Downtown Boone Development Association
June Board Meeting – June 24, 2025
8:30 am – The Jones House

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Suzanne Livesay, Fulton Lovin, Ethan Rector, Megan Kevorkian and Stephanie Boozer

Ex-Officio's Present: Eric Plaag and Dalton George

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

MSD Member's Present: Bob Flanigan (King Street Flats), Joe Lynch (Speckled Trout Outfitters) Hope Thingelstad (Explore Boone), Melody Pineda (App State) and Rosie Bentley (Shoppes at Farmers)

Introductions
While waiting on quorum, the Board went around the room for introductions.

Call to Order
At 8:40 a.m., Kendra called the meeting to order.

Lane took a moment to share a few quick updates. She began by noting that a new piece of public art has been installed next to Town Hall. Describing it as bright and fun, she shared that the piece is titled *Death Spiral*, a reference to the aerial combat patterns of eagles and the rotational movement of the sculpture's top section.

Lane continued with an update on upcoming parking changes, set to take effect on July 1, 2025. She mentioned that a one-page summary would be shared to help remind everyone of what to expect.

She also noted that, for those who may have missed the email, the Hellbender Mural was recently featured in a story by Smithsonian Magazine.

Finally, Lane announced that a new events calendar is now live on downtownboonenc.com. She encouraged business owners to add their events to the calendar, noting that submissions will be reviewed to ensure appropriate oversight.

Request for Approval of June Agenda
Kendra asked if there was a motion to approve the June agenda. Stephanie made the motion, which was seconded by Kendra. The motion passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of May Meeting Minutes
Kendra asked if there was a motion to approve the May meeting minutes. Suzanne made the motion, which was seconded by Fulton. The motion passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements
Kendra asked whether the amount in the undesignated fund balance was included in the financial statements. Lane noted that it was not but appreciated Kendra raising the question. Lane added that with several higher-cost projects on the horizon, such as decorations for the new streetlights planned as

part of the Howard Street Project, the trail mural, and additional seating options, it might be appropriate to use the undesignated fund balance for those expenses.

Kendra stated that she would like to review that information at an upcoming meeting. Lane apologized for not having it prepared for this meeting but committed to presenting it at a future meeting.

With no further discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the financial statements. Stephanie seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Organizational

Request for Approval of S. Livesay Board Application

Lane began by noting that she had included the Board Roster in the format provided by the Town Clerk, which she found to be clear and easy to maintain. She added that if Suzanne's application were approved, it would leave two open Town Council-appointed positions and one open DBDA-appointed position.

Eric asked whether the DBDA is recruited individuals for the Town Council-appointed seats. Lane confirmed that she does assist with recruitment and noted there were a few people in the audience she hoped would consider joining.

Kendra made a motion to approve Suzanne's application. The motion was seconded by Megan and passed unanimously.

Request to Move July DBDA Meeting to Tuesday, July 22

Kendra noted that several Board members would be unavailable for the regularly scheduled July meeting and proposed moving the meeting to Tuesday, July 22. Suzanne mentioned that she would be out of town on that date.

Kendra then made a motion to reschedule the meeting. The motion was seconded by Megan and passed with five in favor and one opposed (S. Livesay).

Discussion of August Annual Meeting Schedule

Lane opened the discussion by noting that last year's annual meeting was held during the Board's regularly scheduled meeting time in the Community Room of the Appalachian Theatre, with a catered breakfast. She provided a brief review of the previous year's agenda and the NC Main Street statistical reporting that was shared at that meeting.

Lane mentioned she had considered potential locations along Howard Street for this year's meeting but had not identified a space large enough to accommodate the group. Suzanne suggested reaching out to Fizz Ed to see if they might be interested in hosting and offered the Appalachian Theatre Community Room as a backup location.

Megan inquired about the possibility of including an update from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). Lane noted that Emily Neely had given a presentation at the previous year's meeting as part of a certification project. Hope Thingelstad from Explore Boone, who was present, felt this would be an easy request to fulfill. A brief discussion followed regarding the specific TDA information that would be helpful to include.

The Board also briefly discussed Boonerang turnout before reaching consensus to replace the regular Board meeting with the annual meeting. Fizzed was identified as the preferred venue, with the Appalachian Theatre serving as the backup location.

Discussion of ARC Read Non-Profits Training Course Selection

Lane shared that the Downtown Boone Development Association has been selected as one of 75 participants in the ARC READY Nonprofits program, a seven-week capacity-building training initiative offered by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The program begins Monday, July 14, and the DBDA will be participating under the *Board Development* training area.

