

DULUTH
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
February 16, 2010
MINUTES

Present: Ken Odum- Chairman
Rob Ponder-Vice Chairman
Ed Gulesserian
Shelly Howard
Ron Osterloh
Dennis Taylor
Kathryn Willis

Staff: Christopher McGahee, Economic Development Manager
Ken Sakmar, Budget and Finance Director
Phil McLemore, City Administrator

Absent:

Chairman Ken Odum called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. He requested approval of the minutes from the meeting of January 19, 2010. **A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Rob Ponder and seconded by Shelly Howard. All voted in favor, motion passed.**

Chairman Ken Odum then requested that the DDA Funding item be moved up in the agenda and that Mr. Ken Sakmar, Budget and Finance Director make the presentation.

DDA Funding: Mr. Sakmar presented a financial history of all DDA transactions. DDA members were most appreciative and had a clear and complete understanding of the financial status of DDA at the end of the presentation.

LCI Grant Award: Chairman Odum then requested that the agenda item related to the LCI Award be moved for discussion next. Mr. Gary Cornell, Jordan, Jones, and Goulding reported that the LCI grant was awarded and that paper work will soon be forwarded to the City of Duluth for execution. The grant award is \$50,000 with a city match and an additional amount of \$5,000 from the Gwinnett Place Community Investment District for a total project cost of \$105,000. DDA members listened to the study outline presented by Mr. Cornell. Work can begin as soon as the award documents are executed.

Pedestrian Walk Way: Chairman Odum requested that the Pedestrian Walkway be moved next in the agenda discussion. Earlier in the year, DDA acquired a pedestrian

easement from Mr. Mark Nezda to construct a pedestrian walkway from Main Street to Town Green. Mr. Mack Cain, Jordan, Jones, and Goulding, was present to discuss options for the walkway. Mr. Cain presented the basic outline of the project. Mr. Cain, emphasized that a number of issues would be cleared up by the project related to utilities and drainage. Rob Ponder cautioned that this would be a sensitive project because of the proximity of 130 year old building foundations. Concerns related to lighting, drainage, and landscaping were expressed by DDA members. Mr. Cain was charged with finalizing the plan to incorporate lighting and drainage issues and to present the plan at the next DDA meeting.

Red Clay Demolition Construction Options: Chairman Odum requested an update on Red Clay Demolition. Mr. McGahee and Mr. McLemore stated that the architects were moving forward with the bid document and that one remaining discussion point was to determine how far to carry the exposed wall construction of the section of the building that would remain. General consensus was that the wall should be shored up in a manner that would be considered permanent as opposed to temporary.

Old City Hall Administrative Office Sprinkler Damage: Chairman Odum requested an update on Old City Hall. Mr. McGahee reported the insurance company was moving to cover all cost related to clean up of damaged tile, carpet, and drywall. A remediation company was on site and was conducting a thorough clean up. Once cleanup is complete, the city can either take a check for depreciated payout or replace the damaged items. Mr. McGahee pointed out if mold occurs the remediation company will return to take care of it.

Member Rob Ponder made a motion to recommend to City Council that lump sum check be taken rather than return the building to pre-sprinkler burst status. Dennis Taylor seconded the motion. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

TAD Boundary Changes: Mr. McGahee explained that Council adopted the redrawn boundary on February 8th, 2010 to comply with Gwinnett County recommendations. Mr. McGahee and Mr. McLemore pointed out that most downtown properties remain in the TAD.

Request from Stacie Stamper for Façade Grant: Mr. McGahee presented a request by Stacie Stamper for a Façade Grant to replace a malfunctioning door at Frugally Yours. **After considerable discussion concerning property maintenance, Member Rob Ponder made a motion to approve a Façade grant in the amount of \$1500 to Frugally Yours to replace the malfunctioning door. Kathryn Willis seconded the motion. All present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.**

Lease Study Downtown Properties – Mr. McGahee reported the results of the assessment conducted by himself and Member Ed Gulesserian. Most downtown properties owned by the city are in severe need of property maintenance. All leak in some manner and most do not have working HVAC systems. None are considered market ready. Mr. McGahee recommended an interim lease structure while conducting a thorough building by building assessment for property maintenance. Member Gulesserian emphasized that the situation was complicated and that sooner or later roofs would fail and that creeping blight was a concern. He also pointed out that no solution would be cheap. No conclusion was reached. Discussions will be continued.

Downtown Restaurant Options: Mr. McGahee stated that he is continuing to work with restaurant interest to occupy Main Street vacancies. DDA would be consulted as needed if financing were an option.

Way Finding Committee: Mr. McGahee stated that Ed Gulesserian has agreed to serve on the Way Finding Committee as the DDA representative. Way Finding will determine the types and kinds of signage needed by the city to present a unified vision.

Chairman Ken Odum requested final discussion and comments from the Public. No discussion from DDA Members. David Cossette remarked on the importance of incorporating the Red Clay Theatre into downtown marketing efforts and having more professional management and more funding support from the City. Member Shelly Howard outlined activities associated with the next Art Walk.

Chairman Odum requested a motion to adjourn. **A motion was made by Ed Gulesserian to adjourn. Shelly Howard seconded the motion. All voted in favor, motion passed.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Chairman, Ken Odum

March 16, 2010
Date

Secretary, Shelly Howard

March 16, 2010
Date