

GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2013
248 SOUTH 4TH STREET
7:30 A.M.

PRESENT: PJ McGovern, Jodi Coleman-Niernberg, Marty Chazen, Les Miller, Stephan Schweissing, Jason Farrington

ABSENT: Peggy Page, Kevin Reimer

STAFF: Diane Keliher

GUESTS: Sam Susuras, City Mayor; Libby Collins, Mesa Land Trust; Rich Englehart, City Manager; John Shaver, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Jodi called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. Harry is absent due to a family emergency.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stephan made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 25th meeting; PJ seconded; minutes were approved. Jodi welcomed Marty Chazen to the board as the new City Council representative. He was introduced to the DDA board members. PJ noted that because the appointees to the DDA by law must be either property owners, business lessees, or residents in the DDA district, Directors have an inherent conflict of interest as they are also the beneficiaries of the decisions of the Board. John Shaver added that legally that circumstance is understood to be generally a beneficial conflict, but that the Board must be diligent to anticipate, identify and reveal substantive conflicts of interest of an individual nature.

MESA LAND TRUST PRESENTATION: Mesa Land Trust (MLT) has been discussing changes to Monument Road that would connect Downtown to the Colorado National Monument. Libby distributed a pamphlet entitled *Economic Vitality and Community Development through Conservation*. The "Three Sisters" project partnership between MLT and the City was very successful. During construction of the trails, MLT had land owners wanting to sell their land along Monument Road to them. Mesa County, Colorado National Monument, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management are all working with MLT to see what can be done along Monument Road.

The map in the pamphlet shows how Monument Road would connect the Downtown area, the River Front Trail, and the Lunch Loop/Tabeguache Trail to the Colorado National Monument. Property along Monument Road is privately owned and is zoned for high density residential development. MLT would like to work with these landowners to preserve the views along the Road. Monument Road is the gateway to the Colorado National Monument and should be as attractive as possible.

There is also potential for a greater number of trails. Urban Trails has proposed an off-road paved trail that would follow the Riverfront Trail to Monument Road and South Camp Road. MLT would like to facilitate this project and create even more open space along the Road. There have been community meetings since February to solicit feedback regarding what people would like to see along Monument Road. There was great support for protecting scenic views and trail connectivity. We are very fortunate

to have an open space area with a connection to a Downtown area. There are 258 acres to acquire and MLT has acquired 125 acres already.

MLT will write a plan, create a vision and work with the City and County to incorporate it into their long range planning. MLT would like the DDA's support and the business community members' feedback. MLT will be hosting a luncheon at US Bank and will hold other local events for public input. If you have further questions or concerns, Libby Collin's and Rob Bleiberg's contact information is located at the bottom of page 1.

Jodi was pleased with the family-friendly aspect of the trail as well as the connection to Downtown amenities.

CITY MARKET/VALUE LODGE: Jodi reported that City Market is in discussion with Value Lodge in pursuing that location for a fuel station. There is not a contract in place, but its close. City Market may come to the DDA for funding for street-scaping. Jason asked about the vacation of White Avenue. There was discussion of various real estate issues.

WHITE HALL UPDATE: All the prep work will be done this week and demolition will start next week. The boiler has been removed from the sanctuary.

AVALON: The Foundation is still doing fund raising. PJ asked if they realize there is a deadline. Rich said that the Foundation has attended all the meetings and will meet with the mayor on Friday.

AOTC: We have received the 2013 submissions and sent out an email to the selection committee. With Harry being gone this week, it looks like the meeting will be next week. PJ pointed out that we don't have to choose sculptures every year if the quality is not there.

DDA BOARD MEMBER POSITIONS: Stephanie Tuin, City Clerk, emphasized how important it is to fill the open DDA board positions. Peggy is term-limited and Kevin plans to renew his position, so that leaves two open positions. Jason said it was hard to find the application on the City website. PJ encouraged us to send it out in the Downtown newsletter.

CINCO DE MAYO FEEDBACK: Jodi and Les attended Cinco de Mayo and it seemed to be a good event for downtown. Most shops were open. Jason noted that the sidewalk in front of some buildings was blocked with the beer garden fence. The car show was held separately at Lincoln Park.

OTHER: Les asked if Marty would like to add anything regarding the DDA board. Marty stated that the DDA is a very important part of the City. The past initiatives have been good and he has been supportive of them. The DDA has money to do things in the downtown area. He wants to make sure the money is spent effectively for the good of Downtown.

Les asked about his support of the Avalon Theatre renovation. He would like to see the Avalon Foundation come to the table with significant funds, and that the project shouldn't go forward solely on the public funding from the City and DDA. Les asked about phasing the project.

Jodi said that the Avalon is a great part of Downtown and arts and culture. Her biggest fear is that the Avalon will go dark. Marty would prefer to back off and allow the Foundation additional time to raise the necessary funds. He also is concerned about the operating side of the project – that the facility may

or may not be a break-even proposition. PJ is frustrated with the Symphony's participation. Rich commented that he would like council to have the opportunity to look at fixing the building's core issues. He added that the return on investment is the sales tax that is generated by people coming downtown to eat and shop. Stephan said that he feels that the Foundation has done fundraising before and then the project does not go forward. He feels we need to do something. PJ said the DDA has invested a lot of money in the Avalon and it is very important to Downtown.

Marty is concerned about who will run the daily operation. PJ suggested making a business plan for phase one. Rich agreed that we need to have an operating plan. Sam said that the Symphony approached City Council with their vision of the project being funded by the DDA and private donations only and now they have dropped the ball and the City has picked up the extra cost. Marty said that the City has only budgeted 1.5 million for this year. The other 1.5 million has not even been budgeted. Jodi was surprised that Council was not financially committed in the original plan since the City owns the building. Sam commented that he feels the only people who use the Avalon are in the original square mile and that the other citizens in the Valley don't want to pay for something they don't use. Stephan said that this is a community facility similar to a school or a park.

Rich reminded everyone not to lose the vision of the project. The City is working with FCI and Chamberlin to figure out an option that will work for everyone.

ADJOURN: Stephan made a motion to adjourn; PJ seconded; the board adjourned at 8:43 a.m.