

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Board of Directors
Minutes of May 7, 2008

Attendance: Peggy Brooker, Cathy Carson, Jesse Helm, Dick Munroe, Drew Perkins, Randy Pryde, Kate Sarosy, Ron Wright and Tina Wulf.

Excused: Liz Becher, Bob Ide and Pete Owen

Unexcused: Kermit Wille

A compact disc recording of this meeting has been placed in the DDA Minutes. The CD can be played using both DR-02 Software or Windows Media Player.

Chairman Helm ascertained a quorum and meeting called to order at 11:32 a.m.

City Report

WNL – Kate Reported the NIC could not go through with the Wednesday Night Live concerts. NIC has all bands lined up but has been experiencing difficulty securing sponsors for WNL (in addition to the NIC Fest) and the NIC BOD did not want to see the NIC lose money to WNL. The City Council voted to sponsor the WNL by covering the \$15,000 anticipated expenses as a means of supporting the core and helping to continue to bring people downtown. Kate said she hoped the DDA would join the City with their monetary support as well.

Action: Cathy Carson moved to contribute to the City's sponsorship of WNL with \$3,000 from DDA reserves. Peggy Brooker seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD YELLOWSTONE DISTRICT

Kate reported the Old Yellowstone District (OYD)'s design standards and guidelines have first reading at the May 20th Council meeting.

Acceptance of May 7, 2008 Minutes

Action: Drew Perkins moved to the minutes of May 7, 2008 be approved as presented. Kate Sarosy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Peggy reported there is \$931.55 in checking account with fairly normal expenditures for the month except the expenditures for the National Main Street Conference. There was a checking deposit of \$1,341.54 from the Assessor's office and based on what Tom Doyle reported, we still have about \$57,000 to be collected on or about May 11th and distributed to the DDA sometime in June or July. Peggy reported the WYOSIP balance at \$340,513.66.

Approval of April 2008 Financial Report

Action: Drew Perkins moved to accept the May 2008 Financial Report as presented. Dick Munroe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report

Tina reported she, Peggy and Liz are attending the ***Preserve Wyoming 2008: Main Street & Beyond Conference May 14-16 in Cheyenne***. Peggy informed board members the deadline for registration had been extended until tomorrow, May 8th. Peggy is going down Thursday for the day only and offered to transport anyone else wishing to attend. Tina said she and Liz are going down Thursday and returning Friday and also offered transportation.

She also reported on her National Main Street experience with a town of 16,000 - Lansdowne, PA and said Drew would offer his insights as well. Of importance to for Lansdowne's five year success as a Main Street community is the collaborative effort of the Main Street Manager and all of the volunteer Main Street partners (including municipal staff members such as planner, mayor, Arts Council, Borough president, and property owners, merchants, and artists).

Tina said she envisions sitting down with all of Casper's downtown-related entities (including City staff and Council, OYD planners, CAEDA, Chamber, parking garage staff and managers, etc.) to formulate perhaps a ten-year master plan for the entire core. She said the biggest benefit would be capitalizing on all available resources: geographic, economic, social, etc.

Lansdowne's projects or efforts which seemed especially desirable include:

- Community Asset Building – use of GIS (both City & County) to form basis of meaningful, usable and accessible data for all parties concerned so we can truly get a handle on what are our downtown/core assets, assess what's missing and go after/recruit the rest & retain the best. (Liz Hepp, City GIS teaches college GIS course and would like to see about a fall class project whereby students would be charged with downtown data collection and utilization through a GIS program as a way to assist us with our data needs. Also, City GIS and County GIS are working together to make their information more accessible between the two and more user friendly for reporting, etc.)
- Downtown parking garage escort service
- Establish the master plan
- Build consensus for the plan
- Execute the plan capitalizing on all resources from all entities
- Offer grants to encourage downtown residencies (for artists or others)
- For every \$1 invested in downtown Lansdowne, \$5 goes backs into community (remember they've only been a Main Street community for five years – when Mary Randolph reported to us on Wyoming's program, it was over \$2 but not quite \$3 – it could be higher with the addition of Rock Springs and Evanston).

