Downtown Boone Development Association
April Board Meeting – April 29, 2025
8:30 am – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Suzanne Livesay, Kendra Sink, Fulton Lovin, Megan Kevorkian and Mike Forrester

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

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Brad Farthing and Geoff Hayes

MSD Member's Present: Alyssa Hasty (Lost Province), Hope Thingelstad (Explore Boone) and Henry Colella (AppState Student)

Call to Order
At 8:36, Kendra called the meeting to order.

Request for Approval of April Agenda
With no changes suggested, Kendra made a motion to approve the April agenda. The motion was seconded by Fulton and approved unanimously.

Request for Approval of March Minutes
Megan made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Fulton and passed unanimously.

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

Lane apologized and noted that she meant to inform the Board earlier in the meeting that Vanessa White had resigned from the Board and the DBDA now has 4 open positions. The Board briefly discussed prospects before moving to the next item.

Request for Approval Town of Boone Contract
Lane opened by noting that outside of the changing of the contract dates no changes had been made as no concerns had been expressed that she was aware of. There was a brief review of Town Council voting capabilities and the term of the contract. Edie encouraged Lane to make sure the agreement was reviewed by the Town Attorney. Fulton then made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Mike and had a unanimous vote.

Update on Main Street Director's Meeting

Lane opened the discussion by informing the Board that she had recently met with NC Main Street staff to review the requirements for hosting the upcoming NC Main Street Directors' Meeting. She noted that there would be a dedicated webpage on the NC Main Street website and that she would need to finalize a few items soon in order to get the page live.

Lane shared that she had been coordinating with Christina from University Events and was scheduled to meet with her later in the week to continue working through the event logistics. She then reviewed the preliminary schedule: a New Directors' meeting on Monday, the conference beginning Tuesday at 1:00 PM, a full day of sessions on Wednesday, and concluding at 12:30 PM on Thursday.

Lane mentioned that she was still working to confirm accommodations and had experienced some difficulty reaching local hotels. Suzanne offered to share her contacts at the Greystone and Fairfield hotels to assist. Lane also shared that she had already started gathering items for the welcome bags for conference attendees.

The Board briefly discussed location and space requirements. Lane noted that the event timing was ideal since there would be no classes in session at the university during that week. The Board discussed the benefits of hosting the meeting, and Lane concluded by stating that she would return with cost estimates for final approval at the May meeting.

Discussion of Training Opportunities in May

Lane began by noting that two training sessions were scheduled for this week: on Wednesday at 12:00 PM, there will be a *Canva-holics* training, followed by a replay of the *AI for Marketing* session that was originally presented earlier in the month.

She continued by announcing upcoming sessions: on Wednesday, May 21 at 12:00 PM, she will host *Website vs. Social Media*, a training focused on the importance of both platforms and how they can complement one another. Then, on Wednesday, May 28, she will lead *SEO for Beginners*. Both sessions will be held at the Jones House.

Lane emphasized that these trainings are open to anyone in the community and encouraged Board members to help spread the word.

Discussion of Freelance Website Support

Lane began by reviewing that Julia Moretz currently works as Executive Assistant to Tina Houston and manages the websites and social media for her three restaurants. Lane noted that she has met with Julia numerous times as part of the Promotions Committee and emphasized that Julia is a wealth of knowledge in both WordPress and social media—two areas where Lane could use additional support.

Lane explained that she and Julia had discussed a more intentional approach moving forward, with Julia helping Lane become more comfortable updating the website in WordPress and eventually developing standard operating procedures for both website maintenance and social media best practices.

The Board discussed the importance of timely website updates. Lane also gave a brief update on the events calendar she is currently developing. After a short review of the proposed contract, Kendra made a motion to approve the agreement with Julia Moretz. The motion was seconded by Megan and passed unanimously.

Approval of DBDA Logo License Agreements

Lane began by noting that she had initially believed the licensing agreements were for five years, but upon review, she realized they were actually for three years. She explained that these agreements are

with various downtown businesses for the use of the DBDA logo and are necessary to maintain and protect the organization's trademark registration.

After a brief discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the license agreements with Lost Province, High Country Souvenirs, and Alumni Hall. The motion was seconded by Mike and passed unanimously.

Suzanne then indicated that she needed to leave the meeting, which would result in the loss of quorum. Lane noted that there were two time-sensitive items remaining on the agenda and asked if the Board would consider amending the agenda to address them before Suzanne's departure. The Board agreed and proceeded to move up the discussion of the Request to Order New Promotional Items and the Request to Order Additional "Live It Up" Banners.

Request to Order New Promotion Items

Lane began by noting that with several upcoming events—including Boonerang and the NC Main Street Directors' Meeting—there is a need to order additional promotional items, such as tumblers, bandanas, and stickers.

