

**Downtown Cheyenne Development Authority
December Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 17, 2020**

Board Members: Bruce Heimbeck, Sara Weber, Jonathan Savelle, Anthony Ortiz, Katherine Brady, Steve Borin, Breck Collier, Astrid Starship, Jeff White
Ex-Officio: Julie Tucker, MCPD; Mark Christensen, City of Cheyenne; Brian Lovett, Laramie County; Richard Johnson, Cheyenne City Council
Staff: Amber Ash, Haylee Chenchar, Holly Scheer, Amy Mahoney, DAPCPA
Public: Glen Garrett

Meeting called to order at 3:01 pm by Bruce Heimbeck.

Consent Agenda: Board minutes with corrected executive session minutes and a treasurer's report. Motion to accept consent agenda was made by Jeff which was seconded by Breck. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Report: Amber explained that the invoice to the City for \$4000 is the fee charged for watering the plants, after removing 90 of the planters. This would have otherwise cost us twice as much. With new planters with a water reservoir, we will save money, with the lifespan of planters this is a significant savings.

The committee met on Dec. 14. Two of the banks are very strong choices with local service and downtown locations. They need some extra time to finish narrowing down the selections. The two final contenders are ANB and Jonah Bank.

Amber held a meeting with the downtown businesses, city department representatives and Ward I City Council members to discuss snow removal. In the packet there are pictures. The 24-hour hold was removed from the process. In addition, the Clean and Safe crew removed snow from parking areas on 17th and Lincolnway. Amber thanked the City for their work towards improving snow removal following large snow events.

There were 63 businesses in the Small Business Saturday promotion. This allowed us to feature people we haven't before such as B&B, Big Horn, Avenues, USA Tax, etc. There were over 10,000 engagements and many shares.

Diamond Horseshoe is struggling. Haylee met with them and featured them on Facebook which boosted their sales by \$500/day. This is exciting but we can't be the sole marketing arm for businesses. It's important that businesses attend the free marketing trainings we offer. We don't have the staff or the bandwidth to feature all the businesses downtown.

Super Saturday promotions featured 74 businesses. It's a huge undertaking, and Holly spent 3 days alone on phone calls. This was an increase of 11 businesses and we used a slightly tailored list. She needed to make repeat calls. Despite a noon Friday deadline people were still calling Wednesday at noon to be included. We need to crack down on this because it causes issues with advertising partners.

We submitted our CARES Act reimbursement requests but haven't received the funding yet. The City's DUNS number will need to be used.

The account balance for the 17th Street lights keeps decreasing. Robin said the remaining balance can be used to reimburse the DDA for the repairs we've done, so far this is \$6000.

The DDA posted a consumer response survey on Facebook for Small Business Saturday. Response levels were low. Approximately 20% of people said if they hadn't seen the advertising, they wouldn't have participated.

The audit isn't back yet. SLIB and the State Auditor Office have been made aware that we will be in noncompliance and we are waiting for federal guidance that still is pending. It was supposed to be out by fall. We won't meet the deadline. Robin is aware and hopefully this won't affect CARES Act funding.

PayPal is still unresolved. Might be resolved with banking change. On a related note, she refers people with property to tenants.

Amber participated in a work session on the Reed Ave Rail Corridor. Introduction is anticipated for March.

Amber is working on the Lincolnway Placemaking Plan as a proposed 6th Penny Ballot Initiative. This will improve the pedestrian issues and make it less of a highway. We need updated costs. Bruce noted that it's helpful to review the plan and see it and what WYDOT is considering.

Work continues on ArtSpace. Amber, LEADS, the City, and ArtSpace representatives met Dec. 1. We are currently working on financing. There is a potential that Brownfield funds could be used. Anthony is on this committee. We may need to look at this for a potential 6th Penny project to cover land acquisition.

The changes Matt Mateo needed for the Mendocino were approved by the Design Committee. The building as it is currently is neither contributing nor historic and would need a lot of investment to be historic. The front was removed. The money he got was a 65% match to make it historic but it's not possible.

The Radican Building is complete and we've received the invoice for this.

