

Downtown Cheyenne Development Authority

June Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Board Members: Craig Kerrigan, Jeff White, Bruce Heimbeck, Katherine Brady, Jonathan Savelle, Anthony Ortiz, Astrid, Sara Weber, Breck Collier, Steve Borin,

Staff: Amber Ash, Haylee Chenchar, Holly Scheer, Amy Mahoney, DAPCPA

Ex-Officio: Sam Crowley, City of Cheyenne; Buck Holmes, Laramie County; Julie Tucker, MCPD; Mark Christensen, City of Cheyenne; Don Herrold, Historic Preservation Board; Charles Bloom, City of Cheyenne

Guests: Stephanie Pickering, MHP; Keegan Hall, MHP; Linda Klinck, Wyoming Main Street; Kayla Kler, Wyoming Main Street; Margaret Austin, WTE; Glen Garrett

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm by Bruce Heimbeck.

Bruce welcome Commissioner Holmes to the meeting as the new liaison.

Consent agenda: Jeff moved to approved the consent agenda and Anthony seconded the motion Glen Garrett offered a correction to the minutes. Bruce asked if a correction was needed. Amber will review the minutes and adjust accordingly. [After further review, Amber subsequently removed the line in question to avoid further confusion.] Motion passed unanimously.

MHP Audit Presentation: Amber provided a brief introduction on the audit by MHP and introduced Stephanie and Keegan. Stephanie explained that the DDA is always presented discreetly as a component and then incorporated into the city and this year the DDA was just audited as part of the city's audit. As such, fewer transactions were audited but they did cover internal controls, board minutes, cash handling, receivables, revenues, etc. The DDA received a clean or unmodified opinion which is favorable. Stephanie discussed some of the highlights of the audit. Steve moved to accept the audit which was seconded by Katie. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff report: Amber explained that the City had a work session for goal planning which included substantial discussion about Downtown. Amber provided a brief overview of the items discussed including the TIF and district expansion to include Black Hills Energy.

PayPal has been drawn down and once a bank is selected, we will no longer need to deal with PayPal. This will resolve the issues we've encountered with PayPal.

Amber called attention to the social media spreadsheet included in the board packet. Holly went through all posts on the website and social media and catalogued them. Businesses names have been mentioned in one form or another on the website and social media 1,604 times since Haylee started. Amber and Haylee are working on social media guidelines to make sure that this amount of work isn't taken for granted.

Amber noted that we've had 5 businesses open since the last board meeting. Urban Studio wasn't included on the list but they have announced they will be opening a studio downtown, possibly on Thomes. AG Photography opened in the Hynds. Amber also noted that she inadvertently left Alexis Drake off the list of potential CIG applications.

Katie noted that the increase on Facebook is very good to see.

President's Report: Bruce noted that Amber has been with the DDA almost a year. As such, the board will need to review her compensation, her calendar, staff time, and the strategic plan. He asked for volunteers. Craig and Anthony volunteered to assist him with this task.

There is a lot in this report that pertains to the Strategic Plan. A lot has been happening on social media. There is an extension on the sign.

Charles asked where Ike's will be and Amber explained in the old Casa de Trujillo location.

City Report: Charles noted that the new mayor was sworn in and this was good news. A meeting was held to discuss zoning and the West Edge Overlay. They will ask the DDA to distribute a survey on this. The Brownfield Revolving Loan Board will be a meeting in February to close the Bell Building project. As part of the 6th penny, they are working with the Greenway Committee to connect to downtown at Dey and 15th. Union Pacific would not allow an underpass.

Jonathan asked if the fire at the Hitching Post would expedite its demise. Charles explained this actually will complicate matters because the EPA is involved. They will need to wait for the investigation to see if this was arson and whether it will still be eligible for EPA funds.

Commission Report: Buck thanked Chairman Heimback for having him. The county is currently slow and they are currently evaluating 6th penny projects. He's on the Brownfield committee and is glad to serve on this.

Historic Preservation: Don was happy to share that ornament sales were a success and raised over \$14,000 toward the fountain.

MCPD: Julie said she had nothing to mention.

Banking RFP: Anthony explained the procedure for scoring the RFPs. The DDA received five proposals which, after scoring, were narrowed down to the top two. The Committee then held Zoom interviews to ask questions and get clarification. While all 5 banks have a strong tie to the community and Downtown, the decision came down to the suite of services available. Jonah has Wildcatter and merchant services that would allow us to close the PayPal account. Anthony made a motion to go with Jonah Bank which was seconded by Katie.

