



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, March 17, 2009

The March 17, 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.

On motion by Doug Hollberg and second by Otis Blake III and approved by all present, the minutes from the meeting held on February 17, 2009, were recorded.

Attendance: Otis Blake, Nat Doughtie, Robin Nance, Commissioner Doug Hollberg, Bruce Ballard, Allen Marshall, Adam Causey, Drew Whalen, Frederick Gardiner, Kira Harris-Braggs, Vicki Hyatt.

Financial Report:

FNB façade account stands at \$35,465. \$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 had no report.

DDA Director's Report:

- Mr. Causey presented an application for the 2009 LCI Supplemental Study application to the Atlanta Regional Commission. This application will be for a transit-oriented development (TOD) and mixed-use development ordinance. This will help in making the areas around the proposed commuter rail station ready for development as denser mixed-use areas, per the original LCI study. The application requests \$10,000 from the city to be matched with \$10,000 from the ARC, and will be budgeted through the Planning Department.

On motion by Doug Hollberg and second by Allen Marshall and approved by all present, the board voted to approve a letter of support for the 2009 LCI Supplemental Study Application to the ARC for a TOD/Mixed Use Overlay District.

- **Parking Study**
Mr. Causey updated the board on the parking study. The study is in its final stages. Mr. Causey reminded the board of the design charette taking place on



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March 18. The study will then be completed and brought before the City Commission in late March/early April.

- **Old City Hall**
Mr. Causey updated the board on the RFP process. There were no submissions received. Mr. Causey was in talks with several developers; however, most of those groups could not secure underwriting for the project given the current economic climate. These groups were still interested in the property and Mr. Causey said he will continue to talk with them about it. Mr. Causey said it was possible to issue a Request for Qualifications for the site, which is different from the RFP process. This may generate additional interest. Mr. Blake inquired as to the asking price for the site. Mr. Whalen and Commissioner Hollberg indicated that \$1.3 million was a target figure; however, no appraisal on the site had been performed. Mr. Marshall suggested that the site would be more attractive to a developer if they didn't have to pay the entire purchase price up front and that a more creative way to finance the acquisition of this site may be necessary to get the project sold. Mr. Causey also suggested making some site improvements prior to the sale.
- **Downtown Cluster Plan**
Mr. Causey presented an initial cluster plan for the downtown area. The 2006 LCI study recommended completing a plan that group similar businesses near one another. The idea is to develop complementary businesses and increase foot traffic through downtown. Mr. Causey outlined various clusters that utilize the existing strengths of certain areas to target new businesses that fill needed gaps. Mr. Causey asked for feedback and reminded the board that the cluster plan is meant to be modified and improved over time.

Mr. Marshall asked for the cluster plan to extend north of the railroad tracks to bring that area into downtown, per the LCI study. Mr. Gardiner also recommended bringing in the TOD/Mixed-Use Overlay area into play as well.

Mr. Marshall asked about the location of the proposed commuter rail station and why it is located in an existing parking lot. Mr. Causey and Mr. Gardiner responded that the location requires no acquisition and is the path of least resistance to get a station constructed quickly. The consensus from the city was that we didn't want current commercial properties removed from the tax rolls for public use. Mr. Hollberg added that the associated parking deck would add additional retail space at that location as well. Mr. Whalen gave a brief history of the land and rights-of-way around the rail lines and Welcome Center.



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Mr. Blake inquired about the regulatory function of a cluster plan. Mr. Causey explained that the plan is a suggestion of where compatible uses should go and would be used for business recruitment and retention. The DDA and the city will work with property owners to get desired businesses downtown. However, the city fully understands the need for property owners to fill their buildings and the DDA will not stand in the way of a tenant because it conflicts with the cluster plan. Mr. Hollberg also suggested that the cluster plan extend farther to the east, past 5th St. He mentioned that the Tree Board has suggested some improvements to that side of town, including the addition of medians on Solomon Street.

- **FY2010 Budget/Projects**

Mr. Causey updated the board on a project that could be funded by the city through the DDA to implement recommendations from one of the downtown studies. Mr. Causey also outlined the DDA operating budget for FY2010, which is less than half of the FY2009 operating budget. Mr. Causey explained that this year will be extremely lean and all departments have been asked to keep their spending down.

Mr. Hollberg inquired about the LCI implementation funds for the downtown area. Mr. Gardiner answered that there is no timeframe on when we could see that money, as recent turmoil in the DOT has complicated the process.

Mr. Causey presented a list of potential LCI projects that could be funded for downtown, as requested at the last meeting. Most projects are long-term and expensive, including an amphitheater or 5th St ROW improvements. Mr. Causey recommended spending some money where we could, such as improvements for the DDA-owned parking lot. Mr. Hollberg suggesting looking at acquiring the small building next to the DDA parking lots, which is owned by Sean Cain. Mr. Blake stated that any money the DDA did receive would go further if consolidated to one area and suggested spending it on the DDA lots. Mr. Marshall agreed and added that they are new business going into this area that would benefit from these improvements. Mr. Ballard said that we should build on the positive developments in this area and use it to highlight efforts to turn it into an “entertainment district”. He also explained that the area to the east of Hill Street will soon be in a constant state of change due to the replacement of the 6th Street Bridge and the proposed commuter rail.

On motion by Doug Hollberg and second by Bruce Ballard and approved by all present, the board voted to send a funding request letter to the City Commission to improve the DDA-owned parking lot on Slaton Avenue, and to potentially acquire other properties in the area.



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City Manager's Report

No report.

Other Business

- Main Street – Kira Harris-Braggs
The Downtown Council is in the middle of a membership drive and is hosting “morning meet-and-greets” for business owners to network and discuss downtown issues.

The Farmers’ Market is planned to begin on May 16th. UGA is providing a market manager.

Main Street committees continue to meet and work. The Economic Development and Design committees are coordinating with community groups to address the pocket park at 6th St and Solomon St.

The downtown website is in the works. The city’s IT department is handling the project.

Main Street is discussing options for the 6th Street Bridge. The National Trust has a program called “Preservation of Endangered Spaces” which may have some funding available to help save it. Mr. Hollberg added that Ralph Jones has some ideas to reuse the bridge. Mr. Gardiner added that there should be a focus on tourism utilizing Griffin’s cultural heritage.
- City Planning Department
Vicki Hyatt updated the board on One Town/One Goal. May 2nd is the build day in Thomaston Mills. There is still money needed to get the playground installed. There are plenty of opportunities for volunteers, as well.



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Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted by:

ATTEST:

Adam Causey
Executive Director
Downtown Development Authority

Robin Nance
Chairman
Downtown Development Authority Board