

GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
& GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 10, 2020
VIA ZOOM
7:32 AM

DDA Board Members present: Doug Simons Jr. (Chair), Josh Niernberg (Vice-Chair), Cole Hanson, Dan Meyer, Libby Olson, Maria Rainsdon, Duncan Rowley, Anna Stout, Vance Wagner

Downtown Grand Junction Staff present: DDA Executive Director Brandon Stam, Administrative Specialist Vonda Bauer, Marketing and Communications Specialist Dave Goe, and Event Coordinator Rykel Menor.

City Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Kraig Andrews, Chuck McDaniel, Phyllis Norris, Phil Pe'a, Anna Stout, Rick Taggart, and Mayor Duke Wortmann.

City of Grand Junction Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Public Works Director Trent Prall, Senior Planner Lance Gloss, and City Clerk Wanda Winkelmann

Guests: Grand Junction Economic Partnership Director Robin Brown

CALL TO ORDER: Doug called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes:

Meeting of November 12, 2020

Anna made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 12th Downtown Development Authority Board meeting. Libby seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

Discussion of the following items:

LAS COLONIAS RETAIL/RESTAURANT SPACE FUNDING

Robin gave a brief summary of the project to develop a restaurant and retail space at Las Colonias. The Las Colonias Development Corporation (LCDC) recently requested \$1.5M from the Downtown Development Authority and \$1.5M from the City of Grand Junction. The cost of the project is estimated at \$6M; therefore, the LCDC will request bank financing for the additional \$3M to develop the plaza. The LCDC is also requesting the City to guarantee the loan. A draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the LCDC Chair has been sent to both boards.

There were concerns that the timing of the project was not favorable due to the pandemic and that Downtown businesses are struggling. Other concerns included TIF dollars would be going out of our Downtown corridor and the priority should be focused on the Downtown corridor. There has also been pushback from community members regarding the City competing with private industry. It was suggested other funding sources be explored, such as a development corporation or private entity instead of using public money.

In addition, Brandon and Phyllis serve on the LCDC Board and stated that the project was not originally \$6M. They thought the LCDC would get funding through a bank and not from the City or DDA.

Jim Jeffries, owner of Edgewater Brewery, stated that he did not receive any subsidies for his investment of \$3.5M for his business. Mr. Jeffries also expressed his concerns that he is already competing with the Las Colonias Amphitheater with event space and now a restaurant is in the planning stages of being developed.

A letter was submitted to the DDA Board and City Council by Scott Howard, owner of Rockslide Brewery and Dream Café, regarding his concerns that the public sector is competing with the private sector.

DDA Board members and City councilmembers were in favor of the project; however, funding the project was not supported at this time.

ARCHITECTURAL COSTS FOR LAS COLONIAS RETAIL/RESTAURANT SPACE

Blythe and Company was the architect for the Las Colonias restaurant/retail space. Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) paid the architectural fees of \$142k for the LCDC. GJEP did not budget for this expense and is requesting reimbursement from the City and DDA. Robin explained that GJEP hired a staff person for approximately \$60k to administer the LCDC and has paid additional legal fees for the LCDC as well.

After discussion, DDA Board Members agreed to pay ½ of the cost of the architectural fees invoice.

Vance moved to authorize the DDA Executive Director to negotiate with the City of Grand Junction for the reimbursement to GJEP of the architectural costs, up to fifty percent (50%) of the amount. Duncan seconded the motion. Anna abstained. The motion was approved unanimously.

DOWNTOWN PLAZA AND FUTURE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Brandon explained that a public plaza space was identified in the Downtown Plan of Development; therefore, there have been discussions with City of Grand Junction staff and City Council regarding the Downtown plaza concept. In addition, staff have been working with Consultant Ted Ciavonne on the design concepts, cost estimates, and phasing of the project. The estimated total cost is \$1.2M; however, the estimate did not include restroom facilities. The Downtown Development Authority would also need approval from City Council for a Use Agreement to utilize the plaza space.

The consensus of the City Councilmembers was in support of the plaza and alleyway improvements. However, they expressed their concerns regarding the loss of parking to construct the Plaza and the timing of the project due to the pandemic. Brandon will provide the Parking Study that was completed to City Council and the DDA Board. The study provides recommendations and options for better utilization of the existing parking.

DDA Board Members expressed their support of the plaza concept. The space would be designed for Downtown events as well as an affordable option for community groups to host events without closing Main Street. Therefore, Main Street businesses would not lose parking in front of their stores. Events would bring more people downtown which would generate additional sales tax revenue and benefit the economy. The goal is to make Downtown more vibrant.

Brandon stated that the Leadership Committee as well as Downtown business owners have expressed their support of the project. Downtown staff will continue to provide outreach to the businesses.

Based upon support of the plaza and alleyway improvements, Mr. Caton stated that staff will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for City Council's formal consideration.

OTHER BUSINESS

Doug Simons Jr. stated he is a member of the Marijuana Working Group (MWG). The group is considering a ballot measure that would allow retail marijuana businesses in Grand Junction. Doug requested feedback from the DDA Board regarding allowing the marijuana businesses in the DDA district. Board members discussed the importance of restrictions on the outward appearance of the storefronts and limiting the number to one or two operators in Downtown.

Dave stated that the "Twelve Day of Christmas" campaign was going well, and that community engagement has been great on social media. The deadline for the Downtown Staycation was also extended. Brandon stated that gift card sales were \$100k which was a \$20k increase from last year.

Brandon stated that the enclosures for the outdoor parklets will be installed soon and will be a great benefit in the spring.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Anna made a motion to adjourn. Libby seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.