Steve asked if there was a monthly charge and Amber explained that yes there is; however, both banks charge fees which vary based on types of services utilized, balances in accounts, and the number of transactions. Amber also noted that the DDA isn't a nonprofit but a governmental organization.

Astrid wanted to know before the vote a comparison of the banks and the interest on the DDA's funds. She wanted to know how charges worked. Craig explained account analysis and fees for service against the balance, giving an earnings credit. With interest rates neither consumers nor banks are making money on this. Amber again noted that this depended on services used and it is anticipated that there will be no cost based on the RFP; however, this could change. Amber also explained that some of the DDA's funds are in the Wyoming Government Investment Fund. Katie noted that this was very thorough process with presentations by the bank and the committee decision was unanimous.

Astrid asked to have information one full month before votes. She said she needs more notice to decide on things. Bruce explained that the DDA has been working on this since December. Astrid said she doesn't know what she is voting for in terms of which bank. Anthony explained that the committee met and was diligent on this. It's a lot of information to evaluate before making a recommendation.

Astrid says she still doesn't know how to vote just that they liked Jonah Bank better. Anthony explained some of the important factors were the Wildcatter or sweep account and the merchant services. The other bank was ANB. Astrid said that she doesn't know why she wouldn't vote for the other banks but requested to have all information a month in advance of votes.

Motion passed with Astrid abstaining.

Snow removal: Anthony explained that he has been working with Pete Laybourn and Jason Sanchez at the City to keep businesses operating and comply with ADA requirements. The DDA will clear North/South streets from Pioneer to Warren. The Clean and Safe crew will clear from 15th to 18th. They will feather the snow away from the sidewalks and curbs to fix the lack of parking. They are asking for \$5,000 from the DDA for contractors to do north and south on Carey, Capitol, Warren, and Pioneer. The police station and banks do their own. Anthony anticipated that plowing will cost \$200 to \$250 per hour. Expenditures are anticipated to be \$1,000 per snow event. They would like people to not park on these streets the night of a storm for faster snow removal.

Amber said that she is reworking the budget to allocate \$5,000 for this initiative.

Astrid said it would be an issue for her to not have parking for 30 cars around the Plains. She asked if they can plow around the cars and remove the snow up to the cars. Anthony said that the parked cars slow this down and asked that they be moved to a parking lot to make this fiscally solvent.

Amber noted that next week's meeting has a public notice so this can be discussed then as well as part of the Strategic Plan meeting. That will give her time to present the board with a revised budget and to properly notice this in the paper before a vote is taken.

Astrid asked if we can do snow removal at four inches accumulation instead and noted that she appreciates the week's notice. Anthony said that we could tow cars like every other city. We're doing what needs to be done for businesses and their customers.

No votes taken today on this issue.

Main Street: Linda introduced Kayla as the project manager and that she is the program manager. She said that Amber has enhanced the DDA and wants to embrace the Main Street approach. There are currently ten standards but they are paring these down to six: broad based community commitment, inclusive leadership and capacity, diverse and sustainable funding, strategy driven programming, preservation based economic development, and demonstrated impact and regrowth. The yearly evaluation is a requirement of accreditation.

The board members and Commissioner Holmes took turns introducing themselves. Linda shared that the Main Street conference will be in April and cover a lot of business topics. In addition, there will be a group rate. Kayla began presenting the standards.

Kayla started with Standard VI. This covers the reinvestment reports that Amber does monthly. Katie and Astrid suggested adding in the splash pad, the Christmas décor and the Signs for Seniors. Bruce noted that the website will soon have property listings. Kayla asked Breck to share a success story and he described how Small Business Saturday was a big success as well as the shopping before Christmas. Breck stated that December was the biggest month Red Bison has had since opening. Jeff noted the small business grants that Amber and Craig spearheaded at the beginning of the pandemic. Steve called out the social media stuff and how helpful it has been for businesses who are struggling. Astrid noted the Plains businesses has been down 75% and she directs a lot of business to other local businesses.

