



Downtown Development Authority of Blakely
MINUTES
Monday, April 22, 2024
5:30 pm
Alexander Building
Chamber-Development Authority Board Room

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Franklin Ford, Edwin James, Jennifer Mulkey, Heather Allread, and Brad Clenney.

ABSENT MEMBERS: Dave Atkins (excused), Beau Clenney (excused)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Vikki Ford, Jordan Mulkey, Celia Bostwick and Susanne Reynolds

Jennifer Mulkey, DDA Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

- **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the March 25, 2024 meeting minutes was made by Brad Clenney and seconded by Franklin Ford. All voted in favor.
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** A motion to approve the financial report (GCB - \$20,295.93, FSB - \$7,500.00) was made by Brad Clenney and seconded by Edwin James. All voted in favor.
- **OLD BUSINESS:** Franklin Ford gave an update on Mobile Food Truck Ordinance & Guidelines recommendations. Ford, Beau Clenney, and Susanne Reynolds have been researching Mobile Food Trucks by looking at different communities in GA and AL to find an appropriate strategy, so the brick & mortar restaurants do not suffer from it. It has been recommended the future food truck court be centrally located. The best location would be the city public parking lot near Sheila's. It would help Sheila's business. The space can be utilized for other activities other than food court. Reynolds will send recommended guidelines and ordinance to the board for feedback when it is drafted.
- **NEW BUSINESS:** A discussion was had on the length of regularly scheduled meetings, which has been suggested to last no longer than an 1.5 hours. Public presentations placed on the agenda have been recommended at 15 minutes. Reynolds made the comment that if someone wants to address the DDA board, they should be referred to her first. Some things may not be appropriate to go to the board at that time. Reynolds can answer the questions or concerns, and provide guidance on when items should go to the board. The number of public presentation requests per meeting should not exceed three. Ford discussed the importance of the DDA's product, which is the property that can house businesses. It was suggested that the board encourage property owners they know to sell at a fair market value. A discussion on how the DDA can acquire property

to improve infrastructure for affordable business development was also had. Franklin suggested board members leverage their connections. He also asked if there was inactive city property available. Reynolds said she has compiled a list of public property and can send the spreadsheet to board. Recommending the City adopt a Blight Tax to encourage property owners to sell dilapidated buildings was discussed. There are many absentee property owners. Reynolds has a draft/example that can be shared with the DDA board. The tax can go to the DDA if implemented to help with the mission of improving Downtown Blakely. The next DDA meeting falls on Memorial Day. As stated in the bylaws, the meeting should fall on the next Monday, which is not a holiday. Board members recommended a special called meeting on Tuesday, May 28th instead. Reynolds said she would discuss with Dave Atkins, the Chairman. He will need to call the special meeting.

- **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Vice-Chair Jennifer Mulkey had no items to discuss.
- **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Susanne Reynolds announced the Development Authority of Early County is now accepting applications for the EC Growth Scholarship, due May 17 @ 4 pm. She asked the board to continue to encourage local artists to submit artwork for the downtown banner art contest due on May 10 at 11:59 pm. Reynolds will meet with GDOT the following Wednesday. She asked if board members knew of any issues that needed to be brought to their attention. If so, let her know by next Tuesday afternoon, so she can discuss it with the GDOT traffic engineer.
- **OTHER DISCUSSIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Jennifer Mulkey reported on ideas for potential fundraising events, such as a gun raffle. She also mentioned setting dates for events. During public comments, Celia Bostwick asked if GDOT had any influence over rough railroad tracks (especially Church St. & North Main). Reynolds responded that she had contacts with the railroad (Norfolk Southern & Heart of Georgia) that could be notified of issues. Vikki Ford said she would help get Downtown Blakely Shirts in businesses and help Reynolds roll and put price stickers on the shirts to prepare them to be placed in downtown businesses. She asked if the DDA had a Venmo account to make payments easier for people who do not carry cash. Reynolds said the DDA has Venmo and CashApp. The bank information needs to be changed to GCB since the OSB account was closed. Reynolds will update the account info. Heather Allread said she would place shirts in Funny Girl Deli. Franklin Ford mentioned giving the businesses the Downtown stickers that were made. They can be good conversation starters about revitalizing downtown Blakely and help tell the story of the community.

A motion to adjourn was made by Franklin Ford and seconded by Heather Allred. All voted in favor.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Susanne Reynolds, Blakely DDA Executive Director.

Dave Atkins
Chairman

Jennifer Mulkey
Vice-Chair

