

Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia
Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2015

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia was held on October 8, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. at the DDA office located at 936 Broad Street, Suite 107. Those members in attendance were David Hutchison, Natalie McLeod, Cameron Nixon, Scylance Scott, Jr., Executive Director Margaret Woodard, and Legal Counsel Byrd Warlick. Guests and observers included DDA Office Manager Roxanne Walls, Chris Guardaro of WAGT, Wade Robinett of Retail Strategies, Jack Wilde of Augusta Regional Collaboration, Jane Ellis of Sherman and Hemstreet, Camille Price of Augusta Tomorrow, Cody O'Hara and Robin Glaubman of WRDW, Dennis Trotter of Jordan Trotter Commercial Real Estate, Augusta-Richmond County Deputy Administrator Ted Rhinehart, Ben Harrison of Blanchard and Calhoun, and Tim Rausch of *The Augusta Chronicle*.

Mr. Nixon called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

In the absence of Mr. Hadden, Mr. Nixon presented for approval the previous meeting minutes from September 10, 2015. 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, Ms. McLeod presented the financials for September 2015.

The 3rd Quarter financials have been reviewed by the accountant and reflects a good job of record keeping by DDA staff.

The balance sheet as of September 30 reflects total checking/savings in the amount of \$52,868.33.

With the upcoming Christmas Light-Up Spectacular event those expenses will be reflected on the Profit and Loss Budget Performance (Consolidated) Report. The largest expense paid for the month was board insurance.

Ms. Woodard told the board that the city is sponsoring the fireworks for Christmas Light-Up Spectacular this year and they have been invoiced. The money that we currently have for the event is leftover from raising sponsorships from years past and will basically cover event day expenses.

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. Hutchison made the motion. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The September 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

- The loan closing for 1033 Broad Street (Sole Augusta) was held on September 16th.
- The loan for 912 Ellis Street has been approved by GCF and we are in the process of scheduling the loan closing.
- We are in the process of completing the needed paperwork for 1162–1168 Broad Street and owner is getting ready to hire a contractor to begin that project which will have 10 apartments.

Other

- A ribbon cutting was held on September 16th for Purely Painted Market located at 1036 Broad Street.
- A ribbon cutting was held on October 2nd for The Dragon's Claw located at 980 Broad Street.
- Tradewinds Antiques & Interior Design located at 1031 Broad Street will open on November 1st.
- We are working with a large office user that currently has three locations in Augusta for a downtown headquarters and they are looking at a building to purchase on Broad Street.

SPLOST VI Project/Riverwalk

- We are in the process of scheduling a meeting with Cooper Carry in the next thirty days.
- Not only has Cooper Carry been hired for the Riverwalk but the city has also hired them for the design/mobility plan for the TIA project which is close to \$100 million for projects in the downtown area with \$25 million for Broad Street. They are also doing some work on the James Brown Statue area for the city.
- Cooper Carry is working on finalizing the budgets for the five initial projects.

Grant Projects

James Brown Boulevard Phase I

- Demolition on the last block located across the street from the Richmond County Board of Education from Broad Street to Ellis Street began on October 7th.
- Due to various challenges such as utilities under the sidewalks, fill materials, weather, and ramps, the Georgia Department of Transportation has extended the completion date until December 2016.
- The majority of the project will be completed this year. However, there is a lot of paperwork and punch list items to complete.

James Brown Boulevard Phase II

- This phase will begin at Twiggs Circle to Laney Walker Boulevard.
- Letter to proceed with design and environmental work should be received today.

- Timeline:
Design work will begin in 2016
Purchase right-of-way in 2017
Construction on Twiggs Circle to begin 2018

Augusta University

- A meeting is scheduled today with Mr. Cedric Johnson for us to assist with February 2016 Augusta University Homecoming.
- Ms. Woodard attended a meet-and-greet held on October 7th at Craft and Vine for Dr. Keel.

Website

- The economic development video will be unveiled to the board next month.
- Mr. Wade Robinett of Retail Strategies assisted with the messaging and branding for the video and Retail Strategies is working on the retail component for new site.

Ms. Woodard thanked the city for hosting the site and the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau for the funding for the economic development video.

