Downtown Boone Development Association
October Special Meeting – October 28, 2024
8:30 am – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Vanessa White, Suzanne Livesay, Sarah Long, Renee Boughman, Austin Northern and Megan Kevorkian.

Ex-Officio's Present: Edie Tugman and Lindsay Miller.

MSD Members/Guests present: Bob Sneed (Dancing Moon) Cole Kernstine (Taco-Boone-Do), Ben Burns (Taco-Boone-Do), Julia Moretz (Betty's Biscuits), Deanna Evans (Watauga County Library), Rosie Bentley (Shoppes at Farmers), Joe Sheryak (Mountain Running), Bob Flanigan (King Street Flats), Hope Thingelstad (Explore Boone), and Allexia Brewer (Ambrosia Arcade).

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Mark Freed, and Brad Farthing.

Call to Order
At 8:37 Kendra called the meeting to order.

Request for Approval of October Agenda
Lane asked if she could add to items to the agenda, the first is a discussion of headshot sessions under the organizational sections and the second a discussion of a new shirt/sweatshirt/hat order at the end of the promotional section. Suzanne voted to approve the agenda with the additions. The motion was seconded by Renee and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of September Meeting Minutes
Sarah made a motion to approve the September Minutes. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of October 11 Meeting Minutes
Renee made a motion to approve the October 11 special meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Vanessa and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Kendra made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Renee and had a unanimous vote.

Organizational

Request for Approval of Print Distribution Contract
Lane opened that this contract was for the distribution of our brochures to a variety of regional welcome centers. After a short discussion, Renee made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Election of Officers
Kendra opened by inquiring if anyone on the Board is interested in serving on the Board. There was a short discussion about current officers and then Renee motioned to keep the officers as they currently are. The motion was seconded by Sarah and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval for Funding of Part-Time Help

Lane began by thanking Mark for his creative thinking and informed the Board that Mark had suggested the DBDA consider allocating funding for part-time help for Lane, as he has an abundance of part-time staff and there are times when the Downtown Coordinator could use additional support. A brief discussion followed regarding events and potential opportunities for assistance. Kendra then motioned to approve $1,000 to cover part-time staff wages. Suzanne seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously

Discussion of Downtown Headshot Photography

Lane opened by mentioning that she had followed up with Real Boone Photography and Megan Shepard about organizing a larger group headshot session for downtown businesses, as discussed at the last meeting. She reported that Megan quoted approximately $90 per person, while Real Boone was less specific, indicating he would not charge his usual rate of $150. Suzanne suggested obtaining a third quote. After discussing logistics and necessity, the Board requested that Lane send out a survey to gauge interest from downtown businesses, obtain a third quote, and present the findings at the November meeting.

Promotional

Discussion of Boone BOO! Programming

Lane began by noting that, thanks to large candy donations from Tweetsie and Mars, there was plenty of candy to distribute. Mark briefly reviewed the plan for candy delivery, and Kendra mentioned she expected Boone BOO! to be very busy since few other events were happening that evening. Lane then went over the evening's event schedule. Mark suggested reminding customers about the road closure. The Board reviewed the details of the costume contest and other planned activities, and Lane shared that she had purchased trophies for the costume contest winners. She also informed the Board about a fun finale, a dance featuring Elphaba rappelling down the side of Mast General Store. Mark added that Cultural Resources still had Halloween inflatables available for anyone interested in borrowing one. Lane noted that FEMA would be participating in Boone BOO!, and Edie shared that FEMA would soon be moving its residence trailers to Wilkes County. Megan inquired about possibly extending event hours to transition into an adult-themed gathering. After a brief discussion about the popularity of certain neighborhoods on Halloween, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Discussion of November First Friday Programming

Lane began by mentioning that she was collaborating with Amber Bateman from the Watauga Arts Council on programming for November First Friday. She noted that the last time she checked with Amber, only a few participants had signed up, but she planned to follow up on Wednesday to finalize details and post updates on social media. Renee informed the Board that Kim Short and Ilya Wayne were preparing to open The Happy Persimmon inside Boone's Fly Shop and encouraged the Board to visit them

