

DOWNTOWN GRAND JUNCTION BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2014
248 SOUTH 4TH STREET
7:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Les Miller, Chair; Jason Farrington, Vice Chair; Shane Allerheiligen, Martin Chazen, Kirk Granum, PJ McGovern, Jodi Coleman-Niernberg, Stephan Schweissing

ABSENT: Kevin Reimer

STAFF: Diane Keliher, Harry Weiss, Aaron Hoffman

CALL TO ORDER: Les called the meeting to order at 7:46 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Marty made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 14th meeting; Stephan seconded; minutes were approved.

OPERATIONS & STAFFING: Harry is concerned about the lack of BID member engagement and participation. While the BID has a strong governance structure, organizational leadership suffers from the lack of member engagement. Harry feels part of the BID's core purpose is to cultivate a strong Downtown business community and facilitate its interaction. This problem is partly a legacy of the formation of the BID and the supplanting of the DTA. While the BID provides steady and predictable revenue for programs, the character of the relationship between its members and the organization changed in the conversion from a volunteer-based membership organization to a publicly funded mandatory district. Current staffing levels are not sufficient to tackle this deficiency, and the Board already has considerable responsibilities that limit its capacity to take on much of this problem. Harry would like add staff to directly take on this issue.

The City also recognizes we do not have sufficient policy guidelines or a proper event management structure in place to deal with the increasing demand for special event staging in Downtown. This poses a large and complicated undertaking that a special event working group within the City has been evaluating. We have an incomplete and somewhat patchwork system that handles only a portion of the scope of problems. Currently complaints and appeals wind up before the City Manager or ultimately the Council. Rich feels these are inherently Downtown issues and could be better managed by the BID or DDA. City staff is breaking out the true cost of City services provided in support of downtown events such as law enforcement and parks staffing. The event working group has developed some recommendations for the event approval process, but the question of more direct involvement in event management and enforcement has not been answered. John noted that the other big complication with events is the management of alcohol and the licensing and enforcement functions of government. The recent "Go Cup" legislation offers some options for managing this issue, but it is fairly complicated in its own right. Harry wonders whether the "Go-Cup" structure could be readily adapted to the physical layout of our Downtown, but felt it was well worth analyzing.

When the BID was created, its mission was intentionally drawn narrowly. PJ added that the BID was formed to produce events and to provide marketing, but that he feels greater emphasis should be on marketing. Marty would like to see any programmatic changes or staffing be supported by sufficient and predictable revenue coming in to the BID. Harry suggested some services could be supported by the implementation of a fee structure that recognizes Downtown as a facility and prices it accordingly.

John notes a disconnect between third-party events and BID events, though the public generally perceives all events as being BID sponsored when in fact they aren't. There is a clear need for Downtown event regulations and guidelines, as well as a clear structure of who ultimately is empowered to make decisions and set policy. Jodi feels the BID members often complain about events, but have not been willing to deal with the management and planning aspects. Harry feels that the broader community perspective of the DDA is the better framework for managing events rather than the sometimes self-interested perspective of the BID. Stephan observed that this is a good problem to have, but noted we get the blame no matter who runs the event. Stephan suggested increasing the fee to close Main Street for third-party special events which would reflect its premium value while also encouraging events to consider other, less expensive Downtown locations. Kirk feels we should have more control over third party events. PJ said if we can charge for services, they could produce an income stream. Marty would like to treat Main Street as an event facility. He would like a cost analysis of using Main Street. John added that he would like to see event performance criteria. Marty warned that time is of the essence if we want to get anything approved for next year's budget. PJ suggested forming a committee to make a recommendation to Council. Rich says there is a team already in place for just that.

Kirk asked about the funding of the Epic Rides event. Marty said they have three years of City subsidy and then the future of the event will be determined by Epic Rides. Jodi added that there was lots of free promotion of Downtown in sponsoring events such as the Grand Junction Off-Road.

Rich left the meeting.

PJ asked Harry if we need to form a sub-committee to address the issues raised in the meeting. Kirk will volunteer; PJ would like to be an alternate; Shane will participate; Kevin might be interested. After October, Stephan would like to help out. He is able to meet the week of the 15th.

Les asked about recruiting BID members as "block captains". Harry would like to approach businesses off of Main Street first, which would reach certain sectors of professional services that have not generally been recruited into active BID service. Les asked if Harry has names of Downtown bank presidents. Harry will circulate an email. PJ encouraged Harry to leverage the board with peer-to-peer work. The first meeting of the sub-committee will tentatively be on the 16th or 17th.

OTHER: The Avalon Theatre Foundation met yesterday and said they felt it was important that the Foundation offer the Avalon open house preview for Downtown businesses. They will host and staff the open house, and distribute invitations.

ADJOURN: Stephan made a motion to adjourn; Marty seconded; the board adjourned at 8:51 a.m.