

Downtown Development Authority of Blakely MINUTES

Monday, August 28, 2023

5:30 pm

Alexander Building

Chamber-Development Authority Board Room

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dave Atkins, Beau Clenney, Edwin James, Jennifer Mulkey, Franklin Ford, and Heather Allred.

ABSENT: Brad Clenney (excused)

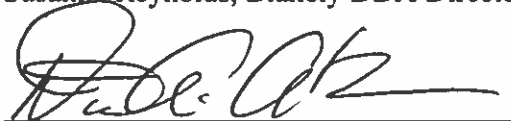
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Susanne Reynolds, Celia Bostwick, Vicki Ford, Jordan Mulkey, and Marcie Justice Williams

Dave Atkins, Interim DDA Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

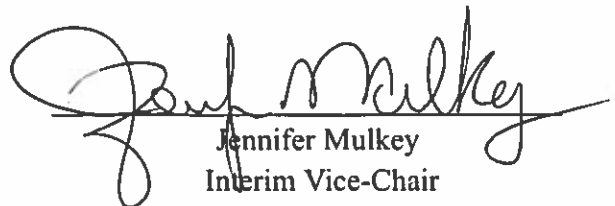
- **MINUTES:** Franklin Ford made a motion to approve minutes from the July 24, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Jennifer Mulkey. All voted in favor.
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** The account with One South Bank was opened with \$1,000. A motion to approve the financial report was made by Jennifer Mulkey and seconded by Heather Allred. All voted in favor.
- **OLD BUSINESS:** Franklin Ford presented logo/branding options for the Blakely DDA. The board discussed option 3 with modifications to add the Early County Courthouse aka "Grand Ole Lady." The design could be combined with option 2 (add dome). A motion to approve the domain name(Downtownblakely.com) and reimbursing Backlight for the domain (3 year) at a cost of approx. \$75 was made by Heather Allred and seconded by Beau Clenney. Franklin Ford recused his vote (Backlight co-owner). All voted in favor. The approval of the DDA Bylaws was postponed due to the DDA Director's edits to the draft. It will be presented during the September meeting.
- **NEW BUSINESS:** The FY23 DDA Budget was presented by Susanne Reynolds and Dave Atkins. A motion to approve a budget of \$15,000 for FY23 was made by Beau Clenney and seconded by Edwin James. All voted in favor. The FY24 DDA Budget was presented by Susanne Reynolds and Dave Atkins. A motion to approve a budget of \$50,000 for FY24 was made by Franklin Ford and seconded by Heather Allred. All voted in favor. A discussion was had regarding adjusting the budget if needed. A motion to approve budget adjustments by the interim officers and DDA director was made by Edwin James and seconded by Beau Clenney. All voted in favor. Susanne Reynolds presented the Business Blend/Downtown Business Networking event. Tori Garrett, owner of Balance Nutrition on the Court Square has agreed to host the event on October 16, 2023, from 5-6:30 pm. A sponsorship is needed to provide complimentary shakes/teas to the first 30 registrants. A motion to move forward with the event was made by Heather Allred and seconded by Franklin Ford. All voted in favor.

- **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Dave Atkins commented that this is a great group and he is honored to have been selected as its interim chairman. He emphasized the importance of protecting the integrity of the DDA and its board. One South Bank will not charge the DDA for any services since he is the bank's president. The DDA needs to be a unified front, even if it does not always agree with each other. Once something is passed, it should become the entire board's idea and mission. The integrity of the DDA must be protected at all times. Board meetings will be kept to an hour or 1 hour and 15 min. The chair will represent the group. If he is doing something the rest of the board does not like, let him know. He likes to move quickly, but wants things to be correct and accurate records kept.
- **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** The Electric Cities of Georgia tour went very well. There were about 30 statewide project managers in attendance. Toured Brewers Manufacturing, the Industrial Park and Court Square with the Mayor representing the City of Blakely. The City's inventory was shown to them. They loved the Courthouse and were given Nantze Springs water, Blakely Feed and Seed hats, Nucor koozies, GA Peanuts (Chamber donation), and First State Bank of Blakely (fans & donation). ECG can be a major asset to the DDA by providing renderings/conceptuals of buildings for prospective business owners. Rural Zone was submitted. We should know if accepted by the 2nd week in November. It will become effective Jan. 1, 2024, if accepted. DCA has released pre-applications/letter of intent for Hurricane Michael-related damages to properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Susanne Reynolds and ECG assembled lists and guidelines for those eligible. The letters of intent will be submitted by the City and given as sub-grants to property owners, if approved. Before and after Hurricane Michael photos are required. It was suggested to reach out to the insurance companies for this. Local contractors will need to provide cost estimates. The DCA's deadline for the letter of intent is Sept. 15. Susanne will need all documentation by Sept. 12, to allot time to compile information and letters on behalf of the City. Happy Birthday to our Interim DDA Chairman, Mr. Dave Atkins!
- **OTHER DISCUSSIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Marcie Justice Williams came to find out the intentions of the DDA and is very happy with what is happening within the DDA. She thanked the board for the effort to "get the ball rolling." Jordan Mulkey asked what incentives are being offered to new businesses currently. Susanne Reynolds explained the waivers the city approved on June 6, 2023 (Utility and Permit Assistance). The County also offers a Local Revolving Loan Fund as long as jobs are being created or retained. Franklin Ford offered ideas to think about for fundraising.

A motion to adjourn was made by Franklin Ford and seconded by Dave Atkins. All voted in favor. Meeting minutes were recorded by Franklin Ford, Interim DDA Secretary-Treasurer and Susanne Reynolds, Blakely DDA Director.



Dave Atkins
Interim Chair



Jennifer Mulkey
Interim Vice-Chair