

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING
200 Burnt Mountain Road
Jasper, Georgia 30143
MINUTES
Monday, March 24, 2025 @ 5:30 PM

Members Present:

Amy Leake-Chair
Marty Callahan
Sonny Proctor, MD
Jack Dunn
Brian Rittenberry
Pam Watkins

Members Absent

Parish Lowrie

Guests in Attendance:

Amy Meyers
Amberlee Godfrey
Chris Leake
Brandon Hannah

Press

Mari Livsey-Know Pickens
Dan Pool -Pickens Progress

Agenda item: Call meeting to order and Approval of Agenda **Presenter:** Chairwoman Leake

Chairwoman Leake, seeing a quorum, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Mr. Brian Rittenberry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda item: Adopt Agenda

Presenter:Chairwoman Leake

Discussion:

Chairwoman Leake and Mr. Marty Callahan discussed amending the agenda to include Ms. Amy Meyer from the Chamber of Commerce to discuss BRAG. Any discussion? Then this item will be considered Item #1 under new business.

Conclusion:

Chairwoman Leake called for a motion to adopt the amended agenda. Mr. Marty Callahan made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mr. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to approve carried 5 to 0.

Agenda item: Adopt Minutes from 02.24.2025 Meeting

Presenter:Chairwoman Leake

Discussion: Chairwoman Leake asked if anyone had any discussion on the March 24, 2025, meeting minutes. Any additional discussion concerning the 0.24.2025? Hearing none, called for a motion.

Conclusion: Chairwoman Leake called for a motion to approve the 02.24.2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Sonny Proctor, MD made a motion to approve the 02.24.2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to approve carried 5 to 0.

Agenda item: Item #1 BRAG (Bicycle Ride Across Georgia)

Presenter: Ms. Amy Meyers – Pickens County Chamber

Discussion: Ms. Meyers discussed that the cyclists will be here in Jasper on Monday June 2, 2025, for an overnight stay in Lee Newton Park. There will be approximately 1200-1800 cyclists. Ms. Meyers stated that all Downtown Businesses have been invited to discuss various options, including opening their businesses to stay open late to provide some dining and shopping opportunities. Things that are still needed are transportation options to and from Lee Newton Park, to provide the riders with the ability to shop and dine in our downtown area and entertainment options for the afternoon/evening. Ms. Meyers said that they have at least 2 golf carts committed to assisting with transportation. Ms. Kim Goldener, Deputy City Manager, has received the completed event application for the use of Lee Newton Park. This group provides for the cyclists' needs with items such as a First Aid Centers, Bike Repair Centers, Portable restrooms, and training classes including yoga classes. Ms. Pam Watkins asked what type of entertainment is needed and who would be paying for this. Ms. Meyers stated that it is not within the budget for the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce but is hopeful that a combination of businesses and others will consider contributing to this item.

Agenda item: Item #2 Financial Report

Presenter: Mr. Marty Callahan

Discussion: Mr. Callahan discussed the Hemlocks Invoice for Downtown Beautification. He stated that we have received two donations so far for downtown live events. Mr. Callahan also discussed Hemlocks invoices for downtown beautification. Chairwoman Leake asked everyone to review the Hemlock's invoice and agreement and that any action taken on this item should be discussed at the next meeting. Brian Rittenberry asked when the next planting will be. Chairwoman Leake stated that I will need to actually flip through it and make sure they're scheduled. That is why I said let's go through this as a board and let's look at it and see if we can or need to make any changes or any amendments to this Hemlocks service agreement. Mr. Douglas stated in anticipation the packet of information sent on Friday or Saturday did include it. We do need to talk about it and I was going to talk about it and go into further discussion of the invoice/agreement in the general updates section of the agenda. We need authorization because I was not aware of a lot of stuff as the new member, so this pack of information is you know is their existing agreement they have been operating off of a different agreement, so we'll talk about that in a little bit. In terms of walking through what their proposal is and then if the DDA desires is to continue that. Chairwoman Leake asked Mr. Douglas if he would touch on that in his updates. Sonny Proctor, MD asked about the deadline for contributions for the downtown live events and stated he had concerns about raising the funding for these items. Mr. Callahan explained that the deadline for contributions is an attempt to gather as much information as possible so the banner that is used for these events can be completed. Coca Cola provides this banner and an in-kind donation. This is a huge banner that takes approximately six weeks to prepare. To be placed on the banner requires a contribution of \$1,000 or more, so these contributors want to see the banner up by the first downtown live so knowing this we need the deadline to make this possible. If someone wants to provide a contribution at any time, we are happy to accept but must tell them that we are accepting their donation, but it is with the understanding that they will not see their business listed on the banner, if it is after the deadline.

Sonny Proctor, MD stated this is an acceptable strategy to continue to solicit funds even after the deadline. He understands that we are in good financial shape for the events but wants to remember that there are several other obligations that we have responsibilities for. This was discussed in our initial strategic planning meeting when we first revitalized the DDA and one of our priorities was to maintain the appearance of downtown.

