

**Athens Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, May 13, 2021
2:00pm – 4:00pm
Innovation Hub, 210 Spring Street**

REGULAR MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Ford, David Lynn, Jason Leonard, Mike Hamby, Kelly Girtz, BJ Hardy, and Drew Dekle

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeremy Smith, Greg Sowell, and Rachel Swartz

1. **Approval of Minutes** – Mike Hamby motioned to approve the minutes from March 2021. Kelly Girtz seconded. Motion approved.

2. **Public Input** - none

3. **Community Reports**

- **CVB** – CVB Sales team will be attending three in-person conferences to prospect for convention/sports/corporate business. Athens Restaurant Week is being planned for July 10-17. Restaurants should be on the lookout for signup information by the end of this month. Athens CVB has applied for tourism marketing grant money from the state and plans a \$125,000 recovery ad campaign for the summer travel season. Leisure travel is rebounding quite quickly and quite strongly; we can expect good volume over the summer. Staffing shortages are an industry-wide issue being experienced throughout the nation. Very encouraging level of interest in Athens from press visit inquiries as well as site inspections by meeting planners.

Chamber – none

DABA – none

Downtown Outreach – none

4. **Directors' Report**

Planning and Outreach

- A. Tax Levy & Assessment for the Year 2021**– Under the authority of the Act creating the Athens Downtown Development Authority, up to one mil can be levied and assessed against real property in the downtown Athens Area, as defined by the act. Kelly Girtz moved to approve the resolution recommending a tax of one mill upon the value of said real estate as fixed by the Tax Digest of Athens Clarke County, and to authorize the directors to transmit the resolution to the ACC government. BJ Hardy seconded. Motion approved.
- B. Community Enhancement Program (CEP) FY22 Funding Request** – For FY2022 the CEP funds were approved for \$65,000 annually from the Hotel/Motel Tax Special Revenue Fund for operating expenses. Unexpended funds lapse at the end of each fiscal year. David Lynn reviewed all applications for funding requests based on the diversity of the event and the attendance and impact of the event. There are 16 applications for FY2022 requesting a total funding amount of \$114,051 and reviewed each application for program need, merits, and benefit. The board decided to table this discussion for the next meeting.
- C. Gift Card Program** – For several years, the board has discussed a digital gift card program. A new gift card program is called Yiftee. They use a Mastercard platform and are administered by a third-party provider. Greg Sowell mentioned that the ADDA would need to be clear on the fees to the consumers. Drew Dekle approved staff to initiate the program pending review by ADDA lawyer. Mike Hamby seconded. Motion approved.
- D. Downtown Park Update** – The T-SPLOST staff has asked the ADDA to delay the start of the construction of the Downtown Park until remodeling the Costa Building has reached a point where the parking lot is no longer needed for staging.

Business Services

- E. Park Here Athens Contract Renewal** – Our surface parking lots have been managed by Frank Pitman and Park Here Athens. In May of 2020, the ADDA board approved a new contract with Park Here Athens for one year, with the option to renew for two additional one-year periods. Last year, due to Covid, there was no revenue. Mike Hamby approved to execute all necessary documents to renew the current contract. Kelly Girtz seconded. Motion passed.
- F. Façade Grant Request – Arden’s Garden** – The Façade Grant committee reviewed the application from Arden’s Garden requesting \$3060 in matching funds, and recommended approval. Mike Hamby

motioned to approve the grant, contingent on receiving all permits from ACC and, if necessary, a Certificate of Appropriateness. Drew Dekle seconded. Motion passed.

G. Reach Grant Request – KA Artist Shop Expansion – The Reach Grant Committee reviewed the attached Reach Grant application from KA Artist Shop requesting \$4200 in matching funds. These funds will cover 50% of the estimated cost of their expansion to the adjoining second-story space. KA Artist Shop will be completing the work themselves. Mike Hamby motioned to approve the application. BJ Hardy seconded. Motion passed.

H. HARPS Bethel Village Art Installation – Helping Art Reach Public Spaces (HARPS) is seeking to form a collaboration between Broderick Flanigan and other organizations to guide the HARPS Temporary Art project. The plan is to use the vacant apartment buildings at Bethel Midtown Village before they are demolished. There will be temporary art installations, murals, sculptures, and paintings. Mike Hamby motioned to approve funding, up to \$2000 with matching funds, for the HARPS temporary art project, funded from the community events programming. Kelly Girtz seconded. Motion passed.

I. ADDA Preliminary Budget – Linda Ford provided the board with the FY22 ADDA Preliminary Budget with a budget narrative. The board will vote on the budget in June or July, after the Mayor and Commission approve the ACC budget.

5. Old Business - Kelly Girtz had a follow-up conversation regarding the property transfer of the parking lot to the federal government building parking lot. They would still want a 50 ft. security clearance around the building, and space for their vehicles.

6. New Business – Linda Ford is working on board retreat for August or September. Since Athens is now a GEMS community, Georgia Mainstreet Association will provide a facilitator free of charge.

Jason Leonard said that Mayor Girtz had a face-to-face meeting with some bar and restaurant owners. This led to discussion of a formation of a round table with the Chamber/ADDA/bar owners. They will meet again prior to students returning in August. There will also be a return to 2am bar closure prior to the end of the federal emergency. In return, the bar owners would hold a vaccination event.

7. Financial Report – Linda Ford went over the financial report and noted that the ADDA is slowly recovering from the losses of the Covid shut-down.

8. Suggested addenda topics for next meeting –

9. **Executive Session** - none

10. **Adjourn** – BJ Hardy motioned to adjourn, and Mike Hamby seconded. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2021.

Jason Leonard, Board Chair

Linda Ford, Director of Business Services

David Lynn, Director of Planning and Outreach