



**Clayton Downtown Advisory Board
Special Meeting Minutes
April 28 @ 6 p.m.
GoTo Remote Digital Meeting**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Co-Chair Tony Johnson
Co-Chair Jessica Lloyd
Neal Stancil
Erin Belcher
John David Millican
James Lipscomb
Heidi Peach
Town Council Liaison Bobby Bunn

STAFF PRESENT:

Economic Development Director Patrick Pierce
Public Information Officer Stacy Beard
Town Special Events Coordinator Amy Shearin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alison Kilpatrick
Laura Johnson
Judy Ryan
Betsy Grannis (joined the remote meeting for a few minutes prior to dropping off)
Councilman Michael Grannis (joined the remote meeting for a few minutes prior to dropping off)

1 CALL TO ORDER
Roll Call

Tony Johnson called the remote meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Roll call was completed. Noted as absent Alison Kilpatrick, Laura Johnson, and Judy Ryan. Betsy Grannis and Councilman Michael Grannis both appeared to call into the remote meeting at the start, but both dropped out of the meeting.

2 ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA
None

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) March 9, 2020 DRAFT Minutes

Co-Chair Jessica Lloyd mentioned that she is listed as present in the top left listing as "Board Members Present," however she was absent from that meeting. Her absence was noted correctly later in the agenda.

ACTION: Adoption of Draft Minutes with minor adjustment to remove Jessica Lloyd from the listing of "Board Members Present" in the top left column of the agenda

Motion: Board Member Stancil
Second: Board Member Lloyd
Vote: Unanimous

4 STAFF REPORTS

- a) Introduction of Economic Development Director - Patrick Pierce
Presenter: Tony Johnson, Co-Chair

Co-Chair Tony Johnson, who was one of several community participants in the hiring of a new Economic Development Director for the Town of Clayton, introduced the candidate he helped select...Patrick Pierce. He stated that Pierce had just started with the Town having moved from the Seattle area with his wife and two daughters. Patrick shared that while he had not been on the job in Clayton for long, he had spent weeks on the front lines of helping businesses through COVI-19 in Washington state, where he served as the head of a large county economic alliance that combined two chambers of commerce in Snohomish County. Patrick shared that he values downtowns and how they create places and atmosphere that makes people want to live in a community. He stated that he felt Clayton had something special in that there were clearly good people and an active board who all wanted to work together to make downtown successful. He looked forward to meeting everyone in person and working with the board.

5 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Design Committee Report
Presenter: Heidi Lee Peach
- Yellow House Façade Grant Application Update
 - Remaining Façade Grant Money Update (COVID-19 related usage)

Member Heidi Peach reported that Yellow House had submitted an incomplete facade grant application. Public Information Officer Stacy Beard said she would follow up with Economic Development Specialist Jenn Gallimore to find out exactly what was remaining to close out the application and have the Design Committee consider approval. Ms. Peach asked if Gallimore could also report on the total remaining funds. She also stated that she planned to submit applications for facade improvements for a property she recently purchased. Beard encouraged all members to remind businesses or property owners about this facade grant program in their conversations with downtown businesses.

- b) Vitality Committee Report
Presenter: Laura Johnson
- Downtown Advocates - updates on feedback/ideas advocates are hearing from their outreach

Laura Johnson was not present, so Co-Chair Tony Johnson reported that advocates had worked extensively to create a comprehensive list of downtown business contacts prior to COVID-19. These advocates worked in the first few weeks of the pandemic to reach out to those contacts, seek feedback and offer assistance. Neal Stancil, an advocate assigned to downtown blocks, reported that many of the businesses on his blocks were included in those that Governor's Executive Order required to close. He shared that it will be his intention to check in with those businesses once they are allowed to reopen to once again offer assistance. Mr. Stancil suggested the idea of a joint vitality and promotions committee meeting to work on ideas and messaging to downtown businesses as restrictions are being lifted.

c) Promotion Committee Report

Presenters: Jessica Lloyd, Erin Belcher, Special Events Coordinator Amy Shearin

- Promotions Committee held remote meeting April 9 to discuss events/sponsorships
- Decision on May 15th Town Square Concert Series Event
- Postponement of Movie Nights
- Discussion of how future events may look under COVID-19

Jessica Lloyd reported that the Promotion Committee held a remote meeting to discuss upcoming movies, concerts and sponsorships. Due to COVID restrictions, the movies were being moved to the fall and the group discussed how features such as bouncy houses and face-painting might not be possible. Ms. Lloyd reported that she had reached out to sponsor and that some had asked to be refunded since concerts and other events may not occur.