Mr. Brian Rittenberry is concerned about the current donation process. When you have a short window of time to gather these contributions it makes it difficult since a lot of businesses feel that they are hit

hard for contributions. But if we were given more time to gather these donations it would allow for the donors to plan it in their budget for the next year. I understand that it may be hard to keep track of everyone who has committed to next year and who's may be willing to do so, but this would allow us to know who to reach to. This could potentially make it easier for them to commit and be able to put their budgets.

Sonny Proctor, MD stated that this was something that could be discussed during a planning session, but it needed to be rescheduled, and I am sure Amy will be addressing that. I think that it is really hard for people to understand where we are and where we will be very soon. We've been doing a phenomenal job at putting on events and are gradually changing how we have been handling these things. But we will ultimately be moving into the Main Street Program. This program is designed to be an economic development driver, and we will continue to learn the requirements which include some educational training required to be completed. I have taken the course which helped me understand it and you will see that there is a transition period where we will be moving from an event planner to driving the businesses downtown and there will be benefits that they will see. I appreciate your comments.

Chairwoman Leake provided an explanation for the misunderstanding of her email if it appeared that the deadline for contributions was the final date and stated that is not the case. The deadline was intended to make sure that the donor business understood that if they make a contribution after the deadline we would not be able to place them on the big banner due to time restraints (approximately 6-8 weeks) for the printing of the banner and having it ready before the first downtown live event.

Agenda item: Item #3 Downtown Live Update

Presenter:Mr. Marty Callahan

Discussion: Mr. Callahan discussed that we do have an understanding for the cost for these events, however, the costs have increased including police presence. Mr. Callahan has stated the he has a couple of vendors that have not confirmed their participation. He stated that the banner is a big draw for businesses and is a large financial piece. We have several in-kind donors that will cover the cost of the bands, but with the size of the events growing there is a need to provide more well-known bands. Tutton Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Jasper has committed to providing bands for two of the events. Marty stated that he has towns from all over asking how we are hosting these types of events. We need to have a plan moving forward on how we plan to move forward with these events.

Chairwoman Leake wants to bring awareness to the changes in leadership and board members. One of the former board members handled all the publications and social media so we are asking for the public, sponsors and vendors for a tiny bit of grace as we maneuver through this and take on roles and responsibilities that I will admit that I am a little bit unfamiliar with but I'm willing to learn more for the betterment of our processes. I met Sonny and Parish and showed them the complicated process when it comes to vendor and sponsor applications. If I had sat behind a desk, I might be more proficient at this and it would have probably moved along a lot faster, but again we are a volunteer organization. We are appointed members, but we all have businesses and so I just wanted to publicly say that if the vendors and sponsors will give just a tiny bit of grace we make things better. We do understand that everyone's name was not mentioned last year and will do our very best to make sure that all of that has been resolved and not only resolved but executed in a much better manner moving forward. Pam has been very gracious to help us out and volunteer her time and expertise to assist us in all of this. So thank you to Pam. Are there any other questions or comments about the downtown live events update or dates?

Agenda item: Item #4 Main Street America Update

Presenter:Chairwoman Leake

Discussion: Chairwoman Leake state she will segue both the Main Street America update and the DDA Retreat. We were planning our retreat that we do every single year to plan DDA's goals and objectives and what we plan to do for the entire year, and we include a one-year and a five-year goals. Last year we met almost every single goal except the number one which was to have the Main Street program up and

running or in the process. The first part to that was to have the start-up program manager in place and hired. Since we've had some change in leadership that's been just a little bit of a challenge and so we reached out to Elizabeth Elliot to confirm the dates and times for hotels and where she was going to eat, the question of "Have you hired your manager yet?". Since we had not gotten there yet, she didn't feel that there was a need for her to come out just yet. So we put a pause on our DDA Planning Retreat until we get the manager position filled since this position will be responsible for helping us implement all of our goals and objectives. The number one article section is to appoint and/or hire a local startup program manager. We are really excited about this and can't wait for Brandon's update on it. Once this person is hired we can move forward with the other requirements and implementation of the program. Any questions from the board about the Main Street America program?

