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

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Michelle Novacek, Wayne Miller, Sarah Long, Megan Kevorkian, Mike Forrester and Suzanne Livesay

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

MSD Members/Guests present: Lynne Mason (Lost Province), Alyssa Haysty (Lost Province), and Bob Sneed (Dancing Moon).

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Geoff Hayes, Reta Jackson and Mark Freed.

**Call to Order**
Kendra called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

**General Business**

**Request for Approval of May Agenda**
Kendra asked the Board if anyone had any changes to the agenda. Lane stated that she would like to highlight the Destination Development Training that is hosted by NC Main Street and noted the different opportunities to participate. With no changes to the agenda, Michelle made a motion to approve the May agenda. The motion was seconded by Suzanne and had a unanimous vote.

**Request for Approval of April Meeting Minutes**
Michelle made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Austin and had a unanimous vote.

**Request for Approval of Financial Statements**
Lane noted that, per Michelle's request, she has added a report that shows the balances in the various accounting lines. After a couple of clarifications, Renee made a motion to approve the financial statements. Kendra seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

**Organizational**
**Discussion of Town Council DBDA Board Member Appointments**
Lane opened by noting that at the May 8 Town Council meeting the DBDA and Town of Boone contract was on consent agenda. Lane noted that per Edie's desire to become a voting member of the DBDA there had been some very minor changes made to the contract. Edie added that she thought that it is important to have a Town Council member be a member of the Board because tax dollars are being spent. Wayne inquired if this has ever been done before. Edie explained that there had been some confusion around the role of Town Council liaisons and they were working to clear up their roles on various boards. Fulton added that his recollection was that there had not been Council involvement in the past, and that they had been added to serve as counselors to the Board. Eric explained that in the past, at the advice of the Town Attorney, Town Council members had been stripped of their voting rights on Board because they could potentially be voting on some items twice which could be problematic. Eric noted that to Edie's point the DBDA is unique and does have some anonymity in its

decision making that some could argue could warrant Town Council oversight. Lane noted that she has inquired with the Town Attorney to clarify if the Town Council member appointed would need to be an automatic member of the DBDA, because according to the DBDA By-laws, only automatic members have voting rights. There was short discussion about the approval process for the DBDA budget. Lane noted that she did not have this on for a vote, but since the change was made after the Board approved the contract she wanted to let the Board know of the change. With no other discussion, the Board moved onto the next discussion item.

**Discussion of 501(c)(3) Status**

Lane opened by noting that IRS agent Jeff Flynn had responded on April 22 to the Form 1023 that was submitted in November of 2023. She continued that he request additional information about our articles of incorporation, economic development activity and budget. Lane briefly reviewed her responses to Mr. Flynn and noted that the response was due May 20 and she submitted it on May 17. Lane noted that she had a copy of the letter and response for review. Suzanne asked to review. With no other discussion, the Board moved onto the next discussion item.

**Discussion of Upcoming Main Street Statistical Information**

Lane opened and noted that she included a copy of the tracking form that she will be using to keep up with the statistical information so that the Board knew what information is being sought. She noted that this information is required by NC Main Street for accreditation and is due July 31. Lane added that she is planning to dial in on our retail rental rate per square foot. She continued that Main Street usually pushed back that the reported $16 per square foot is too high, however Lane noted that she believes it is too low. There was a brief discussion acknowledging the need for clarification and interest in reviewing the results.

**Promotional**

**Review of Challenging Behaviors in the Workplace Training**

Lane opened by noting that on May 7 DBDA hosted the "Challenging Behaviors in the Workplace Training" led by Katie Warner with Watauga County Compassionate Community Initiative. Lane stated that there were two downtown employees that attended along with herself, Downtown Police Officer Geoff Hayes and Emergency Coordinator Matt Krause. She continued that she thought it was a really helpful training that offered a new way to handle challenging behaviors based around an education on trauma and resiliency. Lane note that she hoped to schedule another training in the fall. Kendra stated that she felt these were really good trainings and wished more people would show up. The Board briefly discussed incorporating training opportunitites in the afternoon to see if that would help. With no other discussion, the Board moved on the next agenda item.