Town Special Events Coordinator Amy Shearin reported that Parks & Recreation departments were having the conversation nationally about whether and how events can happen. We need to consider how we could all safely gather in crowds at Town Square or how we would ensure things like Port-a-Johns are kept clean, bouncy houses, etc. Her feeling is thoses in the short term may not be logistically possible. She stated that events are not going to look the way they did in 2019, if they can even happen in the remainder of 2020. Ms. Shearin said that guidelines from the state on large gatherings are coming but may work against our usual events. At this time, concerts are likely to be postponed but new dates are not being picked to avoid having to cancel twice. She is in contact with the bands. Shearin welcomed the idea of a joint vitality and promotions committee and offered that she and other department, like the police department, would be glad to work with the group as they try to navigate understanding guidelines and crowd distancing, not only for DDA events, but also other downtown events like Last Friday.

Co-Chair Jessica Lloyd asked if there were funds left over in the town budget because concerts or events were cancelled, was that money available if the advisory board wanted to use it for other promotional downtown events when they are possible, for example, music on street corners or a shopping event. Amy Shearin explained that some of the town's downtown budget is tied up in deposits to bands, for stages, etc. She explained that re-purposing money budgeted for certain events would likely require approval from Town Council. Councilman Bunn stated that he would like to check in with the Finance Director on those issues. Board member Stancil stated that he hoped there would be

some flexibility with the funding if the purpose remained the same - to promote and bring people to downtown. He stated that it would be helpful to understand that as the board committees try to come up with a game plan as businesses start coming back online, so that opportunities aren't missed. Patrick Pierce agreed that he felt there was a lot of pent-up demand, that everyone was wanting to get back out and back to some sort of normal. He stated it would be good if the board, the Council and staff were working together to figure out the right way to be nimble and flexible and ready for those moments when we can put something together. He said it will be important to continue being engaged with the business community.

Co-chair Tony Johnson said that was a good goal for the group to work toward in the coming months. Co-Chair Jessica Lloyd stated that if the 501C-3 has to refund sponsor money, food truck deposit and vendor fees, their promotion budget is definitely going to change.

d) Organization Committee Report

Presenter: Betsy Grannis

- Four board member terms, including two co-chairs, are expiring in June
- Future meeting adjustments due to COVID-19
- Potential Re-visioning/Re-organization Retreat

Co-chair Tony Johnson noted that 4 terms are expiring and asked if advertisement for seeking new members had begun. Stacy Beard said the clerk would be sending letters to the 4 members to understand if they intend to re-apply for another term (Co-chair Tony Johnson, Co-chair Jessica Lloyd, James Lipscomb and Judy Ryan). She stated that in addition to social media advertisement, the town has found that existing advisory board members are often the best at recommending potential candidates for open positions.

Co-chair Tony Johnson stated that the next meeting is May 11 and then June 8th and there traditionally is not a July meeting. He asked the group if they'd like to get back to their normal board meeting and committee meeting schedule in light of the fact that, with restrictions starting to ease, there is a lot to discuss and do. The group agreed to move forward with a regular May 11 meeting to be held remotely. Staff said they are happy to facilitate any digital meetings the committee would like to have and to field ideas for the budget and COVID-related promotions.

Co-chair Jessica Lloyd asked when the upcoming year's budget would be available. Stacy Beard said the budget would be presented to Council on June 1st so it could be shared with DDA leading up to that meeting, the same time it's available to town staff. She explained that with so much uncertainty about the economy and loss of sales tax revenue, it's been difficult to forecast what the impact on the budget will be, which has made building the budget difficult. The budget must be balanced, but figures on revenue are not clear. Beard stated that the staff and Council value what the DDA contributes to promotion of downtown, which is the heart of the town's economy, and the events that bring the quality of life that residents are seeking.

