

MEETING MINUTES

**City of Newnan
Downtown Development Authority
Wednesday, November 11, 2020
8:00 am – Newnan City Hall
25 Lagrange Street- Council Chamber Room**

Members Present: Keith Brady, Ray Dubose, Casey Smith, Graylin Ward, Brant Frost

Members Absent: Jim Thomasson, Martha Ann Parks

Staff Present: Courtney Harcourt, Abigail Strickland, Hasco Craver

Visitors Present: Phyllis Graham

The meeting was called to order at 8:02am.

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed by the Authority. Casey Smith made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the previous meeting as presented to the Authority. Brant Frost seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Courtney Harcourt presented the Financial Report to the Authority, noting the following account balances:

- a. **YTD Income:** \$16,137.43
- b. **YTD Expense:** \$27,589.81
- c. **BOZ Primary:** \$21,964.31
- d. **MMI:** \$113,687.75

Courtney Harcourt provided an update regarding ongoing downtown projects. 34-36 Madison Street closing should be complete by the December meeting. The two retail spaces are available for lease.

In March of 2020 the DDA met and voted to take action to implement several items from our 2020 POW. We did not take action as we had anticipated because of the planning and implementation that was needed to provide resources to the district in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some ideas from our work plan were adapted and implemented as a response to the pandemic in a temporary form to encourage business retention. Some programs and grant applications were also delayed as a result of the pandemic.

The Authority was selected to be apart of the Georgia Placemaking Collaborative, however, the program has been delayed into 2021. The program will take place virtually.

The biennial strategic plan for Newnan Downtown Development Authority has been delayed into 2021, and will likely take place virtually. A deposit was made to the facilitators when the meeting was originally scheduled earlier in the year.

Courtney Harcourt inquired as to if the Authority was still wanting to consider updating commercial design guidelines for district. The design guidelines would create tools and resources

for future development for the Planning Commission. In turn the National Register designation might expand. Brant Frost inquired as to a few parcels that the Authority was considering adding into the downtown development district late last year. Courtney Harcourt state that no action from the Authority was taken but the Authority could review those parcels again. Keith Brady mentioned that he believed the Authority should take on the Old Jail project in 2021 to get the process moving.

The Carnegie-Thompson Alleyway project has been delayed, primarily due to business turnover in the area. Once construction of the businesses are complete the project will continue. Courtney Harcourt mentioned that the bistro lighting is ready to be installed. Ray DuBose stated that he has been in contact with the Girl Scout troop that originally wanted to assist with the project and that the troop is currently not taking on project due to COVID-19. Brant Frost questioned the need to update the alleys and not leave them for utility use only. Keith Brady stated that the alleyways are an asset to downtown. The alleyways are now being serviced daily due to the implementation of the downtown trash program which has eliminated the rodent problem. Phyllis Graham asked if the new business Karvelas Pizza Co. had plans to use the alleyway. Courtney Harcourt stated that she had met with the brothers before they began construction to tell them about the project and due to their set up they would not be able to use the back access for patrons at this time. Ray DuBose stated that finishing the alleyway project should be top priority. Courtney Harcourt noted the project will most like continue in December once the final business finishes construction.

The Vacant Storefront project has not expanded this year. Courtney Harcourt inquired to the Authority of whether or not efforts should be continued. Keith Brady stated that this Vacant Storefront project is a huge undertaking management wise unless a property owner is willing to allow the Authority to take over their property to implement. Keith Brady questioned if downtown had a vacancy problem currently. Courtney Harcourt stated the vacancy rate in downtown was low but that the program has props and resources available to property owners. Ray DuBose stated that efforts should be used somewhere else.

Many of the project in the Placemaking Master Plan were completed during COVID-19 Response, such as:

- Pop-ups. Outdoor pop ups during events such as the outdoor gallery at the Boyd Gallery during the Art Walk.
- Guerilla Wayfinding. The traffic control boxes are still in the works and should be up soon. The wrap on the box would include a historic photo of the area along with parking information. Brant Frost suggested adding a history of the buildings downtown to the exterior to tell the building story.
- Explore Open Streets. The Market Day event has close streets for vendor safety since August.

- Parklets. A couple restaurants have created parklets to expand outdoor seating.

District branding (“Rail Road District”) was delayed due to COVID-19. Branding the district could encourage development in the area. If completed, the Andrew Street Extension would provide another entry to downtown. The Linc trailhead, Newnan Lofts, Caldwell Tanks, and the Old Jail are all located with the area. Casey Smith inquired if the residential streets near the Andrew Street Extension would handle new traffic since would create new traffic patterns. The street study and traffic issues would be handled by the City of Newnan. Casey Smith also noted that there will be an increase of bikes in downtown when the Linc trailhead is completed, and suggested the Authority consider a plan for bike racks. Phyllis Graham mentioned the new pickle ball courts and the street extensions would increase downtown activity. Courtney Harcourt suggested the Authority consider hiring a consultant for the district branding along with allowing community input. Casey Smith questioned if City Council should be a partner during the project. Keith Brady stated this district is larger than the Caldwell Tanks site and the Caldwell Tanks renovation will kick off projects throughout the district. Ray DuBose stated that the district needs to be thought of as a whole and input from the Authority will be considered. Keith Brady stated that the City of Newnan has already completed many studies in the past for the district and staff should review those studies. Casey Smith stated district branding could be a conversation during the strategic plan meeting.

2020 pandemic response in Downtown Newnan (temporary programs and plans):

- Presence in Pop-ups, Parklets, Outdoor Dining, Open Streets
- Open Container District
- Brick & Click Grant Program
- District branding and advertising for business owners

The temporary programs expire in January. Courtney Harcourt ask the Authority what aspects of the temporary ordinances should become permanent. Casey Smith stated that if the open container district does not continue past the January expiration date that outdoor dining parklets would disappear. Hasco Craver that businesses would not be able to serve alcohol in the parklets if the open container district does not become permanent. Casey Smith stated that he has not seen any adverse effects from the open container district and believe the Authority should ask City Council to make the district permanent. Ray DuBose stated that City Council is already working on the open container and will ensure that staff input is gathered before the decision is made.

The open streets during Market Day have been successful. Casey Smith said he might be biased but he belives the street closure make it more of an “event”. Casey Smith recommended creating and placing parking signs during the event to create more awareness of parking availability. Ray DuBose stated that after December Market Day there is still to consider the street closures for the event before the next Market Day in April 2021.

Courtney Harcourt inquired if the Authority saw a benefit in continuing the Brick & Click Grant Program to help business owners get online. Casey Smith questioned if the businesses are going online would they leave their storefronts. Courtney Harcourt stated that the program has guidelines that only support in the storefront and cannot be for a service they currently do not offer in store. Ray DuBose asked to move the discussion to next meeting.

Manager's Report:

Upcoming Event Dates:

- i. 11.20.2020 *Holiday Sip & See*
- ii. 11.27.2020 *Santa's arrival to Newnan*
- iii. 11.27.2020 *Plaid Friday*
- iv. 11.28.2020 *Small Business Saturday*
- v. 12.4.2020 *Forward Friday*
- vi. 12.5.2020 *December Market Day*

Courtney Harcourt noted that the Authority typically does not meet in December but recommended a December meeting this year to review the 2021 budget and Plan of Work. Brant Frost questioned whether or not the budget and Plan of Work could not be discussed in January. The Authority agreed to not meet in December and to resume session in January.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01am.

**Next Meeting:
TBD**