**Review of Boonerang Planning**

Mark opened by covering some of the logistical updates for the event. He noted that on Thursday the Appalachian Theater will be hosting Boone's Got Talent, and the stage in the lot next to Lost Province will go up. He continued that first thing Friday morning the stage will go up on Depot Street, and at 4pm the festival zone will be closed off and is extended from previous years, noting the only events planned on N. Depot Friday evening is the silent disco. He stated that things will kick off on Saturday at 11am and will run until 8:30pm, noting that there will be many spin off events happening throughout the evening. He took a few more minutes to run through the events festivities. Kendra inquired if volunteers were still needed. Mark stated that they could always use more volunteers but added that he felt confident

the event would still run safely with the current slate of volunteers. He finished up by letting the Board know that AppState sustainability would be helping with the clean up on Sunday. Kendra added that they stayed open late for Boonerang last year and had a good turnout. Lane noted that she would include information for High Country Jazz Fest as well as Boonerang in the June newsletter. With no other discussion the Board moved onto the next agenda item.

**Discussion of Freedom First Friday Planning**

Lane opened by noting that the restructuring of First Friday events in light of the new vendor ordinance has been slow, but that she is still working with the Watauga Arts Council to develop a registration system to accommodate additional vendors as a part of First Friday Art Crawl. Lane noted that she is inquiring about a temporary gallery space in the Haircut 101 building and working on events for that evening. A short discussion ensued regarding the proposed changes to the Haircut 101 space.

**Design**

**Update on Town Hall Restrooms**

Lane let the Board know that the doors have been cut out and installed and that the drilling in the vault is largely complete. Lane continued by giving some additional details of the construction and finished up by saying that she does not have a timeline for when it will be completed.

**Update on Sidewalk Replacement**

Kendra asked for the update on the sidewalks. Lane stated that Greens Construction was working on the sidewalk replacement and that it had been going a little slower than expected. Fulton inquired about the increase in width and Lane responded that it would likely be 6-12 inches. Lane added that the sidewalk would be getting new streetlights as well. The Board talked briefly about the remaining areas of the sidewalk that need to be replaced and then moved on to the next agenda item.

**Economic Vitality**

**Discussion of NC Main Street Destination and Small-Scale Development Training**

Kendra opened by asking if there was a desire to reschedule the June meeting to accommodate the Morganton training. There was a brief discussion about schedules and there was general consensus to follow up with a Doodle poll to seek Board member availability. Kendra encouraged the Board Members to communicate with other downtown businesses about these training opportunities.

**Discussion of Town Council Vote on Parking Proposal**

Lane opened by noting that the Democrat coverage did not initially cover all the changes that were made and she included a list in the packet of what had been changed. Edie took a moment to update the Board about a promising meeting that was hosted by the University last week, adding that many folks seemed to leave the meeting inspired by the programming. Fulton then noted that he was dismayed by the lack of communication regarding the elimination of residential parking permits, noting his frustration with the hearsay that lead to the unexpected change. Fulton went on to say that there is some merit to the change but the abruptness is problematic for a variety of reasons. The was a brief discussion about residential parking permits, how many are issued and other opportunities for residential permits (specifically Daniel Boone Park). Kendra expressed her concern that the elimination of the residential parking permits is going to blindside landlords and tenants and inquired if that decision could be reversed or slowed. Eric noted that he anticipated discussing that later in the day. There was a short discussion about the needs of people living in downtown and needing a residential permit. Eric reiterated that he anticipated that the residential permits will be revisited by Town Council to avoid any issues and let the Board to be on the lookout for additional listening sessions. There was a short

conversation on parking for Boonerang.

**Adjourn**
At 10:05 am Sarah made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Megan and had a unanimous vote.