Discussion of Festive First Friday Programming

Lane mentioned that she had included a summary of last year's Festive First Friday events in the agenda packet. She shared her disappointment that Aaron, who usually hosted the carriage rides, was unavailable this year but assured the Board she would look into other similar options. Lane asked Board members to reach out if they knew of anyone who offered hay rides. Kendra and Suzanne discussed ways to incorporate a Grinch character in Caleb Sigmon's absence, and Lane noted that at the last promotions meeting, Fulton had agreed to purchase a Grinch costume. The Board briefly brainstormed additional programming ideas, with Suzanne suggesting she could provide bubbles to imitate falling snow. Lane added that there was some consideration of closing Howard Street for the snowball fight. The Board also

noted the need for a tractor for carriage rides and an actor to play the Grinch. Lane concluded by letting the Board know that after Boone BOO! and November First Friday, she would shift focus to Festive First Friday and set up the next promotions committee meeting.

Discussion of Hosting "Advanced Destination Creation" Workshop

Lane briefly reviewed the history of the Destination Development trainings and was excited to inform the Board that Boone had been selected to host an Advanced training at the Appalachian Theatre on Monday, February 17. She noted that attendance at the advanced training requires completion of the introductory courses. Lane added that NC Main Street was expected to offer virtual sessions for those who have not completed the introductory training, and she hoped to host some of those sessions locally. She concluded by assuring the Board that she would keep them and downtown businesses informed once the final details were confirmed.

Discussion of Live It Up T-Shirt/Sweatshirt Order

Lane began by informing the Board that she was nearly out of Live It Up t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats. She suggested that the funding for a reorder could come from either the advertising or special projects budget lines. After a brief discussion about the item costs, Renee motioned to allocate up to $1,541 for the order. Sarah seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Design

Update on Howard Street Bid Process

Lane informed the Board that the Town held the bid opening for the Howard Street Revitalization Project on October 10, receiving a proposal from M&M Construction for $12.2 million and another from VPC Construction for $15.7 million. Sarah asked where M&M Construction was based, and Lane confirmed they are located in Banner Elk. Sarah expressed her excitement that both proposals came from local companies. Lane added that the next steps would involve the engineer's recommendation being approved by the Town Council, the Local Government Commission, and the USDA. Lane finished up by letting the Board know that she would keep them up to date as the project moved along.

Economic Vitality

Discussion of Hurricane Helene Recovery

Lane opened by noting that she was so thankful for our Chamber of Commerce and their fantastic efforts of keeping our community in the know about all things Hurricane Helene related, she stated that she thought some of what she would be presenting the Chamber has already covered. Lane then presented the following updates: While Congress is unlikely to pass additional Federal aid before the election, North Carolina has enacted state aid packages. The initial $273 million package was passed on October 10, allocating funds for public safety, education, and elections. An additional $600 million package was approved on October 25, with allocations for small business loans, local government water repairs, and mental health resources for schools.

The WNC Strong: Helene Business Recovery Fund, a loan program through Mountain Biz Works, Golden Leaf Foundation, and NC Rural Center, is one of the few disaster recovery loan options currently available. Businesses can seek one-on-one counseling from the Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC) or Small Business Center Network (SBCN) by calling 800-228-8443 or visiting sbtdc.org/hurricane-helene or ncsbc.net. Assistance includes financial impact assessment, recovery strategy development, financial statement reconstruction, creditor options, and loan application preparation.

Additional grant opportunities include the High Country Business Resiliency Disaster Grant through the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce and upcoming Mountain Biz Works recovery grants. Lane invited

Board members to join an informational session on these grants, scheduled for Thursday at 11 a.m. Kendra then asked the Board if anyone had any resources they would like to share. Cole who was in the audience stated that it was his understanding that the Chamber of Commerce had paused accepting applications, in an effort to get caught up with the applications that they had received. The Board beifly discussed the non-profits that are being supported by some of the larger fundraising efforts, as well as some opportunities for grant funding for local non-profits.

Sarah added that the DBDA would be buying Boone lunch at F.A.R.M Café today and encouraged people to come out and support that effort. Lane stated that she had a variety of swag items prepared to give away for the event and was planning to man the informational table throughout the event.

There was a short discussion about Hurricane Helene relief efforts.

Call for Adjournment

With no other discussion, Sarah made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.