We struggle to obtain a quorum for the Design Committee and need to consider expanding the committee. In the last six months, there have been 2 meetings where we didn't have a quorum. This slows down the work and this is an issue for building owners with development projects. Design Committee time commitments are the second Wednesday every month at 11:30. It's typically professionals from the areas involved and we need diversity in that board. Bruce attends and doesn't vote. Amber explained in response to a question from Astrid that typically this would not be DDA Board Members since they make final determinations on these decisions.

We have several projects anticipated for CIG applications. Ike's Bar and Grill, Hawthorn Tree, JazMinn's Events, and Instant Attraction are among them.

Jonathan asked in we've considered Survey Monkey since it takes Holly three days to call all the businesses. If people don't respond to the survey, he proposed that they we could resend it and this

would be more efficient. Amber explained that we currently do send out both emails and surveys. For Small Business Saturday we used emails not phone calls for the bags and we had an angry business owner contact her afterwards to let her know that she doesn't read emails and doesn't check Facebook and we just need to make exceptions and call her. Many or most businesses don't read the emails and wait for the phone calls. It's an enormous amount of time. In the last month, Holly spent six full days on the phone calling all of the businesses and they still complain. Last survey, we received four responses. Sara noted that this upsets her. She thinks that that first time someone wasn't included that people would pay attention then. She also noted that she appreciates the phone calls from Holly.

Anthony proposed that Board members could donate time as a face to face with business owners. We also can't hand hold them and need buy in. Astrid suggested a texting service. Amber clarified that we can't email some people, Facebook message others, text others, etc. as this becomes very complicated. The businesses then complain that we don't do enough to market them but these are the same ones that don't have voicemail set up and return calls after the deadlines have passed. Breck noted that the Facebook group hasn't had a lot of traction.

President's Report: Bruce thanked those who were involved in the RFP process. He looks forward to that report. Relationships are part of what Amber brings to the DDA. He's looking forward to the Lincolnway Placemaking project. Amber brought up that the staff works more than they should to bring visibility to the downtown and when things don't go well the businesses call and complain. Holly has had to make a lot of calls.

Jeff wanted to let the Board and staff know that when he talks to the City and Council everyone compliments the DDA's work this year. This is a testament to Amber's leadership and staff work. Take a week off and get your breath.

Bruce agreed that the relationships with the city and other partners are what get things done downtown.

City Report: Charles explained that the Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund is working on applications for the Hitching Post. There are expectations and collateral for the loan and ability to pay it back.

Mark updated about the West Edge Overlay Zone. They're working on marketing the Brownfield project and creating a website for this that will be transparent. This will also affect Artspace. He's happy to bring a presentation to the DDA on District mapping.

Steve asked Charles Bloom about the parking issues with the construction happening downtown. Charles said that he would facilitate a conversation with Anissa Gerard about this. Mark agreed and added that the Bell Building is working with the Environmental Quality Department and he will assist with those concerns.

Laramie County: Brian noted that things are slow currently at the county and the county's COVID numbers are the lowest that they've been. The hospital is currently vaccinating their staff. 6th penny will be discussed as soon as new leadership is in place. There are too many projects to fund as in the past. He wanted to thank the Board and the staff for the amount of effort with helping the businesses and taking a strange Christmas and making it good for the community.

DDA Initiatives: The board reviewed the proposal in the board packet for a sign for the DDA office. There are concerns on the cost of the sign. Amber and Bruce have worked with Glen to get the costs down from \$24,000 to \$15,000. This doesn't reflect the \$2,900 architectural design fee that the DDA is obligated to pay regardless of whether they proceed with the sign. Amber explained the importance of the sign to the DDA and why it was needed.

Anthony asked about pricing and whether multiple bids had been received. Bruce explained the process and Amber noted that the contract with Glen was initiated on March 26, 2020. Astrid echoed Anthony's concerns regarding the price. She felt like we need to be conservative and responsible with the Mill Levy funding and public perception. Jonathan noted that the design is simple, elegant, and fits the local aesthetics and we should consider it. Bruce noted that at this time we need to set an amount and move forward. Anthony expressed that for this price point we need to be fiscally responsible and also see a picture and more schematics.

