



**MEETING MINUTES**

Prusakowski called the meeting to order at 8:34 am and welcomed members and guests. Members present: David Prusakowski, Elaine Abercrombie, Bryan Shealy, Connie Sams, Megan Watters, Randy Quick, and Tayesha Lytle. City staff present: Aundi Lesley, Megan Otwell, Jennifer Bailey, Patrick Van Der Horn, Doug Walker, Kelley Parker and Meredith Ulmer. Guests: Seth Ingram, Frank Beacham.

The DDA Presented Seth Ingram with a \$1000 Downtown Impact Grant to the Rome International Film Festival.

City Attorney Frank Beacham swore-in Tayesha Lytle to the Downtown Development Authority.

**ACTION**

**Minutes** - Shealy made a motion to approve the minutes for the August and September board meetings with a second from Watters. All were in favor.

**Financials** - Lesley reviewed the BID financials. Abercrombie made a motion to approve with a second from Sams. All were in favor.

**Façade Grants** – Watters presented 4 façade grants to the committee. The first was Southern Seasons & Co. – they want to add window signage, banners and front mural. Estimated project cost is \$2,200. Design committee approved \$750. The second presented is Honeycream – they want to add awnings with planters that are attached above the awning, also paint and heaters. Estimated total project cost is \$30,000. Design committee has approved \$2,500. The third presented is Top Hat. They're removing awnings, replacing windows on front of building and painting the front of the building. Estimated project cost is \$14,400. Design committee approved \$3,500. The final presented is Joe Howell – 106 & 108 Broad Street – painting and repairing of front doors and windows. Estimated project cost is \$3,500 per building. Design committee approved \$1,000 for each building. \$8,750 for the total of façade grants. Prusakowski questioned how the Design Committee allocates funds. Watters explained this is based on the building, size of project, and the scope of work being done. Sams made a motion to approve with a second from Abercrombie. All were in favor.

**Gateway Proposal** – Lesley stated that the review committee met to review bids for the Gateway project. RFP was put out and originally had several firms come out to review locations, etc. The deadline for bids came and there were no proposals. The deadline was extended and one proposal came in. The review committee met to go over logistics, cost and experience of the proposed firm. The proposed firm is Knight Sign Industries based out of Tuscaloosa, AL. In the RFP, the proposed locations would be on 600 block of Broad Street and the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge. The review committee would like to move forward with this firm. The firm is open to design input. Firm is offering a turn-key product, so they will design, build and install. Cost is \$263,000. Budgeted \$125,000. Price is somewhat flexible with changing materials and design. Finance department stated that there are excess funds in the capital budget that could possibly be used. Sams asked if the price is \$263,000 for one gateway and what pros and cons for picking this firm. Per Lesley, other designs were too much money and very modern. Quick asked what the timeframe for this project is? Per Lesley, the firm's timeframe said they'd be able to install by the beginning of 2022 if the project released in October. Sams wanted to make sure that we're prepared for public response to using excess capital budget funds vs. what the excess funds could be used toward. Shealy made a motion to approve to move forward with Knights Sign Industries with a second from Sams. All were in favor.

**DISCUSSION**

**Christmas Décor** – Lesley stated that one of the top complaints the DDA receives is about downtown Christmas décor. Staff has requested in the capital budget that the city provide \$50,000 per year for three years, though this is not guaranteed. Watters shared that the money that's currently received for Christmas décor is from the Christmas Parade committee. This year, they gave the DDA \$2,000. The DDA would like to contribute the requested capital funds by a fundraising initiative – the Sidewalk Santa Takeover. Inspired by the city of Woodstock's Scarecrow Invasion, which raises around \$20,000 per year. The DDA's goal is to raise funds, engage the community, and install 200 Santas downtown. Watters asked if these Santa spots would be numbered. Per Lesley the locations would be designated by staff. Shealy stated he is concerned with the security of the Santa's because of the youth issues on the weekend. This brought up a conversation of the downtown cameras being updated. Sams asked where cash votes would be taken. Per Lesley, cash votes can be dropped off at the DDA office. Abercrombie added that businesses could have a jar in their business. Watters suggested the History Center. Watters asked if guidelines are available. Lesley stated that they will be listed on the downtown website and social media. Parker asked if the Santa's would just be on Broad Street. Lesley said the goal is Broad St and the River District but staff will play it by ear this year with the infrastructure improvements happening. Lesley suggested the Town Green may be an option.

**November Meeting Reschedule** – November 11, 2021 is would be the next scheduled DDA Board meeting. However, City offices will be closed due to Veterans Day. Lesley proposed November 4 or November 18. Everyone agreed on November 4.

**Committee Reports** –

- Design Committee: Waters stated earlier in meeting about façade grants and gateway project.
- Promotions Committee: Sams updated that Fiddlin' Fest was a success. Roman Holiday was added and was a big success. Lytle stated it was perfect timing for Fiddlin' Fest with all of the other events happening around Rome. Sams stated that downtown holiday shopping will be starting soon.
- Business Development: Shealy shared that they've been working on a business incubator project. Members of the committee took a trip to Dalton to view their incubator.

**Staff Reports** – Lesley updated the committee on Open Container. Two options on the table at upcoming commission meeting. One is to permanently extend Open Container. The second is to extend the trial. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading will be October 25. Aluminum cups will still be an option. Lesley asked if the committee thought branded plastic cups or stickers may be a better option for businesses. Per Sams, stickers would be best and easiest for businesses.

**Other** – Sams would like the DDA to put out a survey to downtown businesses about the recent Geocaching event.

Watters motioned to adjourn the meeting with a second from Sams. Meeting Adjourned at 9:35am.

Executive session was called to order at 9:38am and was adjourned at 10:05am.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Aundi Lesley