



Downtown Cheyenne

Staff Report

April 2020

Report By: Amber Ash & Haylee Chenchar

BIG INITIATIVES

- **COVID-19 Relief** – 28 applications were received for the COVID-19 Emergency Microgrants, 2 of which were outside DDA boundaries. The DDA awarded 26 grants in the amount of \$48,828.26 to Downtown Merchants. These grants covered rent/mortgage payment, gas and electric invoices, Board of Public utilities invoices, and telephone/internet service. No additional requests were funded. DAPCPA cut checks on April 9th and checks were either distributed or mailed on April 10th.
- **Rock the Block:** Due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, the Committee determined that it would be best to postpone Rock the Block to September. We are currently examining merging the event with the Open Streets Initiative and having 4-6 local bands representing different genres while highlighting our community talent rather than a single larger act.
- **FY21 Budget:** Bruce, Steve, and I attended a phone call with Mayor Orr and Robin Lockman, City Treasurer, to discuss City funding for FY21. The City is asking all departments for 20% cuts and the Mayor will not be including any funding requests for outside agencies including the DDA. I am meeting with a few members of the City Council members to assess the prognosis for funding and have emailed the board a revised budget for review based on a 20% funding cut and no City funding.
- **Main Street Training Funds:** I have applied to the Wyoming Business Council Main Street program for training funds in the amount of \$2,000 to pay for the marketing 3-4-5 workshop. With this additional funding, we will be able to do the full tour stop rather than just the workshop. A “Full Tour Stop” includes the workshop with up to 50 attendees and adds *afternoon marketing office hours* for merchants of our program, *a Community Video*, *tour-related PR*, *Locable.com Tour Community Page* (highlighting local organizations and happenings using our Local Connections™ technology), and *a series of tour-related blog posts featuring our community*.
- **Cheyenne-Laramie County Economic Development JPB:** I emailed Chris Brown and left him a voicemail on April 13, 2020. We were approved for a \$20,000 grant which was included in the FY20 budget; however, the way that the grant is written, it is for FY20 FIP projects which begin June 2020 and end June 2021. I am waiting for further direction from Chris as to how to proceed.
- **Secretary of State Status:** I reached out to the Secretary of State and the registration that is inactive is for a trademark. It has been inactive since 1996. Since I couldn’t figure out which forms to file and the SOS doesn’t provide any guidance, I reached out to our attorney for assistance. She does not believe that we can register with the SOS and there are no other DDA’s in the State that are registered as far as she can tell.
- **Paycheck Protection Program:** I filled out an application and submitted it to Platte Valley Bank since Wells Fargo was no longer accepting applications. After doing some research,

Aaron Bentley, Amy Mahoney, and Lindsey Woznick (our attorney) all came to the same conclusion: we are not an eligible organization.

- **Grills Fund for Main Street Revitalization:** This new grant fund will provide five (5) Accredited Main Street America Programs \$10,000 each to help fund innovative revitalization efforts to address the current and/or legacy impacts of COVID-19.
- **Re-Ride:** Haylee worked with Design the World to build a new webpage for Re-Ride and get it live. Check it out at reridecheyenne.com. The grant was submitted to New Belgium and copies were emailed to the board and the Foundation. On April 6th, New Belgium announced they are delaying the distribution of funds until late summer. Applications will be reopened in July for modifications. Cycle Wyoming is holding off on a decision on the grant until they determine whether they will be able to hold the annual Tour de Wyoming event. Due to reduced revenues, Visit Cheyenne will no longer be able to partner on this initiative. Pursuant to the webinars on recovery I've attended, demand for bicycle sharing programs will increase while public transit decreases when we come out of this pandemic. Consistent thereto, I believe we should move forward with this project as a recovery effort.
- **Office Construction:** The drywall has been removed in the hallway and the blue room. The framing is complete for my new office wall. Electrical work was started on April 13, 2020. The TV arrived and has been installed. Our new conference table is in and at Red Bison.
- **Wells Fargo:** We were finally able to get me added as the Key Executor on the Checking and Savings account. We are currently working to get the credit cards changed. I emailed the forms to Colleen on April 10th and she submitted them on April 15th. The forms reflect the change in personnel.
- **Against the Wind:** The initial payment of \$3,000 was mailed on April 3rd with the remaining 50% of Phase I due on completion. I am meeting with Eddie Fernandez, Bill Lindstrom, Chad Willett, Desiree Brothe, Lindsey Lamb and Haylee (via Zoom) on April 14th to discuss this project. The grant was submitted to the Wyoming Arts Council in the amount of \$18,000. Copies were emailed to the board and the DDF.
- **Open Streets Initiative:** The grant was submitted. Copies were emailed to the board.
- **History Underfoot:** The Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund grant in the amount of \$15,000 was submitted and copies were emailed to the board. In addition, the installation specifications and proposed locations on Warren were emailed to Tom DeHoff.
- **Amazon Prime Membership:** I have cancelled our Amazon Prime Membership, effective April 13, 2020. There is no reason for us to spend \$35 per month on something like this.