Glen requested that the minutes be amended to reflect that the amount is \$2,900 and he hasn't yet been paid or invoiced. He also added that Bruce and Amber accompanied him to look at what is appropriate and this also came from the Board. Randy Byers and another architect were there and it's hard to get costs without knowing what is being bid on. Design proceeds costs. He considered the other signs in the area, such as XESI and didn't have time for a computer rendering. It will read "Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority and DDA" in the middle. It's simple and there's the subliminal messaging of seeing the place marking on the building.

Astrid inquired about how much of the work is being done out of state, number of bids obtained, and if should we consider going out of state. Glen explained that for the most part the work is local except anodizing because it isn't available here. It's \$885 of the cost. Some of the costs are getting it there and back. It needs a lot of prep work. Three bids would be time consuming. Welding and Machine in Cheyenne has a good reputation. The sign will need to be rolled and it's 44 inches high, 9 feet long and then bowed.

Anthony asked if this includes lighting on the sign. Bruce noted that there is lighting on the building and we can address lighting down the road. Charles asked if it is backlit. It is not. Astrid noted that there are four pegs into the façade where the former sign was. She asked if this is where the new sign would attach to the building. She also asked if this \$18,000 would include Glen's fees. She feels like the reason the DDA doesn't fund box signs is they are outdated and don't represent the historic character of the downtown. She suggested we pay Glen and then do a flat sign with letters.

Glen explained that the four holes into the façade were there to support the old sign. It was originally a XESI sign and was plexiglass with a power feed. The supports don't penetrate all the way into the building so it isn't safe to use them to mount this sign. We do need to consider the character of the building and the time period this building was constructed for.

Steve commented that he's spoken to Astrid and others outside the DDA. There are businesses really struggling and we should be helping businesses like RubyJuice. He does like the sign and the design and a sign will move us forward. This is more expensive than we want but it has his blessing.

Astrid made a motion to hold off to see if the costs could be brought under \$10,000, including Glen's fees. Breck seconded the motion.

Anthony noted that color verification, delivery pickup and other costs are now gone from the bid. He asked why. Glen explained that he would try to couple these costs with other trips to Denver to bundle the time. Unknown conditions happen in design and construction as things come up. Powder coating is about \$2,000 to powder coat and another \$2,000 to prep.

Katie asked if someone came to the DDA for sign assistance and didn't have three bids, what would happen. Bruce noted that by trying to keep things local Glen reached out to companies here and they couldn't do it. Glen explained that this is a custom, one-of-a-kind sign and this can't be done elsewhere. It's reflective of the quasi-governmental nature of the DDA. The committee looked at municipal signs and the business park and Microsoft and this says we will be here for a long time. Steve asked if the sign is hail resistant. Glen indicated that it should be. Astrid said that the DDA's quasi-governmental status is why we need to be fiscally responsible and would like a sign for \$5,000 or less.

Motion passed unanimously.

Michael Radican FIP Award: The FIP grant for Michael Radican is from FY19. The building has been completed but there's a discrepancy in the award letter, the FIP application, and what the building owner anticipated the DDA's share would be, \$46,886. The award letter amount is \$44,432.44. This award doesn't include architectural fees. There is an additional award from 2015 when Amy Surdam was the director. This is a difference of approximately \$2500. The minutes from 2019 don't identify the awards line by line, just as a whole. Amber needs direction from the board as to how to handle the discrepancy.

Astrid made a motion to pay the \$46,886 as this was four directors ago. Motion was seconded by Steve. Amber noted that administratively this needs to be a Board action in case of audit. Glen noted that the numbers needed to be doubled checked.

Astrid made another motion to approve payment and reconciliation of the discrepancy in an amount not exceed \$2600. Motion was seconded by Steve. Motion passed unanimously. Amber noted that the amount is \$2057.98. Amber is directed to pay this amount with permission to release the check as soon as it is cut to close books. No objections.

Mayor's Council: Julie explained that they had elections and the executive council was reelected. Objectives for 2021 are being drafted.

Public Comment: Glen requested that if the DDA is reforming the Design Committee, as a Main Street City, we contact National Main Street and Wyoming Main Street and ask how to structure if the only function will be to review grants. Bruce acknowledged this.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:46 pm.