order to continue to draw interest on that account. Mr. Loyd would like board approval to move remaining funds from savings leaving only the minimum to keep the account from closing. This is normal business and does not require a motion.

Mr. Nixon asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none Mr. Nixon asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as information. Mr. Scott made the motion. Ms. McLeod seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The June and July financial reports which include year-to-date are in board books.

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

Active Economic Development Projects

Georgia Cities Foundation (GCF) Loans

- Loans for 905 Broad Street, 1033 Broad Street, and 334 Greene Street are in underwriting with approval expected in the next 30 to 60 days.

GCF Loans in the pipeline:

- An application for 1022 Broad Street for board approval is on the agenda under New Business.
- An application is underway for 1162 Broad Street to be submitted for board approval in September.

Other

- Metro Market located at 851 Broad Street will open in late August with a target date of August 25.
- The Boot Factory Building on Ellis Street has been purchased by Mr. Mark Donahue for apartments.
- Wet Willy's to open at 980 Broad Street which was formerly Schweitzer Art Glass.
- We are working with two local prospects for downtown office space.

SPLOST VI Project/Riverwalk

- A committee meeting was held on July 17.
- There is \$600,000 available for Phase I and in two years we will receive \$400,000 for Phase II.
- Chief Deputy Patrick Clayton of the Richmond County Sheriff's Office attended the committee meeting and provided safety stats. Since January 2014 and with the existence of the Safety Management and Response Team (SMART), minor street robberies are down 33 percent, auto theft is down 25 percent, and auto larceny is down 52 percent.
- The Sheriff's Department has \$600,000 in the next round of SPLOST allocated for security cameras.
- The Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau will do signage.
- Parks and Recreation has \$400,000 in the next round of SPLOST.
- The trees have been trimmed and about \$25,000 in grant work was recently completed.
- The committee approved the Request for Qualifications and it has been forwarded to the Procurement Department and will go through the procurement process.
- The \$1 million will be used to bring the Riverwalk back to what it was and will include brick work, replace tattered flags, replace some of the plaques, site improvement to the weather station and Japanese Garden. If the entire \$1 million is not used then two suggestions were to extend the Riverwalk from the Marriott to the 13th Street Bridge or to do playground upgrades at the east end.
- The committee wants to have a pre-bid meeting for contractors. Once that meeting has taken place and it has been advertised, it takes approximately 30 days to go out for bid. The committee would then meet to review and then proceed. Possible work to begin at the beginning of 2015.

Mr. Nixon thanked Ms. Martin for the article she wrote which included a request from the public for input. Ms. Woodard did receive about 12 emails from the general public along with a letter. The public was in agreeance as well.

Downtown Programs

Retail Strategy

- We have raised to-date sponsorships in the amount of \$27,500.
- A seminar for New Markets Tax Credit Program will be held in late September with Raymond James.
- The Food Desert designation is underway.
- Mr. Chuck Branch will be in town on August 15 with Food Desert designation paperwork.
- Basecamp webinar training will be completed today.
- Sponsor logos for website underway.
- A current prospect list is available for board members.

Grant Projects

James Brown Boulevard Phase I

- A successful bid opening was held on July 8.
- A supplemental agreement to extend contract with GDOT for board approval is on the agenda under New Business.
- Board approval to approve Larry Pittman & Associates as contractor in the amount of \$625,132.25 is on the agenda under New Business.
- After board approval of contractor, we will then go to Engineering Services Committee on August 25 for committee approval and then to commission September 2 for commission approval.
- After all approvals, a pre-construction meeting will be held on October 6 in Augusta with GDOT.
- Construction start date around October 20.

James Brown Boulevard Phase II

- The paperwork is underway.
- Contracts can be executed once a PI number is received.

GRU Day – September 18

- Shuttles will run from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. to get more students downtown.
- We will close 10th Street from Ellis Street to Broad Street for “Funk You” to perform from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Participating stores will continue to offer their specials and discounts.
- A press release is underway.

Parking

- A parking consultant was in town to update our current data.
- Information is available when commission is ready to discuss.

Other

- Augusta was highlighted in the August 2014 issue of *Georgia Trend*.
- The 2015 budget request has been completed for submission to the city.

- A tourism grant on behalf of the Morris Museum has been submitted.
- The DDA September Board meeting will be held at Metro Market located at 851 Broad Street on September 11 at 8:30 a.m.
- An application is being submitted for 600 Broad Street for a small retail incubator.

Ms. Woodard distributed pictures of the politically motivated graffiti that is on five buildings. She met with SMART and an inventory was taken. The property owners have been contacted. Two have been covered up and two will be covered up today. The last one is at 1162 Broad Street and that building is being demolished.