Co-chair Tony Johnson stated that the feedback so far from the businesses that came through the efforts of the vitality committee was overall very positive, with many businesses expressing thanks that someone was reaching out to businesses. Co-chair Jessica Lloyd asked town staff what was being done with that feedback. Stacy Beard stated that the form created by the Economic Development Office to solicit which businesses were open and what services they wanted to see promoted was shared out to 200+ email addresses, but only had 5 responses, perhaps an indicator that businesses are overwhelmed with COVID adjustments and impacts and do not have the time or resources to fill out forms. Member Neal Stancil said the businesses that have been able to stay open, like restaurants, are doing a good job with self-promotion. He felt we really need to take a look at social media because that's where everybody is. He stated that he and Bobby Bunn at the very beginning both took pictures of themselves at Jones Cafe and shared out to help bring awareness about take-out. General awareness of what businesses are doing will be good. If we just had someone walk down Main Street and do a Facebook LIVE to show what's open, show Manning's and Vinson's with lines of people, then people would be getting the message that downtown is open. People are currently patronizing these businesses, so they're getting the message from somewhere and Stancil said that we should just share out those messages instead of re-inventing the wheel. Stacy Beard cautioned that the town and advisory board need to strive for equity - that the DDA has been criticized in the past for only promoting some businesses who do a good job promoting themselves and ignoring those small businesses that aren't active and therefore don't have information showing up in social media feeds. Co-chair Tony Johnson also noted that social media can be a two-edged sword, if you don't practice social distancing or wear your mask and you're sharing photos of that, you need to be prepared for criticism and someone is not going to like what you're doing. Stancil agreed we're in new territory, and that we need to find ways to be equitable but that we need to do something rather than do nothing. Stacy Beard said that staff agreed and is excited to work together with the promotions committee to find that equity and do that.

Co-Chair Tony Johnson did mention there were a few responses to the advocates that were critical that they did not see what the DDA was doing. He said we need to be aware that we might need to fight that perception. Vitality and promotions committees working together sooner rather than later and working with the town to have unified message will be really important to show people that the DDA is still out here and still helping and promoting. Mr. Johnson said the criticism did not point to anything specific - advocates were reaching out and asking what could we do for you and were not getting a lot of responses. He said he did not want to overplay that because there was a great deal of positive feedback...but he shared that someone once told him: it takes 20 positives to outweigh just one negative. It takes just few people who have a negative mindset to turn things sour pretty quickly and he reiterated that we want to make sure we can avoid that going forward.

Member Erin Belcher said advocates should be prepared as we go into the new norm, that not everyone knows how to operate, or how they're going to survive...they'll be scrambling to make sense of guidance - so, many times those questions of "What can I do for you, what do you need?" ...are going to be more irritating to those businesses than anything because they just do NOT know. She stated that that is her situation as a retailer...she just doesn't know. The retail sector in downtown is struggling, so we should prepare to hear a lot of people sharing frustration at the uncertainty.

Neal Johnson reiterated that the core things established in this meeting is that the vitality and promotions committees need to work together on ideas and common messaging and then we will build around that. Staff reiterated they were excited to work with the group on that. Patrick Pierce agreed that there should be a focus on the COVID response, utilizing the facade grant money before year end, and then looking at what the new structure and focus of DDA is - so that each committee can find some clarity as to their core mission, since so many of us are being pulled in different directions right now and that might really help to rally people if we have a succinct mission.

6 NEW BUSINESS
NONE

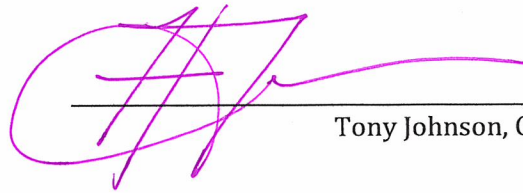
7 PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a)
Co-Chair Johnson opened up to other board comment and public comment - there was none.

8 ADJOURN

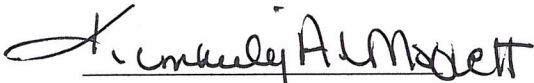
Member Heidi Peach made a motion to adjourn and Co-Chair Jessica Lloyd seconded.

Duly adopted this the 11th day of May, 2020.



Tony Johnson, Co-Chair

ATTEST:



Clerk to the Board



Due to the closure of Town Hall and COVID-19 health and safety restrictions this meeting was conducted digitally, with no members physically present, but instead joining a audio/visual meeting through GoTo Meeting.