

## **DOWNTOWN WAYNESVILLE COMMISSION**

### **ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

January 5, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.  
Municipal Building Conference Room

The Downtown Waynesville Commission (DWC) Chair Jay Spiro called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the following members present:

Alex McKay  
Joyce Massie  
Jeremiah Smith  
Jessica Garrick  
Courtney Tetrault  
Thomas Woltz

Town staff members present:

Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager  
Beth Gilmore, Executive Director

Others present:

John Hornsby, Hornsby Creative  
Cory Vaillancourt, Smoky Mountain News

DWC Chair Spiro wished everyone a “Happy New Year” and suggested board members spend a few minutes debriefing on the Christmas parade and tree lighting event.

DWC member Tetrault said the tree lighting event drew a large crowd sooner than volunteers were able to prepare enough hot chocolate, which caused them to run out early. Next year, will consider making the following changes:

- Make hot cocoa ahead of time, in bulk. Consider a mobile DWC refreshment stand,
- Arrange the set up so that refreshments are not directly in front of the tree and choir,
- Create boundaries so that there is space between the entertainment and crowd.

The event was an overall success, drawing a large crowd with little advertising. Feedback from all who attended has been great.

The Christmas parade was also a success, despite rainy weather. Postponing the initial date due to rain was the right decision. Chair Spiro said it was a great parade with lively, creative entries. He noticed spacing issues, suggesting we communicate with participants about keeping up a steady pace and encouraging more music.

DWC member Massie questioned whether there is a way to capture parade traffic and draw them into stores after the parade. DWC member Woltz suggested adding a “food truck court” to encourage people to linger. McKay said having food trucks present during the parade in Hazelwood worked well.

Having the parade on a Monday night poses a challenge for families who may not want to be out late. Members could consider asking merchants to experiment in 2024 by staying open late for the parade, but compelling stores to stay open late has always been a challenge.

DWC Executive Director Gilmore distributed copies of the 2022 annual assessment that's due on January 9 to determine the DWC's status in the national Main Street program. Last year, the organization lost its accreditation based on 2021 program performance and became an "affiliate" level member.

Gilmore is working to finalize the 26-page assessment that serves as a sort of "report card" gaging the organization's progress. The process has been insightful, highlighting the many accomplishments the organization has achieved in a short amount of time and identifying where there are opportunities for growth.

Gilmore said everyone "deserves a huge pat on the back for a year of hard work and a job well done ... less than a year after being sworn in to serve on this board. We've accomplished a lot, and you should be proud of yourselves."

Gilmore distributes a list of highlights: Accomplishments & Opportunities explaining that in 2022 the commission was successful at laying some key components to our foundation.

Woltz asked that the record reflect the board's gratitude for the Incredible effort contributed by Gilmore and town staff.

Referencing the "Highlights" document, Gilmore noted that there is room to grow toward diversifying funding sources and growing the budget; collecting data and market research; board training and promotions/communications- telling our story.

Gilmore urged board members to attend Main Street training provided through the NCMS program. Gilmore will inquire to see if joining as a group is an option for the "Basic Training" session.

DWC needs a process for tracking property specs, real estate opportunities, façade changes/incentives and business prospects. Executive Director Gilmore would like to be included in conversations about economic development on Main Street. Information regarding real estate, new business opportunities and resources for new tenants should be available on the DWC website. The task before the DWC is to educate the public about what they have to offer.

Woltz suggested that Gilmore follow and connect with new Main Street business prospects through the Town's Planning Department by requesting that she be included in preliminary discussions regarding activity within the district.

Gilmore suggested the idea of a "recruitment kit" that includes welcome swag, useful district information, town contacts and a list of resources.

## **PRESENTATION OF BRAND**

John Hornsby, Hornsby Creative, presented the organization's new logo and brand style guide, explaining the project has been a work in progress for several months with the DWC promotions committee.

DWC should consider trademarking the new logo and "Appalachian True" phrase.

## **PRESENTATION OF WEBSITE- DOWNTOWNWAYNESVILLE.COM**

Darrell Kanipe, Kanipe Creative, joined the meeting virtually to present the DWC's new web site at downtownwaynesville.com. The site will be live by February 1.

## **MISSION STATEMENT WORKSHOP**

Executive Director Gilmore explained that the board needs to finalize a mission statement to complete the organization's annual work plan. John Hornsby, Hornsby Creative, led DWC members through a series of exercises to craft a mission statement that supports the organization's long-range vision. When the exercise ended, Hornsby took with him the board's feedback to draft a statement.

## **DISCUSSION ABOUT THE DWC BUDGET**

Assistant Town Manager Fowler distributed a copy of the DWC budget and explained the Town's budget process and the financial "health" of the DWC. Fowler explained the DWC has two primary revenue streams- Municipal Service District taxes and a general fund balance appropriation, which brought the entire 2022-23 budget to around \$189,000, including some TDA grant funds. He said, the current budget was a "test budget" established this year to see how things played out so that the budget can be fine-tuned. We will evaluate this year's spending and next year's goals to fine tune the 2023-24 budget. Municipal budgets must balance.

Fowler said the town will apply for Medford grant funds to move forward with plans to design and install bump outs. An additional \$17,500 has been reserved in the current budget to match the grant if awarded.

In an effort to grow and diversify the organization's budget, the DWC needs to pursue grant funding more intentionally by building a database of grant opportunities and applying for new opportunities.

Board members discussed whether to pursue expanding the MSD to Frog Level and how that process would go. The process would require approaching the board of aldermen with the support of property owners who would be affected by the expansion. Concern was voiced for the logistics involved, relative to the actual impact it would have on tax revenues. Additional research should be conducted to determine what the impact would be on property owners- and what benefit there would be to the existing MSD, compared to the added workload. In the meantime, the DWC should focus on building an organization that others will want to buy into.

The DWC needs an appointed "Treasurer" to oversee fiscal matters and provide budget updates to the board.

***A motion by Jay Spiro, seconded by Joyce Massie, to appoint Jeremiah Smith as the DWC Treasurer carried unanimously.***

DWC members spent time drafting an annual work plan, incorporating the “opportunities for growth” that emerged from the 2022 assessment.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

DWC Member Massie agreed to coordinate a volunteer recruitment program.

DWC Member Woltz agreed to coordinate grant application opportunities.

DWC Member McKay to coordinate NC Main Street Award nominations.

The next regular scheduled DWC meeting will be February 21, 2023, at 8:30 a.m.

***A motion by Alex McKay, seconded by Courtney Tetrault, to adjourn carried unanimously.***

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Jay Spiro, Board Chair

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Beth Gilmore, Executive Director

Attachments:

- “Highlights: Accomplishments & Opportunities”
- Brand style guide
- Annual Work Plan draft