Linda moved on to Standard V or the Preservation Based Economic Development. Main Street started in the 1970s to work on preserving historic areas while making them economically viable. Holly reached out to Main Street to set up training. Linda from the State Preservation Office will have a HP101 available in March. Don explained that they have a close working relationship with the DDA. The year before the HPB did some outreach and programming. COVID has made this complicated. Cheyenne has a wonderful historic past that needs to be preserved and a lot of structures remain. They're dedicated to protecting and preserving this and they appreciate the work done on Main Street. Linda said that the National Trust for the Historic Trust should have more flexibility for historic preservation. Steve agreed with her and highlighted the issues he had renovating the Montgomery Ward building because of the windows. Astrid agreed about the window standards. Don said he doesn't want to see buildings fall into disrepair and be torn down. Nothing happens without investment. We need to preserve buildings and retain viability for businesses.

Kayla opened discussion on Standard IV: Strategy Driven Programming. Next week is the Strategic Plan meeting which will capture the four points: economic vitality, design, organization, and promotion. These four points are the Main Street Community Transformation Strategy. Linda noted that Matt Wagner completed a strategy four years ago. Steve said that promotion is tremendous. He noted that before current staff, this didn't happen. He said there is a lot of room for economic vitality, pointing to the success of the Depot and Fridays on the Plaza. He wants to make the Bell Building work for this in the winter. Bigger merchants have a bigger piece of design but it's the smaller merchants who keep things going. Smaller merchants work so hard, sometimes they don't pay attention to what's out there. Astrid said that the pandemic set us back but focused us on values. She noted Cheyenne's important history with transportation. Don noted the transcontinental railroad, the airmail routes, the development of commercial airlines with United starting here. Transportation is the story of Cheyenne. Linda asked if there's a business owners' group. Anthony mentioned that he and Holly knocked on the doors of every business downtown to meet with them and ask for their support. Katie noted that we have a weekly/biweekly Zoom for businesses.

Kayla introduced the next standard: diverse funding. Monthly reports have the financial reports and there was an audit done. Linda stated that it is good that the DDA is connected with the city to do this. This standard is important to National Main Street to see a diversity in funding. Bruce said that in the past we had TIF funding and this went away when Black Hills moved. They're looking at this coming back in addition to the mill levy there. Without city funding it's hard to make long range plans. Jonathan agreed that the District should be expanded. Craig explained how the DDA could be income generating with investments. Linda agreed that some mature downtowns are the developers for downtowns. This allows them to make sure the downtown is developed right.

Kayla moved on to Standard II: Organizational Leadership. Staff answered this on the evaluation form. Linda said she wants to make sure they're being positive members and contributing. You can disagree when together but need to agree in public. Steve noted that he directs visitors around downtown and points out businesses. Linda explained there are matrixes for helping make sure boards are diverse, well thought out and inclusive. Bruce noted that when members come on, they get an orientation book. Amber and staff support them with background information. Katie feels like there's great guidance and feels likes staff push board members to do their job to the fullest.

Kayla presented the last standard I: Broad Based Community Commitment. Linda said that growth and development needs to happen for Main Street with community support. Customers in Cheyenne are outlying, many of them within two minutes of the downtown. We need City and county support. She is willing to go with Bruce to meet with the new mayor about this. Wyoming MS likes to see improvement

in engagement level. From the introductions, the DDA has people outside the district represented. Sara noted that at the community cleanup a religious organization came to help. It was good to see them involved. The banks could be involved when there are events. Breck recounted things like Alf who is outside the District doing Summertime on the Streets. He and Corey did this out of the goodness of their hearts and it was good for the sales downtown. Craig noted that since the board is large and appointed by the mayor there should be outreach for applicants and corporate members. Linda agrees that involving big corporations opens up grants for the downtown and helps the community thrive. Bruce said Anthony is helpful with this. He noted that SunCorp will do grants. Jonathan brought up the past loft tours done downtown that showed building owners that they could build out the second floors of their buildings and these would be occupied. There isn't enough living space downtown. Don agreed that this is great for historic preservation. Linda agreed that having people live downtown is good for shopping and also safety.

Linda noted that this concluded the standards. She suggested that, in the future, Amber not do so much of the work so the Board could do more. Bruce agreed the staff does a lot. Linda will recommend us for accreditation. She noted that wanting to evaluate Amber is a good thing.

No public comment was offered.

The meeting adjourned 5:20 pm.