- A meeting was held with private property owners who are very concerned about the cleanliness downtown and Ms. Woodard will report at the next board meeting the steps going forward.

Ms. Woodard asked the board if there were any questions.

Mr. Loyd would like us to have our 2015 budget approved prior to 2015. Once we receive the letter from the city stating our funding amount for 2015, Ms. Woodard will prepare our 2015 budget for review and board approval by the November board meeting. This is contingent on the commission approving the city budget prior to the November DDA Board meeting.

A complete copy of the Director's Report is in board books.

The board accepted the Director's Report as information.

Under New Business, Ms. Woodard presented the first item GDOT has requested which is to approve the supplemental agreement to extend the James Brown Boulevard Streetscape Phase 1 contract between the city and GDOT through December 31, 2015.

We are the agent on behalf of the city and the supplemental agreement must be executed before the end of September. In a letter from GDOT they have asked our board to approve but once approved the city will actually sign it. The city's legal counsel will also review the supplemental agreement. The board reviewed the supplemental agreement which is in board books.

Mr. Loyd made the motion to approve the supplemental agreement to extend James Brown Boulevard Streetscape Phase 1 contract. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Ms. Woodard presented the second item GDOT has requested which is to approve Larry Pittman & Associates, Inc. as contractor for James Brown Boulevard Streetscape Phase I in the amount of \$652,132.25.

Larry Pittman & Associates, Inc. was the low bidder. This went out to bid three times and did go through procurement. The contractor meets all requirements.

Ms. McLeod made the motion approve Larry Pittman & Associates, Inc. as contractor for James Brown Boulevard Streetscape Phase I in the amount of \$652,132.25. Mr. Loyd seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, a presentation and SPLOST request by Ms. Durant of the Greater Augusta Arts Council for \$7,000 for public art on Broad Street signal boxes.

Each artist would receive \$1,000 which includes supplies and the artist has to maintain their signal box for a period of three years. The \$7,000 request would cover seven signal boxes on Broad Street and she would work with Ms. Woodard to determine locations on Broad Street. The next phase would be funding from the city to do signal boxes throughout Richmond County at major intersections. Artists will be selected by a jury. Ms. Durant would like to release the project after Arts in the Heart and have them up by the end of the year. She has also consulted with Mr. Cassell to make sure the signal boxes that are chosen are not going to come down. The outside of the signal boxes lift off and can be put back on.

Pilot SPLOST Program funds in the amount of \$7,000 would be reallocated to Broad Street signal boxes.

Private sponsorships will also be explored.

Board members are concerned as to where people would stick the miscellaneous flyers and handbills that are currently being placed on signal boxes.

Commissioner Williams would like to incorporate James Brown on Broad Street. For boxes closest to James Brown Boulevard or the James Brown Statue Ms. Durant can indicate on the call for artists and encourage use of James Brown.

Mr. Loyd made the motion to approve the SPLOST request in the amount of \$7,000 for public art on Broad Street signal boxes with the condition of using James Brown where appropriate. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Ms. Woodard in lieu of Mr. Loyd presented a Georgia Cities Loan application for 1022 Broad Street in the amount of \$185,000 for board approval for submission to GCF.

A site visit was made by Mr. Chris Higdon of GCF and the loan has been pre-approved by GCF. The borrower, Harrison LLC, has equity in the amount of \$50,000 in the project with a bank loan in the amount of \$229,000. This project will have two retail spaces and four apartments. Historic Tax Credits will also be used.

Ms. Woodard asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Scott made the motion to approve the Georgia Cities Loan application for 1022 Broad Street for submission to GCF. Mr. Loyd seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked for any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

A Georgia Cities Loan application for 1162 Broad Street will be presented for board approval at September board meeting. We will then be placed on hold by GCF until some of the funds are repaid.

With no more New Business to discuss Mr. Nixon asked if there was any further business to discuss. Mr. Nixon recognized Mr. White who gave a CVB update to the board.

The Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference will be held September 3 – September 5 at the Augusta Convention Center. It will bring about 450 to 500 people into town. Registrations are available for the day or the full conference.

SMART three day hospitality and awareness training has been completed.

The city authorized funding to complete the wayfinding system which will include signage in downtown as well as parking identification signage in downtown. The public parking signage will have a similar look to the Welcome to Downtown signage. Mr. White thanked Mr. Cassell and the commission for their full support.

Ms. Woodard asked Mr. White if they could work on kiosk solution for downtown. She will work on pricing.

With no additional items to discuss Mr. Nixon adjourned the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cameron Nixon, Chairman