Sonny Proctor, MD stated that I am about to freak Amy about alcohol because I am going to call up one or more and you don't have to respond. I am just telling you that I have more to add to the story that I think will clarify some of the issues. I'll take some of the responsibility for some of it. We've been in communication with Elizabeth Elliot quite frequently about our expectations were with respect to the hiring and also the other steps that we need to go through. When Amy reached out to actually her associate, Ebony, last week or so to talk about the retreat we learned and I didn't learn this at first, but I learned because I followed up a bit with Elizabeth when Amy had first started the planning for our annual retreat. I had tried to tag on that we had a requirement for Main Street USA to have a planning session that is led by the DCA. I believe that there has been a little bit of miscommunication between Elizabeth Elliot and me and Amy because they had clearly said that they hoped that would serve a purpose of our planning retreat. They met with Amy to talk about agenda items for what was really our annual retreat. They learned that we had not met the training requirements. So I think in order for them to move forward with the planning session we will need to have the required Main Street USA training. I have mentioned this before in multiple meetings. It's an online training course for \$75 per person. I went through it pretty quickly, but I would recommend allowing for up to two days. I believe that once we have taken the course it will lay the groundwork for moving forward. By obtaining the DDA 101 and Main Street 101 training it will help as we go through our planning session for Main Street USA. We are working with a professional organization and it's fundamental foundation of how financial matters are handled in Georgia. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is a very high level professional organization with tremendous educational resources and we are going to have to access to those resources and their four point program which involves economic drivers and resources to design and historical preservation. There may be some noise out there about why we're doing this and what it's going to mean to our community but have to remember that Main Street is the fundamental heart of our community including the county, Jasper is the economic driver for our county because it is where most of our revenue is generated and the county gets a tremendous portion of it. There is a lot of people in the county who want to tell us how to do things and what we should or shouldn't be doing differently. This doesn't change the fact that we're excited about this. So again I apologize Madam Chairwoman, but I wanted to make sure the point was that they recognized that we were not ready, and they were bold enough to tell us knowing how excited we are and how long we have been working on this, that we needed to put the brakes for just a minute.

Chairwoman Leake stated I want to reiterate that the DCA gives us the certification, so it is our responsibility to hold up our end on what we were supposed to doing. We don't go to solicit that from them it is something that we have to earn. They give us a lot of training opportunities and it takes a lot of work. We have done a lot of work on the back end, but there is still a lot of work to be done. I'll just say if this is going to take more than a month or two, I still find it imperative that we move forward with a planning board retreat of some type even if it isn't led by DCA. I just think we are behind the ball with it being March and we plan for our year with year-end goals. So, let's just keep that in our minds.

Sonny Proctor, MD asked if we can make this an agenda item for next month's meeting where we can specifically talk about our retreat separate from the Main Street program? I am going to still push all of you to get all the training for DDA 101 and Main Street 101. We cannot do our DCA Planning Session until

we have all received this training. This will also include the hiring of the Community Engagement Manager because it is a requirement of the Main Street program. You have to have a person that is dedicated to the responsibilities of the job, and it cannot be another person within the city whether that be the city manager or deputy city manager.

Chairwoman Leake stated one main goal is to hire the staff for the main street program and then everything else hopefully, I put a lot of faith in that will fall into place. Moving on to general updates from the city manager's office from downtown lights all the way to community engagement position.

Agenda item: Item #5 General Updates

Presenter: City Manager's Office

Mr. Brandon Douglas stated that a couple of weeks ago, Brian I think we kind of initiated some questions and it may or may not mean anything to y'all but I am still new as well so it helped me to put this stuff together cause it's not been a year since I've been back so when I was gone none of this happened while I was not here. So, I am back and that is why I put together this packet where you will see things such as the downtown lights and the history when Jack kind of led the efforts along with, I think, some of the chamber efforts, Amy and downtown merchants and the elected. The downtown landscaping I asked Hemlocks to provide their service agreement that they've used in the past as well as an updated one and you'll see the email that kind of confirms the specifics on the second to last page. We'll go into the specifics as well as the hosting domain which I did not include because I do not think there has been an email chain as to where we are now, and do we know if they have secure services. The city uses Mari Livsey to help us, so I reached out to her Friday, and I think she is willing to help DDA with this. We did receive the social media proposal and that is your last page of the packet. We also have some information on the DDA training, I talked with Jennifer Nelson and confirmed that she has Monday, June 9th available and we have confirmed Chat Tech is available. We will continue to push out information to everyone as a reminder of the upcoming June 9th training date. We'll get back to the next two items later as they do not have a long discussion. I'll jump back up to the first four or five items. You will remember last month I kind of and really the last two months I've can of thrown a lot of information at y'all that I have uncovered as well and tried to disseminate in a readable format the reason why I continue to kind of push that forward is I find it easier to understand because someone says like Marty did a moment ago, hey what is the cost associated with doing a downtown live and in simplistic terms when you look at the 2024 expenses if you extract out/backout the generator costs per night, which I think is not an option for 2025 it's about \$12,500, so you do that times four events, that is about \$50,000. So, you will see on the first page in the packet you have a balance of \$25,000 but again the way the city's finance director has segregated contributions donations separate from downtown live events. So, the \$22,000 that comes from the hotel/motel tax from the city to the DDA as a contribution essentially goes towards all of these non-public type things. I think the idea was people who wanted to donate to downtown live events not to donate to landscape and basic operating needs. So, when you look at the landscapers' quote of \$7,800, social media quote \$4,500, the DDA training \$4,000 and then I put in a reservation for lights because reaching out to the vendor and followed up with another vendor and this is unfortunately just the way it is they will not give a service agreement.

