

**Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**November 14, 2014**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia was held on November 13, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. at the DDA office located at 936 Broad Street, Suite 107. Those members in attendance were Joey Hadden, Sanford Loyd, Natalie McLeod, Cameron Nixon, Scylance Scott, Jr., Dennis Welch, Commissioner Marion Williams, Executive Director Margaret Woodard, and Legal Counsel Byrd Warlick. Guests and observers included DDA Office Manager Roxanne Walls, Kevin Laird of Comcast, Camille Price of Augusta Tomorrow, Augusta resident Melvin Kelly, Augusta Law Department Staff Attorney Kenneth Bray, Barry White of the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau, Matt Aitken of Sherman and Hemstreet, Jenna Martin of *The Augusta Chronicle*, Al Dallas of the Augusta Mayor's Office, and downtown businessman Jackson Brown.

Mr. Nixon called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Mr. Nixon presented for approval the previous meeting minutes from September 11, 2014. With no additions or corrections, Mr. Nixon asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Scott made the motion. Ms. McLeod seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

In the Treasurer's Report, Mr. Loyd presented the financials for September 2014 and October 2014 which also include year-to-date.

The September 2014 financials reflected nothing unusual. Mr. Loyd asked to board to turn to the October 2014 financials.

The Profit & Loss Budget Performance (DDA Operating) Report for October 2014 reflected the following for year-to-date: total income in the amount of \$138,761.70; year-to-date budgeted income in the amount of \$148,006.70; net ordinary income in the amount of -\$17,236.72.

The retail recruitment sponsorship is our biggest difference in income as we budgeted year-to-date in the amount of \$13,750 and the actual year-to-date received is in the amount of \$8,500.

We are not over budget on our expenses at this time but are approaching the annual budgeted amount on some items. We have budgeted for a loss in the amount of \$38,507 for the year. There is nothing unusual in this report from our budget and what is expected. It continues to highlight, in lieu of the city's budget crisis and the recommendation of a 25 percent reduction in departments, that we have a revenue problem and we have to do something or not about how to continue with operations.

The balance sheet as of October 31, 2014 reflected total checking and savings in the amount of \$69,751.22 with an accounts receivable balance in the amount of \$2,500 for GRU. The majority of the money is in checking as we receive a higher interest rate on our checking account.

Mr. Loyd concluded his report. Mr. Nixon asked if there were any questions. Hearing none Mr. Nixon asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as information. Mr. Hadden made the motion. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The September 2014 and October 2014 financial reports which include year-to-date are in board books.

In the Chairman's Report, Mr. Nixon spoke about the proposed reduction of 25 percent in city funding for outside agencies in which we have been included. A 25 percent budget cut would put our city funding at approximately \$116,000. We have not been fully funded for the past several years and have been using our savings. Mr. Nixon did attend a budget hearing and presented our case. Basically, if we are cut 25 percent we would not be able to continue operations. There is also a new proposal which would cut authorities by 15 percent instead of 25 percent.

Some of the items that were discussed during the budget workshop were other sources of income and to cut expenses. Commissioner Harris asked about parking. Parking is a Commission driven initiative and would require management.

With the retail initiative, Cyber Command and their contractors, GRU and the Medical Community there is a lot that is happening and getting ready to happen downtown.

Mr. Nixon has reached out to some commissioners to let them know we need to be funded no less than where we are currently and encouraged board members to do the same. Mr. Nixon concluded the Chairman's Report.

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

#### **Active Economic Development Projects**

##### **Georgia Cities Foundation (GCF) Loans**

- We have approved several loans that are currently in underwriting at GCF.
- Awaiting GCF approval on 1022 Broad Street and 1033 Broad Street.
- The project at 334 Greene Street (The Vine Inn) is complete and will have loan closing once the Certificate of Occupancy is obtained.

##### **GCF Loans in the pipeline:**

- We will begin working on an application in 2015 for Mr. Mark Donahue for the Boots Factory Building located at 912 Ellis Street which will have 20 apartments.

## **Other**

### **Hotel Site at Augusta Common**

- Ms. Woodard and Ms. Jane Ellis of Sherman and Hemstreet have completed a new package for the hotel site at the Augusta Common.
- A total of 15 packages have been mailed to prospects.

Instead of helping to facilitate development we are assuming more of a role in initiating development which is more of the direction we want to go in.

## **Downtown Programs**

### **Retail Strategy**

Copies of the marketing guide completed by Retail Strategies were distributed to board members and available for guests and observers. Ms. Woodard gave a brief overview of the guide which shows demographic profile of three and five mile radius as well as five and ten minute drive times, downtown trade area with major retail and restaurants, market highlights, commercial retail sites, and a gap analysis. The marketing guide will be on posted on the DDA website in the upcoming weeks.