She continued that the READY Nonprofits program is designed to help nonprofits across the Appalachian region strengthen their internal operations and expand their ability to serve their communities. It includes free training and the opportunity to apply for follow-up grant funding. She continued that upon successful completion of the training, participating organizations may apply for up to $25,000 in grant funding (no match required) to support internal capacity-building projects.

Lane wondered if, once training is complete, the Board could explore the possibility of applying for grant funding to support a Board Retreat focused on leadership or other relevant training for DBDA Directors.

Lane also noted that Western Carolina University has already expressed interest in a potential internship partnership, should DBDA choose to use the grant funding to support such a program. They have requested that their students be considered for any future internship placements.

With no other discussion the Board moved on.

Promotional

Discussion of the July First Thursday Art Crawl

Lane provided an update on preparations for the upcoming July First Friday event. Noting that Trish Daniels has been hired to provide patriotic face painting during the evening's festivities. She will be set up on Howard Street in an effort to help increase foot traffic in that area during the event.

Lane also shared that the partnership with the Watauga Arts Council continues to go well. The Arts Council has taken the lead in organizing vendors for the evening and has set up a clear promotional schedule. Participants are asked to submit their event information by the Friday before First Friday so that WAC can include it in their promotions the following Monday.

Lane noted that coordination for First Friday has found a solid rhythm and expressed appreciation for the collaborative structure that's now in place. The Board discussed 4th of July expectations for a few minutes before moving on.

Discussion of Boonerang Recap Survey

Lane opened by noting that she had spoken briefly with Mark about sending out a survey again this year, and that he is interested in doing so. She mentioned that a copy of last year's survey was included in the packet as a starting point for developing this year's version. Suzanne suggested it might be helpful to ask businesses to compare last year's sales to this year's. Ethan recommended including a question about

any changes to business hours. The Board also briefly discussed the temporary pause in lighting improvements. With no additional suggestions, the Board moved on.

Design

Update on Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel Project

Lane noted that an update was included in the meeting packet. Eric provided additional background on the Historical Marker program, highlighting the community benefits and offering context on the process by which markers are approved and installed.

Megan inquired about the possibility of having a historical piece installed at her building. The Board briefly discussed the process for submitting and reviewing such requests. With no further discussion, the Board moved on.

Discussion of Collaborative Social District Survey

Lane opened by noting that she was not aware Megan had prepared additional materials for the discussion and explained that she was primarily seeking input on the draft survey included in the packet.

Dalton then shared that he had been hosting informal conversations to gather feedback about the potential for a social district in downtown. He noted that the topic had been briefly discussed by Town Council, primarily as a way to gauge general sentiment among Council members. Dalton provided a brief summary of the feedback he had received so far, and a general discussion followed among Board members regarding the concept of a social district.

Before leaving the meeting, Dalton encouraged the Board to review the draft survey. Lane then asked the Board to take a closer look at the version included in the packet. Ethan inquired about the survey's intended distribution, and Lane confirmed that her plan was to send it to all property and business owners within the Municipal Service District (MSD).

Further discussion followed regarding possible concerns, after which Megan reviewed the handout she had prepared. Kendra expressed her support for distributing the survey in order to continue gathering community input. Eric suggested that the proposed hours for a potential district should align with those outlined in the Town's noise ordinance.

After a thorough discussion, the Board returned to the survey and reached consensus for Lane to move forward with distributing it.

Update on Howard Street Revitalization Project

Lane opened by thanking M&M Construction and the Public Works Department for their efforts in tidying up the construction site in preparation for Boonerang.

Laney followed by noting that she had submitted an application in April for a Rural Economic Development (RED) Grant to support the Howard Street Project. She was pleased to report that the Town has been awarded up to $850,000, which will help fund the undergrounding of utilities along Howard Street from Appalachian Street to Depot Street. She clarified that the grant funding can only be used for improvements from the curb to the gutter.

Eric expressed his sincere appreciation for Laney's work in securing the grant.

Lane then provided an update on current construction activities, highlighting the completion of water tap installations and noting that significant work is scheduled next to replace the culverts behind South End.

There was some discussion among the Board regarding where to find up-to-date information, how the construction may impact individual businesses, and the level of flexibility within the construction plans. After some discussion, Eric offered to work with Todd to produce a visual update for downtown business owners and suggested that Laney distribute the information more broadly once finalized.

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