GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025
VITRUAL OPTION ONLY
7:30 AM

Board Members present: Libby Olson (Chair), Garrett Portra (Vice-Chair), Dustin Anzures, Steven Boyd, Cole Hanson, Karli Hyland, Afton Neal, Faith Rodriguez, City Council Representative Ben Van Dyke

Downtown Grand Junction staff present: Brandon Stam, Vonda Bauer

Other: Northland Securities, Inc Financial Advisor Troy Bernberg (representing the DDA)

City of Grand Junction staff present: City Attorney John Shaver, City Forestry Supervisor Rob Davis, Parks Crew Leader Jamie Boda

Guests: Walker Thrash-Developer and Contractor-Vertikal, LLC

CALL TO ORDER: Libby called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

MURAL GRANT – 401 MAIN STREET

Brandon reported that a Mural Grant Application was submitted by local artist Brett Arnold on behalf of Rockslide Adventures (DBA Rockslide Brew Pub), with a letter of authorization from owner Uwe Philip Kirch. The Grant Committee reviewed the request for a $1,000 matching grant toward a $5,000 mural project at 401 Main Street. Although the mural was already in progress, the applicant was unaware of the newly established grant program, and the committee members agreed the request was appropriate.

Garrett made a motion to approve the Mural Grant request for 401 Main Street for $1,000. Steve seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

DOWNTOWN TREE LIGHTING

Brandon explained that the City Forestry Department does all the annual tree lighting and that the DDA has been contributing $5k annually toward the tree lighting costs. He wanted to bring this funding concern to the board for consideration to increase the annual amount.

Rob Davis (City Forestry Department) thanked the board for the opportunity to attend the meeting and provided an overview of the Main Street Lighting Program. He explained that historically, the City has provided labor and installation while partnering with the DDA to fund materials. Since 2019, Jamie has managed the lighting program, which has continued to improve in quality and presentation each year. Rob noted that lighting expenses include lift rentals ($5,000–$7,000 annually) and costly commercial-grade lights. In past years, funding was supplemented by other parks department accounts, but that was not possible this year. The chandelier lights in the large sycamore trees—now about ten years old—are deteriorating, with replacement costs estimated at $900 per tree for nine trees. Rob discussed the increasing expenses and asked if there might be an opportunity to enhance DDA funding for the lighting program.

Jamie explained that there is a need for new lighting on sycamore trees due to their deteriorating condition. The estimated cost for replacing the lights is $900 per tree, amounting to around $9,000 for nine trees.

The Board recognized and commended the Forestry Department for their excellent work maintaining the tree lighting and expressed support, noting that it is an important feature of Downtown and contributes to creating a welcoming, pedestrian friendly environment. They emphasized the need for ongoing maintenance and suggested considering a long-term solution, such as increasing the annual budget, to better sustain and improve the lighting program over time.

Garrett made a motion to approve additional funding up to $10k for lighting on Main Street. Steve seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

600 WHITE AVE

Walker provided an update on the project, including the submission of a pre-application and development of detailed floor plans. He noted potential adjustments to unit counts based on city requirements but expressed confidence in the current plans, highlighting design features such as natural light and flexible living spaces, as well as the importance of addressing parking in the urban setting.

Board members inquired about unit pricing. Walker explained a pricing strategy with units starting around $390,000, with potential adjustments based on interest rates, and emphasized rate buy-downs to maintain market appeal. Board members raised concerns about the lack of contractual protections and whether financial support was bridging gaps or subsidizing profits. Board members agreed that there is a market for urban living in Grand Junction, which could attract both younger residents and retirees, while John highlighted the economic development benefit of converting vacant properties into tax-generating assets.

John explained that board approval is required for the property transaction, noting that the DDA would remain the property owner until deed transfer occurs. He explained the challenges in valuing the property due to previous unsuccessful attempts to attract buyers. Financial Advisor Troy Bernberg reinforced the importance of context when evaluating the asset.

Brandon discussed the purchase and sale agreement and the commitment letter for financing, which would utilize TIF over a three-year period. He highlighted the importance of not making the project overly restrictive and mentioned that the developer is considering other projects as well. Troy added insights on market comparables, noting that recent developments in the Redlands are more relevant for analysis.

John noted that the DDA cannot make multi-year financial commitments, as funding is subject to annual appropriation. The commitment will therefore be reviewed each year.

Libby made a motion to approve the commitment letter and purchase and sale agreement as drafted. Karli seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

BOARD UPDATES

<u>Splashpad</u>

Brandon provided an update on the design improvements for the former splash pad area, noting planned features such as a play mound, games, varied seating options, a boat feature near Trail Life Brewery, and shade sails. The fire pit has been removed from the design. He explained that DDA funding for the project could come from the $250,000 contingency budget, with additional funding provided by the City of Grand Junction.

Permanent Lighting

Libby suggested exploring options for incorporating permanent or supplemental lighting as part of future Main Street improvements to help reduce annual costs and maintenance. She also mentioned considering infrastructure enhancements that could better support lighting installations.

Brandon noted that the City may eventually take ownership of the streetlights from Xcel Energy, which would make it easier to modify or replace lighting fixtures to better support downtown lighting goals. He added that current Xcel lighting tends to wash out decorative or permanent lighting options. Brandon also mentioned seeing examples of decorative and holiday-themed lighting installations at the National Downtown Conference that could be used in planter beds or similar areas to reduce the annual workload for City staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ben mentioned a prior discussion with Brandon regarding the museum. Brandon noted he is meeting with Shenna Hayden, Executive Director of the Museums of Western Colorado, on Friday to discuss potential facility consolidation and funding considerations with the Mesa County. He added that the Dinosaur Museum in Fruita attracts significant tourism, and the topic will be revisited at a future meeting. Ben shared that City Council's perspective is to find solutions that would allow the museum to remain downtown.

Brandon stated that the next board meeting will include the presentation and approval of the 2026 budget, along with the approval of resolutions for the GJ Union Depot and 600 White Avenue.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Steve made a motion to adjourn. Garrett seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.