Downtown Lights –

Discussion: Mr. Brandon Douglas continued to explain that there is the idea it could be anything from \$1,000, it may be \$3,000, or more and the vendors will request the amount you have budgeted to spend. I talked to Jack just to get a little bit of background, and the idea is the vendor can come out and assess and they say, "Okay time and materials can be \$1,800." Well without having this firm commitment from you all to say, "Hey we're fine to spend up to X then I don't feel as though it's appropriate for me to say yeah here's \$5,000." Because you'll see in the quote the original was \$10,700, so at some point there's this epiphany of sorts of have we run this course they say that typically they get 10 years out of them it's

been about 6 years I don't know I'm not the guy so the only thing that I was going to do is if y'all are okay with the idea of saying "Hey we're authorized up to \$2,500 or \$5,000 whatever it is to get the lights back on." Then at that point moving forward we just know that there is no service order and it's going to be a time and material that they've been doing I guess since the impetus of when were the lights were installed so the reason I brought those numbers up is that's about \$18,850 of the \$22,000 is essentially from the city's it covers those known cost when you look at those known sunk costs it doesn't have any effect on the downtown live events and so with the carryover from years past you there's about a need for \$25,000 left to go to carry on for the remainder of this season.

Downtown Landscaping – Brandon Douglas - The main street maintenance says the flower beds are twice a month for 25 beds and maintain the crepe myrtles are pruned once a year for \$3,000 and the flower beds cost \$7,800 per year. So, if it's the pleasure of the board the chair can sign that on the DDA's behalf.

Social Media proposal –

Discussion:

Brandon Douglas - With regards to the social media again I have not communicated with the vendor, and they merely submitted an invoice, and it does appear as though based on 2024 expenses it does appear as though it has gone up from last year to this year. So again, I haven't communicated it, I was just going to bring this to the DDA board for your input.

Sonny Proctor, MD asked "Amy was this what we talked about in the meeting with Parish?"

Chairwoman Leake stated "Yes that is correct and if I may the statement was made status quo at our last DDA meeting was we are moving forward with the understanding of quote and unquote status quo as it pertains to downtown live events, the kids jumpy area, the social media just let's not reinvent the wheel so if we want to keep those two things separate, the social media status quo. I would like a little more time to the review the landscape services agreement, if there needs to be a decision today.

Brandon Douglas - This is not me trying to say not mine, it's just legitimately I know you had asked so I reached out to Jason and said "Hey can you send something I'll present to the DDA. So in terms of from an ownership perspective I don't want there to be any sort of thinking that I have this idea but in terms of even from I think what spurred this on is I think that there was the acknowledgement that okay well DDA wanted to provide this enhancement to Main Street and I think that was the impetus of this agreement, but I'll just tell Hemlocks to just put a hold until we have him an answer.

Sonny Proctor, MD - So Hemlocks was definitely discussed during the budgeting process I do remember that and ironically I think initially the lights I think they offered us a service agreement when we first did the lights. Jack, do you remember? Jack answered, "Yes sir, they did." Sonny Proctor, MD stated "But we didn't do it."

Chairwoman Leake - Anyway, okay so far as the lights, landscaping and the hosting domain, those remain on pause, does the social media proposal need a vote or are we just going status quo from last year?

Sonny Proctor, MD - What was our last year's cost, is this \$4,550? Yes, so in our meeting that Amy and I had with Parish, he and I realized the level of detail that it was going to require to come up to speed in a relatively short period of time and so we made a couple of suggestions about ways to mitigate that which became evident that it wasn't a possibility and if you want to discuss that I would recommend that we do that in an executive session at another meeting. But we thought that since she had done such a good job and could take care of most of this stuff, we felt like we thought it was a good thing to move forward with and if we are going to move forward with it I would recommend that you request a motion and see whether the board supports that or not.

Chairwoman Leake - All right if you have your proposals in front of you those are on the last page from Crucial Social from Libby McRae, and she's done it for the past 3 years. If you want a breakdown and can show you what all is involved in doing the social media and the marketing I'll be more than glad but I think my 20 or 30 minutes that we spent with that I spent with Sonny and Parish proved to be quite time

consuming and at the end of the meeting both of their suggestions were somebody's going to have to do it and I don't think it was going to be either myself, Parish or Sonny going on the computer doing social media branding and we did make a suggestion that Libby help us with a bit more with our website and you know promoting in that manner but if we are okay with remaining as the kind of verbiage has been status quo.

Sonny Proctor, MD - Is there any need to do any kind of bid process? Is this considered a service that has been provided for us?

Brandon Douglas - It's a continuation of professional services so it is up to the board's discretion.

Brian Rittenberry - Is the website included in this price?

Chairwoman Leake - The website is not included in this price. We have been discussing with Mari Livsey the potential of her taking over the DDA website and our hope in the future, that the Downtown Live website can be maintained by our community engagement management position.

Brandon Douglas - Just from a staff's perspective we just outsource that because we do not have the talent or resources to do it justice.

Chairwoman Leake - In house now. Do you think that position will be the new position will be able to?

Brandon Douglas - I would not want to put those expectations on them. They may could but we were looking more at someone who's going to have a different skill set and trades than technology training. There'll be social media.

Chairwoman Leake - That's unfortunate if I could learn how to navigate it.

Brandon Douglas - It may be I just didn't want to create false expectations that we're hiring someone that's qualified the way that someone who does it more regularly would be.

