

Idaho Falls Downtown Development Board Meeting held June 7, 2022, at 9:00am in the Arts Council conference room. Those in attendance: Kevin Cutler, Brandi Newton, Jill Hansen, Tasha Taylor, Chip Langerak, Kevin Josephson, Antonio Meza, Lisa Farris, Christian Ashcroft, Kasi Nelson, Councilman Jim Francis. Staff – Catherine Smith, Mala Lyon and Juan Hernandez

Minutes of the May 3, 2022, meeting reviewed; Chip motioned to accept, Kasi seconded; Board approved.

Financial report – Brandi –proposed that a revised budget be made by Catherine that is modified to show canceled event income; Kevin asked if anything was going to be done to offset the missed fundraiser income? No, only 4 months left – we did not plant spring flowers along Broadway this year to cut some costs. We do have a BID fund that the city holds to be used for projects or operating and we can look into leveraging some funds there to make up the shortfall. Councilman Francis said he would check with Director Brad Cramer. Chip suggested a snow removal reserve fund to help offset higher expenses for a bad snow year. Brandi motioned to accept the financial report – Jill seconded; board approved. Brandi motioned to have a budget revised by Catherine, Chip seconded, and board approved.

Catherine will be attending the City Council work session on June 27 to give them a re-cap of what we have done this past year. This is an annual report tied to our Management Agreement with the City of Idaho Falls.

Grants - We are working on a T-Mobile grant for the Welcome to Downtown sign to go across Broadway. The maximum to apply for is \$50,000 and we are applying for the maximum amount. We need to include 5 letters of support for this grant request. Greg has submitted a letter, we are requesting that the Board submit 3 more to Catherine. Catherine will also request a letter from Brad Cramer and Mayor Rebecca Casper.

Light grant – A new solar light is being installed on Capital Ave at the Melaleuca lot that we manage and we will be moving the second pay station from B Street to there. We have had several complaints about the need for better lighting from the county and downtown employees leaving work after dark. We have had a gentleman that is doing 100 hours of Community Service for us downtown weeding in the evenings. It has been very helpful!

SpringBrew raised about \$1200 – it was a very windy day and we saw a much smaller crowd than we hoped we would. SummerBrew will be June 25. We will be working with Jeni from TEC for SummerBrew as Krisi has officially retired as our event specialist.

On June 25, we will be hosting the merchant driven ‘Shop the Sidewalk’ sale day. We are encouraging shops to put out signs, balloons and a table with sale items. We hope to bring people downtown from the Farmer’s Market this Saturday and every Saturday. Customers park their vehicles in the downtown area to go to the market, so they are walking back into the downtown until the market closes around 1 pm. A suggestion to work with the merchants and help them leverage the events like the Farmer’s Market and Gallery Walks by having a morning, evening and even virtual training/info meeting is something to explore.

We have created a private downtown merchant Facebook page that we are encouraging the merchants to use to share information and allowing us to share information easily and quickly. Kevin asked if we include Broadway shops in events and the communications and we always do – many are linked into the Facebook page and already receive all of our email communications directed to downtown merchants.

Taste of Downtown – looking at possibly late August, but we still have the road closure difficulties and will be working on the details of understanding what is needed to close the road for maximum safety. Chip said he loves the event, but that it is hard to staff his restaurant and a booth for Taste of Downtown. Some restaurants do not have the equipment to do an outdoor set up. Catherine said she contacted 12 restaurants last year, felt like we needed a minimum of 9 to make it work and only 3 responded, so we had to cancel it. Kevin J asked if we could hold it on a Sunday as there are lots of new people moving into the city and they are looking for more to do. Would staffing be less of an issue on that day? Downtown restaurants that are open on Sunday are packed. Brandi said the response to the ARTitorium being open on Sunday has been ok, not great. Chip asked about doing it in the winter inside The Downtown Event Center? Brandi said you must figure out the absolute final date prior to the event that you have to have a solid commitment from the restaurants so you can still advertise and promote and organize. The Arts Council had their street party in 2019 and it was a very successful family friendly event and would like to suggest that maybe we combine efforts and to kick off the new Season of Shows at the Arts Council in combination with a Taste of Downtown. We will explore this some more.

Parking – Jake met with a photography business owner that offers high-end photography sessions on Shoup Avenue. The session last for 4-6 at least hours. Customers are receiving parking tickets and it is creating a poor experience for this business. It was decided that the business owner could ‘pre=pay’ their parking tickets. The owner of the business will connect with Catherine to devise the logistics to execute this temporary solution. Brandi said this problem will be solved with having on-street meters and pay to park.

Jim Pletscher has been helping us clean up some of the alleys and paint over graffiti. We are looking into some grant money to help with safety in alleys with better lighting.

We have contracted with some businesses that have private lots to monitor them as a service. Banks Gaffney Law office has 8 reserved spaces in the private lot on Shoup Avenue and there are signs clearly posted that “if you park here, you will be towed”. That law office has hired a tow company during the noon – 2 pm lunch rush to be present and watch for people to park in the spaces. When customers or others do, they are immediately towed and charged \$420 to get their vehicle back. Catherine spoke with the building owner, and the law firm’s lease gives them every right to have vehicles towed out of the spaces. Since they have hired this towing company, they no longer need us to monitor the parking lot. We are hoping to help downtown employees understand the parking restrictions in that parking lot to avoid being towed through a handful of emails and future social media posts on our private Facebook group.

Construction update - The plan is to open the Park Avenue June 17. Knife River and the Public Works team have been wonderful to work with on this massive project downtown. The intersection of Yellowstone and Broadway is on hold until next year as the bids received were much higher than anticipated.

Lisa Farris, CDBG Report/Façade Improvement Funds – We still have \$15,000 façade grant money and will be looking to Aug or Sept for the 2022 allotment. Have received several letters of support and the deadline for them in June 12. Page Insurance is moving ahead with their project.

Christian Ashcraft, Economic Development Administrator – city report – GIFT city transportation is up and running. Could we give info materials to IFDDC to distribute? Yes, Kade gave us materials and we distributed. Christian is doing research on local improvement districts. This is a way to do an improvement project in a specific area and then those businesses are ‘taxed’ to pay the city back.

Councilman Jim Francis – The city is now applying impact fees to new construction only. There is a working group for proactive communication about the water tower construction with a plan for signs and help for people to adapt to the parking implications from the library parking lot being restricted with construction. The earliest the construction will begin for the water tower is this fall or next spring. Chip said his understanding is that the library will be in charge of handling it like they did once before. The city is also looking at doing an international community festival in the fall, maybe on the riverwalk, to help our community understand the different cultures that all live here now.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:06am The next board meeting will be held July 12, 2022

Respectfully submitted - Jill Hansen, secretary and Mala Lyon