



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

OF THE CITY OF GRIFFIN, GEORGIA

Robin Nance, *Chairman*
Bruce Ballard, *Vice Chairman*
Otis Blake III • Douglas Hollberg
Nat Doughtie • Daniel Searcy
Allen Marshall
Adam Causey, *Executive Director*

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

The April 21, 2009, meeting of the Downtown Development Authority was held in the Griffin Welcome Center at 8:00 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Adam Causey.

On motion by Doug Hollberg and second by Daniel Searcy and approved by all present, the minutes from the meeting held on March 17, 2009, were recorded.

Attendance: Nat Doughtie, Commissioner Doug Hollberg, Allen Marshall, Adam Causey, Daniel Searcy, Kira Harris-Braggs, Vicki Hyatt. Guests: Steve Morris, John Newton.

Financial Report:

FNB façade account stands at \$35,475. \$2,500 grant pending to David Gilchrist. \$5,000 loan pending to Jacade Long. \$5,000 loan pending to Tony Flournoy.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Nance was not present. Mr. Ballard and Mr. Blake were also not present. Mr. Causey chaired the meeting and recognized guests Steve Morris and John Newton. Mr. Causey remarked that Mr. Dane Slaughter would not be attending or presenting a façade application for the Bunn's Cleaners building.

DDA Director's Report:

- Façade Grant – Steve Morris, Griffin Pawn Shop
Mr. Morris presented an application for a façade grant for the Griffin Pawn Shop storefront of the Griffin Hotel building at 128 West Solomon Street. Mr. Morris intends to replace the awning and remove the existing cedar shake façade and construct a new façade similar to the work done at Slices. Mr. Morris will need approval from the Historic Preservation Commission prior to obtaining permits or receiving payment. Mr. Morris was asked if the burglar bars could be removed. Mr. Morris said the pawn shop's insurance group wouldn't allow it, but he would alter the color so that they would be less noticeable.

On motion by Doug Hollberg and second by Nat Doughtie and approved by all present, the board voted to award a Façade Grant in the amount of \$2,500 to Steve Morris for work to be performed on the Griffin Pawn Shop at 128 West Solomon Street.



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- Façade Grant – John Newton, Agape Computers
Mr. Newton presented an application for a façade grant for the Agape Computer store at 128 South Hill Street. Mr. Newton intends to replace the awning canopy. Because only the fabric material is being replaced, Mr. Newton’s project does not require approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Causey requested that Mr. Newton return for additional grant money for new paint if he wanted to expand the scope of his renovation. Mr. Newton replied that he may be open to doing that in the future.

On motion by Allen Marshall and second by Doug Hollberg and approved by all present, the board voted to award a Façade Grant in the amount of \$525.25 to John Newton for work to be performed on the Agape Computer store at 128 South Hill Street.

- Commuter Rail Update
Mr. Causey updated the board on the commuter rail project. A meeting was held earlier in April with John Izard, a Griffin native who works for Cushman-Wakefield real estate developer in Atlanta. Mr. Izard is now the chairman for the “Brain Train” organization formed to lobby for a commuter rail line from Atlanta to Athens. Mr. Izard met with city and county officials to expand the scope of that group to consolidate support for every proposed commuter rail line into a single entity. Mr. Izard would like political, community, and monetary support for a lobbying effort toward state leaders. Currently, the required match for the federal ear-mark was not included in any proposed state budget. The new federal transportation bill may require that previously earmarked funds that have not been expended are turned over to areas that would use them. Brant Keller is working on new projects for the federal transportation bill and will keep the city updated on any news from Congressman Westmoreland on the earmark’s status. In a related issue, the 6th Street Bridge is still scheduled for a 2010 construction. The existing bridge will be demolished, however, there is still an effort by locals to save the structure and perhaps utilize it in another area of town.
- Downtown Cluster Plan
Mr. Causey gave an update on a new cluster plan for the downtown area. Mr. Causey had made some updates to the plan shown in the March DDA meeting and asked for feedback from directors on the plan. Mr. Hollberg suggested expanding the clusters to include the Plott Hide & Fur building on Solomon Street as well as the Dovedown complex. Mr. Causey explained that the plan could be helpful in assisting area real estate professionals find tenants for these buildings that matched the potential uses outlined. Vicki Hyatt suggested using “Coming Soon” signs that showcased the potential use available in specific buildings in each cluster. Mr. Causey agreed and stated that he was attempting to meet with the