- Retail Strategies has completed the reports for 2014 and every year they will update our demographics.
- We have applied for a grant through the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau for website money.
- Information gathering is complete and serious conversations with downtown property owners are underway.
- Meetings with key property owners and real estate brokers are underway.
- Requested from the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce to provide us with a list of their members in the 30901 zip code so we can provide existing businesses with the gap analysis to keep them strong and competitive.
- Currently working on mixed-use projects at 13<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor and also upper Broad Street.
- Developers are coming to meet with us as well as some restaurants in December.
- Also working on available properties catalog.

## **Other**

- A Japanese restaurant is opening in the old Boar's Head location.
- This is the time of year that we will see some closings downtown.
- When 2014 statistics are completed the number of businesses that have opened downtown will definitely outshine the number of closings which is why we are doing the retail initiative to get a strong retail sector downtown.

## **Pilot SPLOST Project**

- Olde Town wayfinding signage has gone through all approvals and they will start building their signage on Broad Street.
- Ms. Durant of the Arts Council has picked the electrical signal boxes which starts at 12<sup>th</sup> and goes down to 6<sup>th</sup> for Phase I and project should begin at beginning of

next year. She is also going before the Commission to get money to do electrical signal boxes in other districts.

### **SPLOST VI Project/Riverwalk**

- RFP is on hold and will be issued in January due to the number of projects such as James Brown Boulevard Streetscape that have recently broken ground.

### **Grant Projects**

#### **James Brown Boulevard Phase I**

- A groundbreaking ceremony was held on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Nixon thanked everyone as well as commissioners that attended the ceremony. Commissioner Williams would like to incorporate attractions to attract more people to that area. Mr. Richard Prouty, senior operations manager of Larry Pittman & Associates, is researching. Ms. Woodard will follow up with Mr. Prouty.

#### **James Brown Boulevard Phase II**

- The pre-design documentation is completed.
- We are awaiting a Project Identification Number from Mr. Don Grantham.
- This phase will start at Twiggs Circle and move back towards Broad Street.

#### **James Brown Boulevard Phase III**

- We are working on a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant and it is due Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **GRU Day – November 20**

- This is the last GRU Day for 2014 as we will not have one in December.
- Sky City and Mellow Mushroom have partnered and there will be free pizza for students with ID.
- There will be a Block Party with Mr. Coco Rubio spinning records and the band “Acosta” performing.

### **Parking**

- The tentative date for the public parking forums is Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.
- The 6 p.m. forum will be held at the Marbury Center on Broad Street as Commissioner Fennoy requested forums to be held on Broad Street.
- Awaiting confirmation from the Library regarding the noon forum as the Marbury Center was not available for the noon forum.
- Dr. Anthony (Tony) Robinson of Georgia Regents University will facilitate both forums.
- Will take comments from the audience and we will do as the Commission asked which is to take the information back to the Commission for them to decide on the direction they wish to take.
- We are working with the Sheriff’s Office for forum flyer distribution by the SMART Team.

### **Christmas Light-Up Spectacular – Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

- Event planning has been completed including fireworks permit, street closure, and media.
- We are again partnering with Twelve Bands.

Ms. Woodard invited board members to walk in the 2014 Christmas Fantasy Parade with the DDA/City float. Mr. Dallas will handle inviting elected officials.

Ms. Woodard asked the board if they had any questions.

The board accepted the Director's Report as information.

Under New Business, Mr. Nixon introduced Augusta Law Department Staff Attorney Kenneth Bray.

Mr. Bray came before the board to present a quitclaim deed for transfer of dock located by the Marriott to the City of Augusta. The property is located at 1 Tenth Street A which is a small dock that is the name of DDA. There were marina parcels deeded in the name of DDA due to bonding. Some were in city's name and some in the name of the Ports Authority. The city is consolidating the marina property and this is the last dock. The current marina operator has control of this dock.

Mr. Nixon asked for any further questions or comments. Hearing none Mr. Nixon asked for a motion to transfer the dock to the city. Mr. Loyd made the motion. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nixon thanked Mr. Bray.

Under New Business, Mr. Nixon introduced Mr. White who then presented a 2014 tourism update.

Recent numbers from the Georgia Department of Economic Development for visitor spending for Augusta-Richmond County increased 4.6 percent with \$478 million spent by visitors in our community in 2013. In visitor spending around the state, we are third behind Metro Atlanta and the coast (Savannah and Golden Isles). According to the rate of growth at 4.6 percent, we are outpacing our peers around the city including Savannah, Golden Isles, Atlanta, Macon, Columbus, and Athens as well as some others.

The Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) has produced a "Tourism Pays" brochure which is general information about visitors. It is an informational piece directed to the local community on the awareness of the impact of tourism. Copies of the brochure were distributed to board members.

Through the recession the ACVB never saw a decline in visitor spending in Augusta.

Mr. Nixon thanked Mr. White.

With no further new business, Mr. Nixon asked if there was any old business to discuss. Hearing none Mr. Nixon asked the board if they have a chance to talk to people about our budget needs to spread the word.

Ms. Woodard thanked Mrs. Walls for planning Christmas Light-Up Spectacular this year. She also told the board there is an updated prospect list available to board members.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Nixon adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joey Hadden, Secretary