

GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2014
248 SOUTH 4TH STREET
7:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Jodi Coleman-Niernberg (Chair), Les Miller (Vice Chair), Shane Allerheiligen, Martin Chazen, Jason Farrington, Kirk Granum, PJ McGovern, Kevin Reimer

ABSENT: Stephan Schweissing

STAFF: Harry Weiss, Diane Keliher, Aaron Hoffman

GUESTS: John Shaver, Rich Englehart, Steve Thoms, Bennett Boeschenstein

CALL TO ORDER: Jodi called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Jason made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 27th meeting; Les seconded; minutes were approved.

DISCUSSION OF JOINT MEETING: Belinda is arranging a lunch meeting in the City's main auditorium from 11:30 -1:00 on Monday the 21st with the DDA/BID Board and City Council. With the Board's input Harry has identified four main subjects to discuss. Jodi urged Harry to keep it simple since time is limited.

Currently the DDA's use of TIF is restricted by state statute, by local ballot authorization, and by City Council resolution. Potential expansion of DDA economic development activities would depend in part upon funding availability, which raises the question of revisiting the TIF restrictions and allowing greater flexibility in its use. Marty suggested sending out a fact sheet to the councilors explaining how the TIF works and its restrictions. He also feels it is important to define the differences between the DDA and the BID for Council.

Harry mentioned Greg Ruland's report in the Daily Sentinel on the market analysis portion of the Downtown Housing Study. Jodi feels that downtown housing is integral to the DDA's economic development objectives.

John suggested TIF funds could be used for real estate acquisition and assemblages for future economic development opportunities as TIF has been used in the past by the DDA. However, when the TIF was extended, the ballot authorization referred only to public facilities and elimination of blight. Kevin asked if TIF money could be used for private facilities that are blighted. It depends on the definition of blight; for instance, vacant lots generally are not blighted. Harry added that Urban Renewal Authorities have sometimes overreached on the definition of blight. Kevin then asked who authorizes the DDA bonds. John explained that it is a combination of the City and bond counsel. Bennett added that the City is beginning to look at authorizing a URA. Kevin asked where the funding for a URA would come from. John replied that it comes from TIF which could potentially affect the DDA and/or BID.

In 1981, the DDA was delegated the task of reviewing and approving special event permits in an advisory capacity for the City. The ordinance has been amended repeatedly reflecting the growth in types of activities and uses downtown such as outdoor dining and mobile vendor carts. While the DDA can perform administrative functions of permitting, it falls to elected officials to set management policies and criteria for special events. Marty thought we had already addressed this issue. Other than a general guideline to limit the frequency and number of street closures, event permitting does not have much in the way of standards. Harry would like greater direction to manage the increasing level of intensity of use Downtown. This is a very challenging problem for Harry as it is often a point of divergence between DDA responsibilities and BID interests, and therefore constitutes a tension within the DDA/BID board function. John added that City Council also gets complaints.

Marty asked if street closures are increasing. Harry stated that with the completion of the Uplift, there are many more entities that would like to use Main Street for their events. Marty suggested clearly defining the issue(s) and offering some solutions for Council. Rich thought the BID had defined how many street closings there should be per month. PJ suggested spreading the events to Colorado Avenue. Harry said there is little interest among applicants in staging special events on Colorado Ave; it doesn't have the level of comfort and amenity (tree canopy for shade) as Main Street. PJ added that the BID could show leadership by moving some of its events to Colorado Ave. Marty suggested having a number of slots and have organizations bid on them. Kevin does not want to limit the opportunity for special events. Bennett heard from Margie of Grand Valley Books to remind the CMU race organizers that downtown is open for business during the race. Les said Rick Taggart addressed that issue at the Downtowner meeting on April 8th. There is a basic need to adopt standards/criteria for where and how events are staged and then how the DDA & City are to apply those standards in reviewing and approving event permit applications.

Jodi introduced Steve Thoms, owner of The Winery and past DDA board chair. Jodi and Steve had previously discussed potential changes that the BID is considering for Farmers' Market and how it might affect his business. Steve noted a lack of communication between the DDA/BID Board and the BID members. Downtown events are an opportunity as well as a problem and events are generally good for Downtown. The events produced by third parties are generally not as well organized as those the BID produces. There are some merchants that feel their concerns are not being heard or that their interests are secondary to DDA concerns. The events seem segregated from the 600 block. Kirk agreed that until the Avalon is open, the 600 block is kind of weak. Steve supports downtown events and wants the opportunity to participate in them. He warned that, "If you want the BID renewed things have to change." He feels the DDA and BID should have separate boards each with its own staff. John reminded him that if the DDA tries to move events off of Main Street the organizations can appeal to City Council. PJ is glad that Steve wants to participate in events but he would still like to spread events around to other streets. Marty reminded Harry that he needs to summarize the situation and define what he wants from Council. Rich added that special events are also impacting the Police Department and other city services, and that those impacts will need to be addressed in any reconsideration of City policies and procedures for Special Events.

2015 BID RENEWAL: The ordinance establishing the BID provides for its sunset unless renewed. There is no guidance in the state statute as to how a "renewal" is handled. As this was a condition imposed by City Council at the time of establishment, the decision rests with Council. It could be as simple as passing an ordinance with a public hearing and leaving everything as it is currently constituted. If the structure of the BID is modified, that might trigger a ballot, and any change in the funding of the BID would require a ballot authorization. January 1, 2016, is the sunset for the ordinance creating the DGJBID. John suggested that if renewal consideration involves a ballot we should do in conjunction with the April 2015 election which is one year away. However, Council could consider renewal sooner if no changes requiring a ballot are included.

Les would like to discuss having two separate boards and who should be the members.

Rich said the City Council and DDA/BID Board could meet on a more frequent basis. PJ agreed we should educate Council in this first meeting and then request additional meetings for specific policy changes. Marty suggested DDA and Council should meet quarterly as Council does with the Airport Board. Bennett mentioned the Greater Downtown Plan, Avalon reconstruction, and Las Colonias Park as additional subjects of concern.

ADJOURN: Marty made a motion to adjourn; Les seconded; the board adjourned at 8:55 a.m.