



REGULAR MEETING

February 20, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Municipal Building Conference Room / 16 S Main Street

MINUTES

Downtown Waynesville Commission Chair Jay Spiro called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following members present:

Alex McKay
Joyce Massie
Jessica Garrick
Courtney Tetrault
Dave Barone
Grace Mason
Jon Feichter
Kelly Allred

The following members were present by zoon: Thomas Woltz

The following Town Staff were present:

Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager
Beth Gilmore, DWC Executive Director

Others present: Hannah White, N.C. Association of County Commissioners

A motion by Courtney Tetrault to adopt the agenda, seconded by Dave Barone, carried unanimously.

A motion by Alex McKay to approve the minutes from the January planning retreat, seconded by Jessica Garrick, carried unanimously.

DWC member Tetrault requested a letter of support from the DWC for Axe & Awl's "Steppin' Into Spring" event. She explained that Axe & Awl has applied for TDA grant funds for a "seconds sale" event on May 18 that includes



live music and craft vendors along Depot Street from Main to Montgomery. Tourism leaders have requested a letter of support from the DWC stating that the event will not negatively impact surrounding businesses.

A motion by Joyce Massie to write a letter of support for Axe & Awl's Steppin into Spring event on May 18, seconded by Kelly Allred, carried unanimously.

Members discussed planning details for a community forum in late March or early April. Executive Director Gilmore reported that Wells Evens Center is available on March 21. She reached out to the Gem and is waiting to hear back about details and availability. Board members agreed that it would be nice to host the forum in a location different than the last forum, therefore the Gem is the preferred choice. If the Gem does not work out, Gilmore should book with Wells.

Board members agreed the forum should cover topics including- who is the DWC and what is the commission's purpose; Annual Work Plan- programs & projects; a way to sign up for volunteer opportunities and get involved.

Feichter added the DWC should request input from the public about how we can reach them more effectively.

Gilmore distributed a revised annual work plan, updated to reflect feedback from the board planning retreat in January.

Members discussed measurable objective #3 in the organization's annual work plan, which states that 50-percent of the organization's advertising budget will be spent on local advertising. Assistant Town Manager Fowler said that goal will limit the DWC from being able to use advertising funds on a more comprehensive marketing plan.

Feichter clarified that the proposed objective does not concern where the advertising dollars are spent, but who is targeted- suggesting that the DWC spend 50-percent of its advertising budget to target Haywood County residents, but not exclusively through local outlets. The organization could still consider a more comprehensive marketing plan, but that plan should be targeted toward a local audience. A lot of locals assume there is "nothing for them downtown, but there is," said Feichter. That should be one of the main messages behind our advertising.

Objective 3 should be edited to state: "spend 50 percent of advertising budget on marketing to locals."



DWC Member Barone agreed with Feichter that the organization needs more reliable data and tracking mechanisms. We need to know the return on our investment, Barone said. Are we reaching our target? Are the events we are planning successful? It would be helpful to know who is coming and where are they spending money? Having reliable numbers would help with marketing, planning, and applying for grants.

Feichter proposes that the DWC get their own subscription to have unlimited access.

Feichter will reach out to Placer and Zartico for additional information to present to council during the town's budget retreat.

A motion by Kelly Allred to adopt annual work plan as amended, seconded by Dave Barone, carried unanimously.

Review of a comprehensive marketing proposal from Kanipe Creative. The \$38,500 proposal includes a 12-month calendar of content, along with building and distributing the content into marketing space and tracking the results. Fowler explained there are funds available in the current advertising budget that can go toward the total cost, to reduce the amount required from next year's budget. Board members were asked to review the contract in preparation of a vote during the March meeting.

DWC Member Allred expressed a concern about the layout of the Apple Harvest Festival. By lining vendors along the sidewalk edge of the street and forcing the flow of pedestrians along the center of the road- merchants miss out on the flow of shoppers and lose sidewalk space to vendors who pile up inventory and belongings. Allred said for years she has had issues with vendors occupying the sidewalk in front of her store, blocking the entryway and in some cases causing people to think that the store is closed. She said for the past few years she has had to "buy access" to her shop by paying vendor fees for the booth space in front of her store to maintain a clear pathway.

Allred pointed to the difference in sales made between the Church Street festival and Apple Harvest, noting she makes more in sales during the Church Street festival when there are fewer people on the street. DWC Member Massie said she also does significantly more in sales during the Church Street Show- a fact they both attributed to a layout that is "more conducive" to merchants.



Assistant Town Manager Fowler asked for a letter from the DWC outlining the concerns and making a formal request for a change of layout. Fowler said the letter will be distributed to Chamber of Commerce event planners and to town council as part of the permit review process.

Gilmore distributed copies of a final mural design proposal. Board members liked the overall design but wanted to see an image of mountains with different hues in the background- an image with more green tones and less blue. Members also did not like the effect along the top edge of the design that looked like a “thunderstorm” over the mountains.

Members will send new “background mountain” images to Gilmore to pass along to Hornsby for a final edit by swapping out the mountains with a different image and removing the “thunderstorm effect” from the top edge.

DWC Member Mason presented a request from a garden club member who is interested in landscaping around the base of the Gateway to the Smokeys Arch as a public service project. Mason will refer the garden club member to the Downtown Waynesville Association.

Barone provided updates on the Miller Street and Depot mini park enhancement projects. Plans for Miller Street have been submitted to an engineer. Barone will take measurements to order string lights for Depot and Church Streets. Fowler and Gilmore will reach out to Church Street business owners for permission to install lights onto the building.

A motion to adjourn by Jon Feichter, seconded by Joyce Massie, carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jay Spiro, Board Chair

Beth Gilmore, Executive Director