Chairwoman Leake - Understood. We can adjust and discuss this with Libby if this is something she would consider.

Brian Rittenberry - That's why I was asking because she's going to charge basically a \$1,000 an event to come out and take the photos, on site photos, videos, graphics, logos, etc., etc., etc., so she would be perfect. When she goes to upload that content into our social media to just go ahead and do it on the website, if she needs to add another \$100 and believe me it is not like it used to be 20 years ago where you're having to sit and write HTML code, most everything is click and upload and it's done.

Chairwoman Leake - She has all of those preset you know so she's not spending hours and hours, but she's right there.

Brian Rittenberry - So I think it would be worth a conversation with her just that she may take that up.

Chairwoman Leake - As this proposal is right now for \$4,500 for her social media services as it is listed, can I get a motion or is there a motion to continue with the professional services of the Crucial Social?

Brian Rittenberry - Let me ask one more question, she's got on here under the social media services at the bottom part, \$550 and it's talking about content calendar development, did she provide us a copy of the content calendar?

Chairwoman Leake - Yes and I three years ago I started pre-approving it. I used to approve every single post as it was coming through. We finally got smart, and I preapproved every post that way she doesn't have to just constantly be sending posts for approval. I can or she can provide you with the calendar of how each thing looks, but yeah there is a content calendar.

Brian Rittenberry - I was just curious because I don't really know what a lot of this stuff costs, I know time is valuable especially somebody that is good and the social media is really good for Downtown Live and that helps drive it.

Chairwoman Leake - I wish if we were going to make a motion, I wish I could have her here to present what she does, because she came last year and presented us with what she offers and the statistics and the numbers.

Sonny Proctor, MD - Is there any question about the quality of services that she provides?

Brian Rittenberry – No, I don't think so.

Marty Callahan – I don't have a problem with the quality of it. It's one of the vendors. I believe it is social media in a nutshell. It's everywhere, it's something you can't define what social media is anybody can do that it's everything about everything that's not newspaper billboard and there the lady that mentioned it. She said we need anything about social media, and I know there were things out there but it needs to be more if we're going to sell it as an ad to a sponsor it needs to be defined exactly what they should expect to get.

Brian Rittenberry – Yes.

Marty Callahan – I don't think we do a good job with that so if I am going to ask to be vote on a sponsorship to add pay for this I would expect a lot more explanation of what she does and that we can show that to a \$1,000 - \$5,000 Sponsor because they want to know because they want to. I'm not saying they have to see every ad, every social media that's out there from you know from Facebook to Twitter to whatever it is. But there is a need to know at least what they're getting and we don't do a good job of that.

Sonny Proctor – So well of all the people that I have interacted with and I know most of the people that are our supporters and I am only aware of three that said that they were displeased, there may be more, I am just aware of three.

Marty Callahan – Well there's I mean this need to cleaned up. I mean and then and if we're going to offer this you know and a lot of these things I don't know if it takes 2 minutes like you say or five minutes or how much to do but it needs to be more defined. I think she does a great job. I mean I've heard more people talk about how we do with it but if we've got sponsors that say "Hey I didn't seem my ad or I didn't see this on my Facebook page or whatever." We need to be able to address that and say "Well here's where you hit our page or here's our page where it posted. We need to be able to prove that. I'm sure in the media world that's not hard to do well.

Brian Rittenberry - So that is why I was asking about a content calendar because if somebody has done a sponsorship part of her content calendar can be to schedule a post and as fare as her constant to you know her taking more time to do it, it's very simple thing to copy and past and you just you can she can schedule it all that way we know that no one has been missed show us where it is scheduled and you can print it out. But does it also include all forms of social media not just Facebook?

Chairwoman Leake – Correct all forms of social media, all Instagram all forms of social media. Like I said I am speaking on her behalf. So I and this is a very clear, but yeah I am speaking on her behalf so that I am very clear, but yeah she has access to all social media avenues and other she puts it out to other communities as well not just Jasper. But yeah everything but print.

Brian Rittenberry - Okay.

Marty Callahan - Yeah, I would just like to see it more explained and something that we can show to people that pay for the sponsorships.

Chairwoman Leake - So include the sponsorship in with this. Understood.

Marty Callahan – I'd like to recommend Brian be on that committee, because he sounds like he knows what he is talking about.

Brian Rittenberry – Well I mean you know with running small businesses, you have to kind of do it all. Social Media is really I mean it's where it's at.

Chairwoman Leake – Do we want to move forward with a status quo for this Crucial Social quote so we can move forward or do we want to table this?

Pam Watkins – I think table just because I need to um cuz I do all the social media and I have no concept of what a good price for this is. This price to me and I just may be a cheap person, it seems crazy , so I would at least like to do a little bit more research to see like and this may be a cheap price but for me I'am just I don't want, I would not feel comfortable voting on it without knowing that and educating myself on it.

Chairwoman Leake – Understood.

Marty Callahan – I think she needs to be here to talk if we can have it.

