



City of Walnut Grove Downtown Development Authority
Minutes of the
January 23, 2023 DDA Meeting
1021 Park St. Walnut Grove, GA 30052

Directors Present:

Russ Butcher
Erica Miles
Desi Borgh
Billy Coleman

Guests Present:

Bill McMullen
Rachel Davis
Stephanie Moncrief

Directors Absent:

Sarah Tuchscherer
Wes Martin

- I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:04 PM call to order by Russ Butcher
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. INVOCATION
- IV. APPROVE AMENDED AGENDA
 - Billy Coleman made a motion to Amend the Agenda to remove the minutes and the vote for new officers. Desi Borgh seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.
- V. OLD BUSINESS
 1. Master Plan
 - Erica Miles reported Planning and Zoning is working on a RFP that they are presenting to Council. Council should review it at the work session.
 2. Recommendation of New DDA Member
 - Discussion
 - Erica Miles recommended Rachel Davis and reported that she is here tonight. She has attended quite a few DDA meetings, council meetings and she is excited to be apart of the development of the city.
 - Russ Butcher stated, based on what he understands, we give our recommendation to the Mayor and Council and they are responsible for swearing in and voting. Miles stated, that he is correct. The council has the official vote, and they swear the DDA members in.
 - Billy Coleman made a motion to recommend Rachel Davis to the City Council for her to join the DDA. Desi Borgh seconded. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
 1. Continuing Education

- Erica Miles reported that she is looking to different classes the DDA members can take. In the last meeting we talked about Land Acquisition and other goals for the DDA. She feels like we need to have continuing education so we legally aren't making any mistakes we may not be aware of. We may also want to make continuing education classes mandatory and amend the Bi Laws accordingly, but I am still gathering information.
2. Land Acquisition
- Billy Coleman recommends that we select 3 parcels to potentially be our first transaction. He has several picked out, but he would like to get further understanding with the Land Acquisition Committee, he and Wesley are on that committee. He will need to understand exactly the process, he will need to get a check for Earnest Money and determine who our closing attorney will be. He recommends Andrea Gray be our closing attorney, but we will need to be sure there are no conflicts of interest. He will get with Wesley and they will come up with the next steps by the next meeting.

VII. Audience Comments:

- Bill McMullen stated we do not have a Master Plan. Why would you buy property? You are putting the cart before the horse.
Billy Coleman stated that we have spent a lot of time and energy to get where we are today so we would like to be ready to go and make sure we are ready, willing and able to execute on a project. We have been talking about a project and a plan for several years around here. We determined at the last DDA meeting that we would like to identify potential properties for acquisition and then we will put it together as we get the plan and move forward with the process.
- McMullen asked, Can you give some idea of what your thought process is about the Master Plan? You have to have some type of basis or is it just a dream.
Erica Miles stated, just because we do a land acquisition doesn't mean that we will be developing it right away. We would hope that we have a Master Plan in place before the actual development takes place. But that doesn't stop us from acquiring land.
- Russ Butcher mentioned a Concept Plan the members of the DDA were presented with and said the Concept Plan does give us an idea of how the land could potentially be used. The Master Plan will also give us an idea as to how the downtown will look. There is currently a rezone in the downtown area and a developer has expressed his desire as to how he would like to develop it.
- McMullen said he doesn't think that warehouses will tie in well with the "New Park". Miles said that is coming up for a hearing at the February 16th Planning and Zoning Meeting.
- McMullen said we should make the meetings more public. He wasn't aware of a DDA meeting. Russ Butcher stated we are in the early stages in a sense but part of our role is to communicate, promote and market. Part of that will be with potential developers but also communicate well with the community but he isn't sure that we have gotten to a point where we have enough detail that is worth communicating. There are still a lot of missing pieces, you have the City Council, Planning and Zoning and DDA. The entities are all working independently but also working together and some waiting for others to get through their process before we can move forward. Miles stated, the DDA meetings are posted on the Municipal Building Door, the city's website and are advertised in the paper.
- Stephanie Moncrief suggested if you want to know what is going on to come to the City Council Work Session that is Thursday at 10AM if you are available. There will be a few agenda items that will be interesting to learn about. The next Council Meeting. It is always

important to go. Reach out to your Council Members. She is always willing to talk to anyone. Miles stated she is available as well.

VIII. DDA COMMENTS

- Billy Coleman stated that he thinks the City should start with infrastructure at the 138 corridor. He is against a \$100,000 Plan. We have a lot of pieces already put together. We just have to keep pushing forward to make something happen. If not, we are going to sit here for another several years and never see a shovel in the ground. He also thanked everyone for coming out. It makes the meetings a lot more interesting and informative when people are engaged. There are a lot of exciting things going on in the city.
- Miles stated that she is happy everyone is here and she apologizes that the meetings were not posted in more convenient locations so more people would know about the meetings. There's a lot in the works and it will be exciting for things to come to fruition.
- Russ Butcher stated he loves the community, and he loves the schools and the people in the community. He loves the potential. It is moving slower than he would like but that is how things go. He would rather it move slower and get it right than rush it and have some regrets. He thanked everyone for being here.

IX. ADJOURN

- a. Erica Miles made the motion to adjourn. Billy Coleman seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Attest:

Chairman

Secretary