Following a brief discussion about rising costs, Mike made a motion to approve up to $4,000 in funding for promotional items. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and passed unanimously.

Request to Order Additional Live It Up Banners

Lane informed the Board that the "Live It Up" banners cost approximately $150 each and suggested that ordering ten would be sufficient. However, Suzanne and Kendra recommended ordering more to ensure adequate supply. Kendra also mentioned that there might be additional banners needed for Howard Street. Lane agreed and noted that we would need to do a larger order for new Howard Street Infrastructure but that would need to be done later in the year.

After a short discussion about amount, Kendra made a motion to approve the purchase of 15 Live It Up banners. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and passed unanimously.

Review and Request for Approval of Updated Façade Grant Application

Lane began by referencing the discussion at the recent budget retreat, where there was strong interest in providing additional grant opportunities for businesses directly impacted by the Howard Street construction. She noted that these proposed changes were also discussed during the April Economic Vitality Committee meeting, which she and Fulton attended.

Lane explained that she had made a few minor updates to the grant guidelines, including increasing the available funding to $10,000 for construction affected businesses and adding outdoor seating as an eligible expense.

There was a brief discussion about downtown murals, Eric mentioned an idea he had for a mural and Lane mention a conversation she had about a potential Northern Peaks State Trail themed mural on the side of Wildwood Community Market.

Since there was no quorum at the time, Lane stated that she would add this item to the May agenda for final approval.

Request to Review 2025-2026 Budget

Lane began by noting that during the most recent Town Council meeting, Town Manager Amy Davis mentioned that, due to updated tax projections, the DBDA may need to revisit its budget. Lane stated that she followed up with Finance Director Guy Miller, and after reviewing the updated figures, confirmed that the projected levy would be approximately $311,000.

She added that the Board's currently recommended budget totals $190,000, which leaves some flexibility. However, she also noted that half of her salary is paid from the unallocated portion of the budget. Lane explained that any unused DBDA funds are placed into an undesignated fund balance.

The Board then reviewed several upcoming projects and brainstormed possible improvements to the alleyway next to *Off the Rack.* Following continued discussion, Eric mentioned that he would likely add a discussion item to the next Town Council agenda to gauge whether Council would be interested in supporting improvements to the alleyway as a way to assist businesses impacted by the Howard Street construction. Lane finished up by stating that she would bring back additional information to the May Board meeting.

Discussion of Restaurant Week Planning and Marketing

Lane began by noting that at the most recent Town Council meeting, Council had approved the use of the Restaurant Week mailer, which also serves as a free parking pass for the duration of the event. She shared that the mailing list was purchased through Data Axle, a company recommended by Jon Schallert, and that a discount was applied by using his referral code.

Lane explained that 2,500 mailers would be sent out. Recipients were selected by first narrowing the list by zip code, then by household income, and finally through a random selection process. She added that she had also ordered an additional 500 mailers, with the address block removed, to be distributed by hand throughout the community. Lane emphasized the importance of being intentional in handing out these mailers to ensure they reach individuals who are likely to use them.

She went on to say that she is working with Julia and Alyssa to build a dedicated page on the DBDA website to support Restaurant Week. Edie suggested possibly including a message in utility billing mailers, and a brief discussion followed on that idea.

A brief discussion occurred reviewing the current status of a couple of properties that were in transition downtown.

Update on Rotating Public Art Call for Submissions

Lane briefly noted that no submissions had been received and that she would need to extend the deadline and re-advertise the opportunity. She added that she planned to seek input from the Watauga County Arts Council, the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, and NC Main Street staff to explore ways to encourage greater participation.

Request to Designate Funding for Temporary Wayfinding Signage for Howard Street

Lane began by noting that since there was a loss of quorum she would need to keep this on the agenda for the May meeting. She noted that the cost of the signage currently needed would not need Board approval.

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project

Lane began by noting that the project was now on day seven of construction and expressed her appreciation for the patience shown by downtown business owners thus far. She shared that she had already learned her first lesson—highlighting the importance of sending out work zone updates a week in advance to give businesses time to prepare, especially when construction may have a greater impact on certain locations.

Mike expressed his appreciation for receiving advance notice, emphasizing how helpful it is for planning purposes. Lane also noted that both resident project representatives have been very professional, friendly, and easy to work with.

The Board briefly discussed the unexpected entertainment value of the construction activity and considered ways to creatively leverage that attention to support downtown businesses.

Lane concluded by encouraging the Board to show extra support for Fizz Ed and Howard Station, as they have borne the brunt of the construction impacts during the first week and a half. She also shared her ongoing frustration with the WhatsApp platform, noting that her account continues to be flagged and blocked, which has made communication more challenging.

The Board briefly discussed the hurricane clean-up work of the Army Corps, the path of the Northern Peaks trail and circled back to talk about restaurant week promotions plan.

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