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Heart of Georgia Board of Realtors in order to discuss that idea and others with local real estate professionals. Mr. Marshall mentioned that larger spaces are so difficult to find matching tenants and that other strategies for those buildings and spaces need to be researched. Mr. Searcy stated that he felt the cluster plan was short on office space, elaborating that the government cluster contained a lot of office uses, but other blocks dominated by retail or service businesses also had a mix of office space and we should remember those office uses. Mr. Causey remarked that he would make changes and bring the plan back to the next meeting. Mr. Causey also remarked that he attended a recent downtown walkabout with City Manager Kenny Smith, Griffin Power Director Bill Bosch, Public Works Director Brant Keller, and Commissioner Hollberg. The goal was to discover the minor deficiencies in downtown that could be remedied by the regular operating functions of city departments. These entities will work together to consolidate power lines, clean up stained streetscape and find smaller projects that could help beautification efforts, such as placing pavers at key crossing points in the landscaped medians.

- **FY2010 Budget/Projects**
Mr. Causey updated the board on the downtown project that could be funded through the 2010 budget. Paragon was unable to get the concept plan for the Slaton Avenue parking improvements. Mr. Causey remarked that the proposed parking addition made it through the first round of budget discussions. The FY2010 DDA operating budget will be rather small, but Mr. Causey is pushing for capital funds to do something downtown. Mr. Causey said he can move some money around to do small, “easy win” projects in the downtown, such as replacing the handrail along the county leased parking lot on 6th Street across from the Griffin Gallery. Mr. Marshall added that the walls in that parking lot need some beautification. Mr. Causey will look into what the county or the Blake’s can do with that property.

Mr. Causey also updated the board on the downtown LCI concept plan. The new consultant for the West Griffin LCI, Pond & Company, has also been retained to perform the concept plan work for the updated Hill Street and Solomon Street streetscapes. The concept plan will help us get closer to implementation funding from ARC/GDOT.

Mr. Searcy updated the board on the work performed by St. George’s Episcopal Church. The church has demolished the building at 10th and Broad at the railroad tracks. The lot may be utilized as parking or greenspace at a later time. Mr. Searcy said the church would like to work with the city to determine the best use of the land.



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City Manager's Report

No report.

Other Business

- Main Street – Kira Harris-Braggs
Main Street committees are still meeting. The Design and Economic Development committees have secured the county's agreement in allowing the lot on the corner of 6th and Solomon to be developed into a pocket park. Hotel/motel money will be utilized for the project.

The Promotions committee is working on a newsletter for Downtown and developing better directional signage for businesses and key locations.

The annual Main Street Planning Retreat will take place on April 22.

June Jam planning is ongoing by the Downtown Council. It is scheduled for June 13 and they still need people to purchase tables and sponsorship. The DC is continuing with its sponsorship drive, and they are nearly a quarter of the way to their 100-member goal. The morning Meet & Greets are continuing, as well, and have been successful. The next Meet & Greet will be at the Welcome Center and will present ideas for code enforcement/beautification efforts.

The Farmers' Market starts May 16th to be held every Saturday until the end of September.

- City Planning Department
Vicki Hyatt updated the board on One Town/One Goal. May 2nd is the build day in Thomaston Mills. Donated materials (building supplies and food) and volunteers are still needed. Team leaders to be in charge at each house are really needed. Mr. Causey stated that he will be a team leader and it doesn't require a lot of skilled building experience. Ms. Hyatt says that Kenny Smith suggested that One Town/One Goal be nominated for the Award for Municipal Excellence through the National League of Cities.

The new LCI study will begin after July 1, 2009. The new LCI area abuts the DDA area and extends to the North Expressway/Griffin Tech/UGA Griffin areas.



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Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted by:

ATTEST:

Adam Causey
Executive Director
Downtown Development Authority

Doug Hollberg
DDA Director / City Commissioner
Downtown Development Authority Board