BUSINESSES OPENING/EXPANDING/CLOSING

- Opened: 0
- Coming: Blacktooth Brewery (unknown), Ninja Playground (unknown), Hawthorne Tree (May), The Lincoln (May 1), Little Moon Boutique (unknown), Omelet House (unknown), Crossfit Cheyenne (mid-June)
- Still Looking to Expand: Desperado Depot & Prairie Home House Goods
- Potential Business: Silversage Ceramics, Project Onyx
- Closing/Closed: Blue Door Arts
- Net business openings (since last July 1st): 7

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS UPDATE

Please refer to the April 2020 Social Media Analytics in your board packet for Facebook and Instagram analytics.

Other marketing and promotions initiatives:

- **Downtown Merchants:** We restarted the merchant meetings via Zoom on April 1st. Attendance has declined dramatically. We will continue efforts to reach out.
- **COVID Approved Bingo:** The DDA partnered with Visit Cheyenne to offer COVID approved bingo. We purchased 8 gift cards to downtown businesses for winners. To date, 2 bingo cards have been turned in.
- **Easter Egg Hunts:** Haylee worked with the downtown merchants to host a few different versions of a Social Distancing Easter Egg Hunt! For children without internet access, businesses “hid” a few paper Easter Eggs in their store windows for children to be able to “hunt” for the eggs as they were driving around with their parents at a safe social distance. For children with internet access, we are hosting a “Virtual Easter Egg Hunt” that eight downtown businesses participated in. These businesses paid to have someone come in to shoot a 3D tour of their store with hidden Easter eggs, which also doubles as a virtual tour of the stores. The links to these hunts will go “live” Easter morning. Thank you to Breck for coordinating the Virtual Easter Egg Hunt. We received tons of positive press on both projects.

Virtual Tour Responses: See Attached Stats for Scans from 3D Pro Imaging

Self-Reported Numbers for Virtual Easter Egg Hunt:

Downtown Mercantile – 55 People

Our Place – 53 People

Freedom’s Edge Brewing – 36 People

Red Bison – At Least 20 People

The Prairie Pantry – 19 People

Wyoming Home – 15 People

The Paramount – Unknown

Alexis Drake – Unknown

- **KGWN Commercial:** Haylee worked with over 60 businesses to develop a new downtown commercial presenting a unified message from downtown business owners to say, “we are all in this together.” The businesses were incredibly grateful to be included in this project, and it served as an excellent networking opportunity to include businesses that haven’t been involved before. This will run through the end of April beginning 4/10.

<https://www.mediafire.com/file/tu9fb4bzav9xbvd/DDA - In this Together-R2.mp4/file>

- **Historic Downtown Scavenger Hunt:** Haylee has been working with the Alliance for Historic Wyoming and the State Archives to develop a historic downtown scavenger hunt. This event will go live on social media this week.
- **Website Updates:** Haylee is working on getting a Drive Folder of all of the website information from the marketing company who did the redesign so that she can start working on a few updates to the website that makes it easier to navigate. She has also created an online form of the Directory questionnaire we originally sent out as a PDF for businesses to scan and send back to us. This online form has made it much easier for businesses to get us their information to compile for our online directory, and we have received 20 responses so far.

MAIN STREET UPDATES

- **Community Transformation Workshop:** Tentative dates for CTW in Fall 2020 are October 7-9 in Cheyenne at the Plains Hotel. It will be combined with the WY Working Together Conference. Registration will open on April 1st.

- **Main Street Conference:** The Main Street Conference was cancelled. If you have been reimbursed by the DDA for your plane ticket, please make sure to pay the DDA back for that.
- **Best Practices Workshop:** The Best Practices Workshop was cancelled. Our check was returned to us. We received it on April 13, 2020.

FIP/CIG PROGRAMS

The Design Committee met on April 8, 2020 to review FIP and CIG applications that had been submitted.

- The Design Committee approved funding for the Phase I of the OTEL FIP Grant. Phase II will be finalized at their next meeting on May 13th. The distributor is working remotely due to COVID and Glen has been unable to connect with them to get pricing.
- The committee voted to extend the deadline for the Hynds application to May 6th. I met with David Hatch on April 13th to discuss his application. He is planning to do some of the restoration work himself and is working with 5R to price that out. This would be a substantial savings on the project costs. I reiterated that his application was due no later than May 6th.
- Approval for the CIG application was postponed to May 13th pending receipt of 2 bids for the sign and 1 additional bid for the tree.

2019 FIP projects:

- Pursuant to the award letter, FIP applicants have one year to complete their projects which is May 31, 2020.
- I spoke with Ron Ibsen on April 13th. He is in Colorado and unable to leave his home due to COVID-19. I have approved a 60-day extension on his project.
- I left Marc Thayer a voicemail on April 8, 2020, to get an update on the Mendicino building and where they were at with Rail Yard Coffee House negotiations.
- I received an email from Rachel Delventhal on behalf of the Plains Hotel that they did not use any grant funds for the repairs that were completed. Our records indicated that the Façade Easement was never signed.