Drew distributed copies of the following printed materials from sessions he attended at the National Main Street Conference:

- The Four Points:
 1. Organization
 2. Design
 3. Promotion
 4. Economic Restructuring

- What is the Main Street Approach to Commercial District Revitalization? Eight Principles of Success:
 1. Comprehensive
 2. Incremental
 3. Self-help
 4. Partnerships
 5. Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets
 6. Quality
 7. Change
 8. Implementation
- The Main Street Four-Point Approach to commercial district revitalization
- Successful Organizational Models for Main Street Programs
 1. Free-Standing Non-profit
 2. City Government
 3. Chamber of Commerce
 4. Community Development Corporations
 5. Merchants Association
 6. Special Taxation District
 7. Downtown Development Authority
- Cumberland's (MD) Strategies for Economic Success: Vision, Direction and Cooperation – Upper story redevelopment & historic preservation incentives jumpstarted Cumberland's economic resurgence through downtown revitalization.
 1. 10-year tax freeze
 2. Inventory all upper level vacancies & "incentivize" occupancies
 - a. Visit w/our property owners & find out what incentives appeal
 - b. Grant possibilities for downtown Casper:
 - 1) Fascia & reappointment
 - 2) Saving energy – energy efficient appliances, windows, insulation, etc.
 - 3) ghost signs or murals
 - 4) affordable housing & housing for workers
 - 5) getting upper levels up to code
 - c. Kate check ask city attorney if we're within statute to do so

Drew said whether or not we become a Main Street community, there is a lot of the organizational structure we could copy to become more focused and efficient. He said our DDA has limitations through state statute and city ordinances with reference to our boundaries and expenditures whereas Main Streets can have more broad geographic area. The other difference Drew noted is the DDA members have to be downtown property owners whereas that is not necessarily so with a Main Street community. He said, "I can envision a situation where the City of Casper might develop a Main Street to deal with the OYD."

Drew said it was very informative and eye-opening and he strongly encouraged board members to attend the Wyoming conference [May14-16]. He said we have a very viable opportunity to take the DDA to the next level and make a difference.

Kate asked what is the next step for the DDA. Tina said she met with Tom Forslund recently and she asked him how she could be more involved – even if it meant attending all the Council meetings – so we could begin more of the partnering that could ultimately, possibly lead to a master plan, a more synergistic relationship. Tom said he would give that some thought and get back to Tina. She said Kate asks a good question – and the answer should probably be part of our goals and objectives discussion as well as align with our new budget.

New Business

Budget

Chairman Helm said **the 2008-2009 budget** is still in the works and it **will be mailed to all board members for their review prior to the June 4th meeting. Jesse asked all members to please review the new budget as we will need to formalize it in June 4 & vote in July.**

Validation Signs

Lori Becher, Joe and Tina put together ideas for the new “We Validate” signs which will go up in all places of business which validate. Tina also said it might be a good idea to utilize 1-2 of the 8” weekly Journal ads to reference the “We Validate” signs and possibly list all validating businesses, thereby reinforce validation and encourage those not validating to do so.

Drew noted there are two entrances to the parking garage and we should show both with photos or a map and arrows. Cathy said she did not know about the Center Street entrance as she worked on Wolcott and always used Wolcott. The problem with only knowing about one entrance is a patron accesses only half of the hourly spots. [Perception]

Chairman Helm agreed and said the signs should also include the parking garage address. Drew said we should also indicate the garage is lighted and has security cameras. [Safety]

Chairman Helm asked Randy how the validations worked. Randy reported, “We have never, in the twenty years we’ve been downtown, been approached by the operator of the garage to participate in the validation program.” Jesse said his reason for asking is the longer movies which exceed two hours. He said he does like the idea of the validation posters and advertising the businesses which validate. He said it would also be good to include visuals on how to access both entrances/exits to the garage within our won advertising. Peggy asked if the Chamber is funding the printing. Tina said yes but does not know if the posters are printed.

Chairman Helm suggested all board members take a walk through the parking garage as we should all understand how it is laid out. He said parking needs will only continue to grow as the new Courthouse is redeveloped, and he said, “We need to be ready for it.”

Tina said she did conduct a little research on parking commissions and she has some materials she had planned to give to the board for consideration but she hesitated. She thought the Parking Committee would continue to meet and address on-going parking concerns but apparently that is not the case, per Officer Mike Moore.

Chairman Helm asked Kate how the parking contract is set up with the City and Chamber and when it renews. Kate said she did not know but will find out and report back. He said the inquiry is out of curiosity and the Chamber is doing a great job. He said it would be helpful to understand what the arrangement is and how it is all set up.