Chairwoman Leake – So that would be April 28th which will be our next DDA meeting. So are you guys okay with little to no social media presence on the Downtown Live page other than what me Amy and Pam could muster up and do for one, two, three, four, five or more weeks?

Sonny Proctor, MD - I was, I'm just recommending that we either have a motion or we don't I'm not going to concede to what I'm willing to accept above or beyond what we already have in place if that makes any sense whatsoever, I mean I'm happy with what's happened thus far. I just I wished we had kind of in an informal committee made a recommendation to move forward based on the level of frustration that I saw. Technically this is not on the agenda so we don't need a table although we could do a table. We could call for a motion or we can just make sure that it's an item on the agenda on our next meeting and with a to do recommendation to follow up on not only the price but the services provided.

Pam Watkins - How about this, what if the I know I've heard like you know status quo and we did have a meeting about that like maybe if we have funds available for this now move forward with it, but moving into stuff for next year maybe revisit it, if you know because I'm worried about the money for events and stuff if that makes sense.

Chairwoman Leake - Let me be very clear that I do not, I am not a proponent of misuse of any donations. There is by no means that I'm, am I out trying to personally say that I would any of these people I would like to be a hopefully we're a board of good stewards of money and not.

Marty Callahan - I'd like to be able to work with her and try to do what she maybe is telling us to do what she maybe is telling us to do for type of content. But if it's going to be the next board meeting that we have to get her in here and talk to her, if we can try to the week before then with her and try to get it resolved before then and not wait until it's April 20th or whatever that day is.

Pam Watkins - Yeah it is like a week and half.

Marty Callahan - So just days before the next meeting.

Sonny Proctor, MD - So with all due respect if we're going to make a decision, can't we make it here in this meeting and I am not being critical of that then we need to make that decision in some other public forum and I would not recommend a special call meeting for this, but I think a good idea would be possibly for um to get a little more detail from her with the expectation that she either presents to a small group of folks or at our next meeting and we make a decision there. I think the question then becomes is the value, if she engages on the next downtown live, is the value going to be worth it and should it be 25% less in essence but that's what I would guess

Pam Watkins - I would say like let's what do you say motion to do the thing?

Chairwoman Leake – Motion to accept the continuation of the Crucial Social Media Marketing. I have Pam, can I have a second?

Brian Rittenberry - Well I have got a question real quick, I just went back and pulled the post on Facebook. I didn't look at Instagram or anything but on Facebook specifically there was a post on 3/21, 3/1, 2/25 and on 2/11, so basically and prior to 2/11 the last post was August 10th.

Chairwoman Leake – Yes, when her contract was out and those other posts from that point on has been me. Okay so I do not want to be your social media manager, if you don't mind.

Brian Rittenberry – So she, it's \$4,500 for four events?

Chairwoman Leake - She will start immediately once payment is made. She will start today.

Brian Rittenberry - So, this is not even a full year of content?

Jack Dunn - No, it's not.

Chairwoman Leake - I have a motion from Pam, can I get a second?

Marty Callahan – I'll second

Conclusion: Chairwoman Leake called for a motion to approve The Crucial Social Media Marketing contract. Ms. Pam Watkins made a motion to approve. Mr. Marty Callahan provided a second. Motion to approve carried 5 to 0.

Chairwoman Leake – Thank you very much, moving on to DDA training and general update section from Mr. Brandon Douglas.

DDA training –

Brandon Douglas – So just to clarify and not to belabor, but again I was just wanting to get the information together. Do y'all, are y'all wanting to table the landscaping service agreement? Because I heard a recommendation?

Brian Rittenberry - I don't think so.

Brandon Douglas – We need, I would need to, so again I am not on DDA, so in order for me to speak on behalf of DDA I need to be able to tell him that it was formally approved, not approved or tabled.

Sonny Proctor, MD - Was it budgeted?

Chairwoman Leake – Unfortunately, we haven't had our goals and objectives for the year that was on a goal and objective of last year. We haven't made that a priority of the current DDA board as of yet.

Sonny Proctor, MD - So it was discussed in our budget meetings. I don't know if you recall that or not. We specifically, it was additional we had the expenditures divided base on years prior where we wanted to focus on the fact that the donations were for the events unless there had some way otherwise been given in a way that there was no restrictions on them and the \$2200 was for the incidentals that we incur every year whether that be administrative stuff or specifically one of those items and so that was okay at least in my mind, now if we want to table it we can since Lindsey is not here to answer those questions.

Chairwoman Leake - But will we need a vote for tabling?

Sonny Proctor, MD - Or has the current agreement expired?

Brandon Douglas – I think that the last time the DDA addressed this was in 2022.

Chairwoman Leake - So this has just been an ongoing service agreement without a vote since then.

Brandon Douglas - So part of what provoked it is when you had asked about the landscaping. I just reached out and said "Hey, do you have some sort of service agreement?" And then when I saw it was dated 2022 I said "Well can I get an updated one?" because there has been some turnover and so that's what is before you is the one that they provided last week for 2025.