Christmas Light-Up Spectacular – December 5th

- The committee kick-off meeting was held on September 30th.
- We are partnering with 12 Bands again this year.
- The city is sponsoring the fireworks.

Other

- The Jones Street Alley Project has been approved by the Commission to turn it into a one-way street from Macartan Street to 9th Street to allow for a loading zone and diagonal parking against TEE Center parking lot and will add approximately 25 parking spaces. The dumpsters will be moved to the area that once housed the satellites for the television station. Ms. Woodard thanked Deputy City Administrator Ted Rhinehart for assisting with the project.
- The public meeting for the Downtown Advisory Panel (DAP) elections will be held in December for that panel to get up and running in 2016.

The board was also reminded of the press conference that will be held today at 11:00 a.m. at the Augusta-Richmond County Judicial Center for all outside agencies that came out in support of SPLOST 7.

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 Mr. Wade Robinett of Retail Strategies for a retail update.

Mr. Robinett is the executive vice president and is in charge of putting teams together to actually execute strategic plans in the communities and recruit retail to municipalities. They have reached out to local brokers and property owners.

Downtown Augusta is represented at ICSC which creates a national platform for brokers to use. Retail employs 1 in 4 people in the country and the effect it has on our economy as a country is very big. It generates sales tax and jobs.

The trends are big box stores such as Walmart and Target are looking for smaller concepts. While retailers have to promote themselves on a digital platform it will not eliminate brick and mortar stores. One of the industries not affected by the internet is the restaurant industry. Of the 42,000 stores that opened last year 40 percent were restaurants. Restaurants are currently trending as fast casual and local. Cracker Barrel is testing the fast casual concept to adjust to millennial consumers.

Downtowns are developed organically and you start with local entrepreneurs and local restaurateurs. Restaurants create the foundation in downtown. When people start coming for breakfast, lunch and dinner then the entrepreneurs begin to come to the area and see available space. As the restaurants build and local boutiques start to fill in and as they see success then you can begin to bring national brands.

Currently, Retail Strategies is reaching out to regional restaurant groups in Charleston, Columbia, Greenville, Atlanta, and Knoxville to show local entrepreneurs the opportunities in Downtown Augusta. Downtown Augusta has so many attributes such as the river, vibrant restaurant scene, retailers that are doing well, and the Masters Tournament. Downtown Augusta is trending upward and our brand is a good sell.

One of the biggest selling points is the effort to improve the river front. We will be a true destination place such as Charleston with connecting Broad Street with the river and getting Reynolds Street developed.

Brokerage companies are very important as it is an 18 to 36 month process at times from the decision to open a business to actually opening the business with sales, lease negotiations, and construction. The local brokerage community now directly contacts Retail Strategies and vice versa.

Ms. Jane Ellis of Sherman and Hemstreet and Mr. Dennis Trotter of Jordan Trotter Commercial Real Estate spoke of working with Retail Strategy.

Retail Strategies is responsible for Dunkin Donuts, Zowie's Kitchen and Which Wich. At the end of their three-year engagement with DDA they will know more about our community than anyone in the market and they are not fee driven. They are sharing our information across the country and are a great source to point new business to Augusta.

The biggest obstacle is managed parking. Retail Strategies has consulted in other downtowns and one of their recommendations is for parking to be well lit so that it feels

safe and to have security in decks. The first thing customers should see is parking. If parking is impossible then customers will not come.

There are three boutiques from Dahlonga, Savannah, and Aiken currently looking for locations on Broad Street. Multi-family developers are currently seeking out downtowns such as Augusta and Retail Strategies is pushing that as well.

Copies of the presentation were distributed and are in board books.

Mr. Nixon thanked Mr. Robinett for his presentation.

There are three board members whose terms have expired and need to be reappointed. They are Mr. Nixon, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Hadden.

Under New Business, Ms. McLeod made the motion to recommend to Commission the reappointment of Cameron Nixon for another term. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Mr. Nixon made the motion to recommend to Commission the reappointment of Scylance Scott, Jr. for another term. Ms. McLeod seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Ms. McLeod made the motion to recommend to Commission the reappointment of Joey Hadden for another term. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. Mr. Nixon asked if any further discussion. Hearing none all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to discuss Mr. Nixon adjourned the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Nixon, Chairman