

Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia
Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2015

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia was held on August 13, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. at the DDA office located at 936 Broad Street, Suite 107. Those members in attendance were Commissioner Fennoy, David Hutchison, Rick Keuroglan, Cameron Nixon, Scylance Scott, Jr., Executive Director Margaret Woodard, and Legal Counsel Byrd Warlick. Guests and observers included DDA Office Manager Roxanne Walls, Jack Wilde of Augusta Regional Collaboration, Jennifer Bowen of the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau, Augusta resident Melvin Kelly, Augusta-Richmond County Deputy Administrator Ted Rhinehart, and Jenna Martin of *The Augusta Chronicle*.

Mr. Nixon called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

In the absence of Mr. Hadden, Mr. Nixon presented for approval the previous meeting minutes from June 11, 2015. With no additions or corrections, Mr. Nixon asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Keuroglan made the motion. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

In the Treasurer's Report, Mr. Nixon presented the financials in the absence of Ms. McLeod.

The balance sheet as of June 30, 2015 was reviewed and includes bank balances at the end of June. The Profit and Loss Budget Performance (DDA Operating) Report reflected the following for year to-date: total income in the amount of \$83,137.84; income budgeted in the amount of \$88,454.02; total expenses in the amount of \$72,722.64; expenses budgeted in the amount of \$83,339.96. There is a slight variance in the equipment and computer expenses due to costs associated with the purchase of a new computer for Ms. Woodard as the one she was using failed.

We have submitted our 2016 budget request for city funding and asked to be restored to a standard level of funding as for the past several years we have not been funded at the level needed for economic development.

Mr. Nixon asked the board if there were any questions and hearing none he asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as information. Mr. Scott made the motion. Commissioner Fennoy seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The June and July 2015 financial reports are in board books.

In the Director's Report, Ms. Woodard updated the board on the following:

Active Economic Development Projects

Georgia Cities Foundation (GCF) Loans

- Sole Augusta located at 1033 Broad Street has opened, loan has been approved by GCF and we are in the process of scheduling upcoming loan closing.
- The loan for 912 Ellis Street has been approved by GCF, awaiting Certificate of Occupancy and will then schedule loan closing. Awaiting GCF schedule to plan date for ribbon cutting for GCF to be in attendance. Seven apartments have been leased.

Other

- The grand opening for 106 apartments at CanalSide was held on July 29th and currently has 30 to 35 percent occupancy.
- Purely Painted Market LLC will be opening soon at 1036 Broad Street.

SPLOST VI Project/Riverwalk

- Consultant Cooper Carry is in town for follow-up meeting this week for overall Riverwalk Master Plan and recommendations for \$1 million in DDA SPLOST allocation.
- We have been contacted by some outside agencies and area clubs that are interested in participating in the project as well for possible exercise stations and/or playgrounds.

Downtown Programs

Retail Strategy

- Retail Team was in Augusta on August 4th to meet with DDA and downtown brokers.
- Possibility for them to give retail strategy update to DDA Board, sponsors and partners at October meeting.
- Three national brands currently touring the downtown area for locations.
- In the last year, the Retail Team has been in contact with 85 national/regional brands in regards to the downtown Augusta market.
- They have reached out to 30 brewpubs for a downtown location.
- An out of market housing developer introduced to the market.
- Currently looking at grocery on Walton Way.
- Working with Dennis Trotter of Trotter Jordan Realty on retail element at Discovery Plaza. Mr. Trotter will attend the next DDA Board meeting to tell the board what Retail Strategies has done for Jordan Trotter in regards to Dunkin Donuts and Which Wich.
- Continue to have conversations with key property owners and stakeholders.
- Zoe's Kitchen could not find a downtown location that worked for them but wanted to stay in the market. They have opened in Washington Crossing.

Other

- Statistics for Department of Community Affairs are almost completed.

- We are still in the process of raising \$8,500 from private partners for the Housing Demand Feasibility Report.

Grant Projects

James Brown Boulevard Phase I

- There are two blocks that remain for project completion.
- There have been issues with underground utilities.
- Trees have been replaced and we are working with the city to get a new bus shelter.
- The anticipated completion is the end of August depending on weather.
- A ribbon cutting will be held once completed.

James Brown Boulevard Phase II

- Awarded TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) for new improvements from Twiggs Circle to Laney Walker Boulevard.

Website

- Reflecting Pool Productions has been hired to do an economic development video for new DDA website which will be hosted by the city. Funds received from the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau made this video possible.
- Retail Strategies is working on the retail component for new website.
- We will meet with city to complete and launch new website.

Other:

- SPLOST requests have been submitted to the city for consideration. One request is to have a distinct entrance at Riverwalk at 6th Street and the second request is a resubmission from last year which is to extend the Augusta Common.
- DAP resolution revisions have been submitted to legal. Originally, there were nine members on the panel and the city has asked to change it to 13 with both super districts each appointing two downtown business owners. This will go back to the city's Administrative Committee in two weeks and then full Commission.
- Met with local brokers such as Sherman and Hemstreet in late June to share information and they have already contacted Retail Strategies.
- Met with Georgia Power regarding their Commercial Energy Efficient Program. Mr. Mark Donahue of Peach Contractors has used this program on upper Broad Street where Fireside is located and Boots Factory at Ellis Street. Also Mr. Andy Jones of Sprint Foods used this program at Metro Market.
- Also met with Georgia Power regarding their economic development services and they are already working with us on a project with a developer.

We have submitted the budget request for 2016 to the city. We will have depleted our savings by December and have been running at a deficit for the last few years. If we are not restored to 2007 funding level we will have to close.

With no questions for Ms. Woodard the board accepted the Director's Report as information.

A complete copy of the Director's Report is in board books.

Under New Business, Mr. Nixon introduced Mrs. Jennifer Bowen of the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau for a downtown wayfinding signage update.

Currently, the wayfinding signage is in the installation phase with an expected completion date by the end of August possibly into September. There are over 300 signs in the system with 60 percent located in downtown and 40 percent outside of downtown.

The signage will direct visitors to various attractions, airports, colleges, and hospitals. It will also be signing and designating public parking. All parking bays on Broad Street will be marked public parking. The 9th Street Garage (Board of Education Deck) will be marked for public parking after 5:00 p.m. and weekends.

Informational kiosks will be located at median end-caps at 10th, 9th, 8th and 7th and are two-sided. One side will be a "You Are Here" map and the other side will be a weather proof poster case which can be used to display a calendar of events or an update for special events. The city's Traffic and Engineering Department will maintain and budget for kiosks but the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau is the managing organization and will have a role in maintenance and report anything that needs to be changed or repaired.

There is also signage that will be placed outside of downtown to direct visitors to various locations and attractions such as Fort Gordon, Diamond Lakes, and Phinizy Swamp as a few examples. Also signage will be placed at Bobby Jones Expressway exit ramps.

Mrs. Bowen thanked the DDA for support with the wayfinding signage.

Mrs. Bowen mentioned to the board that there is a horror movie currently being filmed at Sacred Heart which will have over a \$40,000 economic impact. The Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau has been the designated film liaison for the city of Augusta for over 25 years. It has been their role to assist any kind of production company over those years in finding locations and maintaining a database of pictures with the state's Camera Ready Program, and to assist with necessary permitting, and to be their "eyes and ears" and their "boots on the ground". Two items that Augusta needs is crew depth and accessibility to equipment.

With no further business to discuss Mr. Nixon adjourned the meeting at 9:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Nixon, Chairman