Chairwoman Leake – So this has been coming out of the DDA budget?

Brandon Douglas - Yeah that was, you'll see on the 2024 expenses. You'll see the itemized amounts down below.

Chairwoman Leake - I would like to just address the rest of the board with my I guess I should say maybe apologies that I wasn't prepared to present these items to you guys as far as voting items. So that to us and the public, apologies for the delay we weren't totally prepared to vote on all of these things. So if you'll bear with us.

Sonny Proctor, MD – I make a motion to table.

Chairwoman Leake – I have a motion from Sonny to table the landscape service agreement and a second from Jack. Any discussion on the landscape service agreement?

Brian Rittenberry - I would like to see him here at our next meeting.

Chairwoman Leake – Okay.

Jack Dunn - I would at this time Amy I'd like to also ask if he would like to make changes in the future on the plants, especially the winter and fall that are not working.

Chairwoman Leake – Note to contact Mr. Jason for these or whatever changes needed.

Sonny Proctor, MD - I don't know what his requirements were or if they changed.

Chairwoman Leake – So any other discussion about the Hemlock service agreement? All in favor, any opposed? Okay table that.

Conclusion: Chairwoman Leake called for a motion. Mr. Sonny Proctor, MD made a motion to table Hemlocks Landscaping Services. Mr. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to table carried 5 to 0.

Chairwoman Leake - Moving forward on to Perrow Park general updates.

Perrow Park –

Discussion:

Brandon Douglas – Yes ma’am, so the parks committee met last Thursday and we, the city, had just received the 60% plans, so out of respect for the elected body, some of y’all may or may not get my humor, I actually work for them so I feel like I need to allow the committee that saw for the first time the 60% plans on Thursday by presenting them to council during the work session, so I did not bring anything tonight because I just think that you know for my accountability that council needs to see it out of committee and then obviously if it had been reversed if council was meeting tonight y’all were meeting the following then it would have been just kind of a here it is. So, I don’t have anything to really update.

Chairwoman Leake – May I ask who the chair of that committee is?

Brandon Douglas – You do chairs, but it is Mr. Foust and Mr. Hannah and that is all the members of the parks committee. If you’re talking about the original, I think they gave me a list of folks I guess from the original concept which I don’t think has changed since 2022. So, it is a whole bunch of names. So this was just the drawings predicated off of that.

Chairwoman Leake – Is that committee still active?

Brandon Douglas - I don’t know. I have not met with them since my arrival. I met with Dr. Proctor, Mr. Looney, Mayor and Kim and Josh.

Sonny Proctor, MD – So I can answer all those questions. The last time we met I believe was in March 2022. I believe that was the last time that the public committee met. We had a formative dinner or regathering with the public input committee or whatever you want to call it. So, when you go through a grant process there are things that significantly change about what the expectation is on who is involved in the development and the application of the instrumentation or implementation of that grant and as required by the stipulations in the grant and their stipulations at that time were that it can only be elected and employees of the city. We went through that process which included design process, and it also is now moving forward with once we chose a designer. We are currently going through the design process and basically the plans are 60% complete at this juncture in time and I think what Brandon is trying to imply despite the excitement is that we have and hopefully the DDA continues to have it is a long and drawn out process which has been complicated by a highway coming through adjacent to it and some indigenous people issues that we had when they found an arrowhead and so but we’re past all that and I believe we’re past the DOT concerns that we have about the easement issue. They are not issues; they’ve just been identified for quite some time. We received those drawings last week for review and I think what Brandon is trying to say is the full council has not seen these plans it’s not really appropriate for us to present them to either the DDA or the public until we have them, the design is very specific in its nature and what it includes and I think the progress has done a fairly good job in presenting those requirements of that design and as soon as we can we want to start rolling that out. The process is well underway and so when you go through a relatively expensive process even in the design phase making changes is difficult and if not impossible and when you do that it just cost you more money and just o remind you there’s a couple of million dollars at stake, which was passed by a referendum, the voters passed it and the money was committed or we would not have been able to obtain the grant and the big old check for a million dollars which still may be in Kim’s office up on the wall. We can’t wait to roll this out. Again unfortunately they’ll probably be push back about it but the voters decided it this is SPLOST dollars, so its not additional,

these funds we would be spending somewhere, it is not property taxes, specifically not property taxes for people who don't live in the city but it's devoted dollars from user taxes like SPLOST and so out next meeting, excuse me we're meeting I believe on Wednesday to review with the designer these 60% plans.

Chairwoman Leake - The we are?

Sonny Proctor, MD – The committee that was initially established which was initially, which was Kim, Sonia and Councilmember Looney, myself and I believe Mayor Lawrence and now Mayor Raffield has replaced Mayor Lawrence. So, it's Brandon, Kim, Mr. Looney, myself and Mayor Raffield. Mr. Looney and myself have been on this from the very beginning and even though it takes an inordinate long period of time that and it's just the nature of how these planned projects work. I think we're anticipating a ribbon cutting sometime mid to late summer without narrowing that down, so I hope that helps.

