



# 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, July 21, 2009

The July 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 Robin Nance.

**Attendance:** *Board members:* Robin Nance, Bruce Ballard, Otis Blake, Doug Hollberg, Daniel Searcy, Allen Marshall, Adam Causey *City staff:* City Manager Kenny Smith, City Attorney Drew Whalen, Main Street Manager Kira Harris-Braggs, Special Projects Coordinator Vicki Hyatt.

*On motion by Allen Marshall and second by Dan Searcy and approved by all present, the minutes from the specially called meeting held on June 30, 2009, were recorded.*

#### **Financial Report:**

Mr. Causey stated that the façade grant account stands at \$27,475.57 but that monies allocated to Corner Café Deli and Jackson Hewitt building have not yet been paid out. Mr. Searcy requested a printed financial report for each meeting to be presented at each meeting. Mr. Causey stated that will be available at the next meeting.

#### **Chairman's Report:**

Chairman Nance was pleased with the façade money that has been spent so far and asked for ways we could further recognize those individuals who have refurbished their properties. Mr. Hollberg described the "Golden Nail Award" previously given to property owners who did an outstanding job with renovations. The Golden Nail was a plaque that would recognize building owners every year and was awarded after review by a committee comprised of DDA and Main Street members. Mr. Marshall added that it could be good publicity for the downtown area if it were brought back. The Board asked Mr. Causey to research the award so that it may be revived.

#### **DDA Director's Report:**

- Website  
Mr. Causey updated the board on the progress of the downtown website. It is now up at [www.downtowngriffinga.com](http://www.downtowngriffinga.com). More updates are coming including an available properties page, a testimonials page, and more pictures.



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- TAD/Redevelopment Update

The county has certified the tax base for 2009 and the total value of properties within the TAD declined. However there should still be some positive tax increment in the city's account on which to base future projections, since only positive tax increments are recorded. Mr. Causey stated that he is meeting with Griffin-Spalding Schools to discuss the adoption of the TAD by the school board. Mr. Causey is updating the redevelopment plan for re-adoption by the City Commission and then take it to the school board for consideration. Mr. Smith suggested communicating with the school system about their plans for the Taylor Street campus to ensure they align with our investments in the downtown.

The city's current consultant, POND & Co., met recently to show the proposed redesign for Hill Street, Solomon Street, and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Construction will be paid from LCI implementation funds from the ARC.

- Commuter Rail Update

Mr. Causey discussed recent news of the rail to Atlanta. Mr. Smith explained that a meeting of area mayors took place and the discussion centered on commuter rail and also high-speed rail that may come from additional federal dollars. The Atlanta-to-Macon line is still considered the spine of a larger network of proposed inter- and intrastate passenger rail. Mr. Causey passed on a request from rail proponents that the term "commuter rail" be changed to "passenger rail" in the hopes that additional federal money from the larger rail network could be captured for the local line. Mr. Hollberg said that an 18-month extension of the existing federal earmark for local passenger rail to Atlanta is in the works.

Mr. Marshall asked about another local transportation matter, the proposed new airport. Mr. Hollberg explained the process for additional environmental studies for the two target sites. The city and county met in a joint meeting and approved funding for the new environmental studies. Additional location and funding decisions will be made after those studies are complete.

- Business Improvement District

Mr. Causey presented additional information on creating a Business Improvement District (BID) downtown. A BID creates a district where property owners tax themselves to pay for additional services and amenities. Property owners would have to agree to join such a district. Mr. Causey believes this tool could be utilized in maintaining the Façade Program yearly, and calculations on the four main blocks of central downtown bring in enough revenue to sustain a yearly façade grant. State law provides for DDAs to manage the BID process and finances.



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Mr. Smith asked about using the DDA boundaries or a larger area for the BID, which would bring in more revenue. Mr. Causey said he would do those calculations and find out. Mr. Smith also asked about property owners that would not use the façade grant, what would be their incentive to vote for a BID. Mr. Ballard agreed that something else would need to be packaged with it, much like the SPLOST projects, for it to have support. Mr. Blake inquired about the timeline for creating the BID. Mr. Causey said that a petition with more than 50% of the property owners agreeing must be signed and then the matter is brought before the city commission. Mr. Hollberg said that a simple list showing property owners what they will pay in yearly taxes might be a good way to get petition signatures.

### City Manager's Report

Mr. Smith discussed a recent meeting with Will Hill Newton, Sr. and Will Newton III, the current owners of the city-leased parking lot at Solomon St & 8<sup>th</sup> St. The current lease is a 3-year option for \$500 per month. Mr. Smith said Mr. Newton was now interested in a long-term lease for that site and would want double the rent. A longer lease term would make it feasible for the city to fund on-site improvements. This issue has not been brought back to the city commission.

### Other Business

- **Main Street/Downtown Council**  
Kira Harris-Braggs notified the board that the Downtown Council has canceled September Smash due to lack of sponsor interest. The Main Street committees are actively meeting, and a newsletter is forthcoming. A nominating committee is meeting to suggest new Main Street Advisory Board members for next year. The downtown meet & greets are still happening the third Monday at 8am. Main Street and Spalding County are showing free kids movies at the green space at 6<sup>th</sup> & Solomon on three Friday nights this summer. Mr. Hollberg reminded the board that the Downtown Council membership drive is still going with a goal of 100 members; membership is \$60 per year.
- **City Planning Department**  
Vicki Hyatt showed the new Walk @ Lunch flier and reported that it will be distributed to key locations within the city. From August 4-9, the National Bikers Roundup is visiting Atlanta Motor Speedway. The city, Main Street and the DDA are manning a booth at the racetrack to bring visitors downtown.



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## **Adjourn**

Respectfully Submitted by:

ATTEST:

Adam Causey  
Executive Director  
Downtown Development Authority

Robin Nance  
Chairman  
Downtown Development Authority Board