Kate reported the Council passed at last night's meeting a bid with a contractor to make over \$200,000 worth of structural repairs in the garage.

Alley & Graffiti Clean-Up

Tina reported the City of Casper and the DDA partnered to sweep and power wash all of the downtown alleys. Peggy said, "They look wonderful. I think it has been an awful long time since they have been cleaned. I don't ever remember them looking this good."

Tina commented they did an excellent job. Drew agreed. Tina said the Street Department should be commended. Chairman Helm recommended a letter of appreciation be sent. Dick said even the streets and gutters have been cleaned.

Tina said Jim Coffman's building has been cleaned on the north side facing the federal court house. Randy said, "Jim was very grateful. He has problem with snipers but he is grateful." Peggy asked who did the clean-up. Tina said Jim, Keep Casper Beautiful, and some high school volunteers. Randy said Jim told him they were a bunch of great kids.

Dick asked if anyone knows the meaning or symbolism behind tennis shoes hanging off power lines in the alleys. Tina said she will ask Pete Abrams what he knows and get back to Dick.

Adopt-A-Planter

David Hough emailed a rough estimate of about \$400 per planter (x 18 planters = \$7,200) to Tina for upgraded perennials such as hardy rose bushes. The City will commit \$2,000 this year and Tina asked if the DDA would consider \$2,000 also. [That leaves \$3,200 divided by 18 planters for approx. **\$200 per business/property owner to sponsor a planter.**]

Action: Cathy Carson moved the board allocate \$2,000 towards the planting of the 18 planters along Second Street. Kate Sarosy seconded.

Discussion ensued as to which line item the funds should come from. It was decided it should probably come from reserves as the Improvements/Other is for more permanent projects.

Action: Cathy amended the motion for the \$2000 to come from reserves. Dick Munroe seconded the amended motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Goals & Objectives

Chairman Helm said with Drew soon to preside as Chair it might be good timing to establish our goals and objectives within the next two months. Tina asked the board to consider as part of their goals and objectives and for planning the budget the feasibility of granting or matching monies for security cameras. She said she knows the Stevenson's have put in cameras

recently and the movie theatres as well. Randy reported his new security system captured two vandals breaking into and stealing from his employee's vehicle. His cameras are fairly hi-tech and cost is high initially, \$15,000, but the units are DVR – digitally recorded, so there are no tapes required. Once the cameras fill up the hard drive, they erase old data and start over.

Dick suggested some promotion be conducted in the downtown right after the Fair & Rodeo parade to keep the kids and families in the downtown – perhaps a melodrama, BBQ, western shoot-out, etc. Randy said they were in the restaurant business long before they were in the movie business and the restaurants are packed after the parade. Tina said maybe that's when you do have your Taste of Downtown or at least a hot dog stand. Jesse said another idea is to have people come visit each of the stores – scavenger hunt throughout downtown.

Joy of Life Location

Tina said there is not sufficient time to discuss all the possible locations but a copy of the PowerPoint presentation is in everyone's packet. She asked everyone to review the locations so the board can select the best location at next month's meeting. She and Chairman Helm met with Mick McMurry and toured his properties, all of which are outside the district, but upon reentering the district, Jesse and Tina considered the lot on the SW corner of David and First – across from the Casper Fire Department. Randy agreed to discuss possibilities with the board. There is no water nor electricity, but hook-ups are nearby. The City seems to like the location as it bridges the DDA and OYD districts. Although not in the district (boundary is on east side of David) the west side of the street could possibly be annexed.

Randy said the lot used to be a railroad right-of-way. He and his partners bought it to satisfy parking requirements for the Iris. The only tenant is the coffee hut which signed a one year lease with a one year renew-option, and they are not in the way. Jesse said when you talk about entrances to the downtown, it is by far the best entrance from the west. Tina asked board members to think about this spot and when driving around check it out. She noted the power box with the light signal controls and questioned whether or not it would be in the way. Randy said that may be WyDOTs. Tina said she would check with the City.

No Feeding the Pigeons

A letter from the DDA was drafted, proofed and sent to Council and the Natrona County Commissioners. After the fact, several items were noted as needing amending and at a recent work session, Tina asked Council to remove it from consideration until changes could be made. Tina asked if the board would table this discussion for the next meeting.

Adjourn

Action: Kate Sarosy moved to adjourn. Cathy Carson seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Tina M. Wulf, Executive Director