Chairwoman Leake – That does help, thank you. I just knew there was a large group committee formed with some of Councilmember Looney's guidance and direction. I just wondered what happened to that. Is there a need for that committee?

Sonny Proctor, MD – I think you were on that committee originally and I don't remember if you were at the dinner in March and what changed was based on our former economic development director made connection with the ARC and we were able to move forward with the application process for the first such grant that we've received in our city and hopefully there'll be more and that will tag in to our plans of doing our own comprehensive plan which we may, I don't know if y'all heard about that or not, but we're going to be doing that internally so Jasper will have its own comprehensive plan not to undermine the county's comprehensive plan it's just going to be, it'll be more specific to our wishes and in that process there'll be a tremendous amount of public input and involvement back and forth and I believe that process starts around next month.

Chairwoman Leake – Perfect, thank you. Anything else you want to add?

Brandon Douglas – He's got the background.

Community Engagement Manager –

Discussion:

Chairwoman Leake – Wonderful, thank you and the next item is the community engagement position.

Brandon Douglas – So, we had some interviews on Friday and our goal is to, you're hearing it, I asked Lorrie a little bit before the meeting to schedule a kind of breakfast/lunch meeting. We identified two candidates to kind of move forward in kind of a second round. I know Amy wasn't able to make it. What we wanted to do is have two final applicants just in terms of best practices. Just to give you some background we did receive 31 resumes, however, only received 8 applications, we then selected six to interview and only three obliged. That kind of gives you an indication when you hear things like we currently have 11 vacancies, budgeted positions in the city. So often times the one reason I would say tongue in cheek, hey fill out an application, come join the fun is often times you do have folds that may express an interest but they don't follow through or if they do follow through then when we reach out to them they do not respond. The frustrating part is it's like well you know we basically got three out of 30 who expressed an interest. So it's good because I do think that the two candidates will be just as equally impressive to you as they were to us. I think either of them will do a phenomenal job.

Chairwoman Leake – Thank you and thank you for the opportunity to be able to sit in and give my opinion. Anything else from the general updates from the city manager's office?

Brandon Douglas – That's it.

Chairwoman Leake – So I want to tell you thank you for this wonderful packet of information that we may or may not have known totally existed so wherever you found some of these, thank you very much.

Brandon Douglas - Part of what I'd like for each of you to do to because this is an exercise to kind of go through because anytime you have change and part of the reason why there's always disconnect in any organization is when you have turnover or change sometimes it's not always made available so if there are questions or comments or concerns and this is kind of a prelude to maybe the engagement person

that you know may not have certain experiences or boldness and say I don't know but I'll find out. You can say can you help source this information and that is the way it kind of provides that institutional knowledge because you know I was able to sit with Jack on Thursday and kind of walk through some stuff and that's what we all have to do sometimes so by all means you think about something say hey why this or why not this just ask we'll source it or say we don't know. So therefore you know put it before y'all to kind of discuss.

Chairwoman Leake – Thank you very much.

Sonny Proctor, MD - If I may add something you know I came here 30 years ago. I interviewed for again I was establishing the surgery department at the hospital and I interviewed employees from up here and this is not derogatory toward folks that were up here, I ended up with having a great group of folks that stayed with me for many years and I was, it was a little bit challenging and in Pickens County we interviewed candidates across the board for our chamber director position and I was completely amazed at the quality and the caliber of people that we got and of course we were lucky enough to secure a local person in Amberly and same thing in economic development amazed at some of the candidates that we ha and on and on. Again sitting in the room on Friday despite some o the criticism that we face every day in this world that we live in I was just tremendously thankful and impressed by the caliber of people that want to come and be a part of what we have going on and again sharp, experienced, poised to different degrees, diverse, just a great experience on Friday. I'm sorry you couldn't make it there.

Chairwoman Leake – Me too, sorry about that had a commitment to a couple of nieces that takes precedence and in closing I'll just piggyback on what you were saying if I can take just a second. Dr. Proctor same thing in a little bit of reverse. Marty, myself, Jack and Brian, being born and raised here I just want to commend all of this board but especially these for taking the time to step u and serve and be a part of our community. I know this takes some a lot of time, it take energy and it takes also some money to do these things and I understand that so thank you for your time, thank you for your service and then I want to just call out Pam too, as kind of I want to see you but as a Cherokee County person, you know so we see people who wanting and having a desire to help and serve on our boards who are business owners in our downtown and I just don't want to leave tonight without thanking each of you for your time and your service on here and Dr. Proctor for 30 years of commitment and service and you're willing to serve with us.

Sonny Proctor, MD – I appreciate that.

Chairwoman Leake - Anything else from the board before we adjourn?

Pam Watkins – I was wrong Brandon didn't send me the main street, anything, sorry I didn't mean to be like I'll find it by email. I did not find it in my email.

Next DDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2025, at 5:30pm.

Agenda item Adjourn

Presenter: Mrs. Leake

Conclusions:

Chairwoman Leake called for adjournment at 6:52pm.

Amy Leake, Chairwoman

Marty Callahan, Secretary/Treasurer