**Toccoa Downtown Development Authority (DDA)** **Friday, January 12, 2024**

Regular Meeting Minutes

The DDA held its regular meeting on Friday, January 12, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. at the 2nd Floor Commissioner’s Courtroom in City Hall. Chairman Hall called the meeting at 8:00am. Mrs. Julie Paysen gave the invocation. The following were in attendance: Chairman Marilyn Hall, Mrs. Sarah Addison, Mrs. Carrie Power, Mr. Clay Fisher, and Mrs. Terri Goethe. Mr. Jeremy Ward, Ms. Kristen Deal, Mrs. Misty Richardson, Mrs. Mayhugh, Mrs. Jessica Waters, and Mrs. Julie Paysen were also in attendance. SCDA President Brittany Ivey, Mr. Bryan Westmoreland, TCC Liaison Terry Carter, and Mrs. Kimberly Moavero were absent.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Goethe and seconded by Mrs. Addison, the February 8, 2024 agenda was unanimously approved. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Power and seconded by Mrs. Addison, the January 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Reports**

1. **Main Street Events Update.** Mrs. Richardson provided the report. She shared that Main Street Awards was scheduled for January 25, 2024 at 5pm. She also stated that the next Sip N’ Stroll would be Chocolate Crawl, scheduled for February 9th, 2024.
2. **Ritz Theatre Events Update.** Ms. Mayhugh stated that December was a full month of events at the Ritz with movies and holiday shows. January would be a slower month but would feature shows like the Rolling stones Tribute, and the first Night at the Ritz Season Seven show of the year, the Outlaw Apostles.
3. **December Financial Report.** Ms. Deal provided the report. She noted the status of the façade grants and stated that per the City Manager’s request, the DDA would need to temporarily pause any façade grant funding in this fiscal year. There would be more information coming on an annual cap for the budget.
4. **Main Street Toccoa Report.** Ms. Deal provided the report, discussing the status of the Tugalo Street Greenspace and the annual accreditation.
5. **Unfinished Business.**
	1. **N/A**
6. **New Business.**
	1. **Review FY25 GCA Project Grant Solicitation.** Ms. Deal reminded the DDA that the City has applied and been awarded this grant to fund Night at the Ritz for the last 6 years. Last year we received an increase of $2,000 in our award, with our highest scoring application yet (97/100). While the notes from the application score are overwhelmingly positive, the recommendations share a central theme: encouraging more emphasis on strengthening the ongoing relationship with targeted underserved audiences, as well as attracting diversified regional audiences. In addressing the comments from our previous applications, it’s imperative that we elaborate on how the programming at the Ritz Theatre engages with diverse audiences beyond financial incentives & accessibility. With no discussion, Mr. Clay Fisher motioned to move forward with the FY25 GCA Project Grant Application for Night at the Ritz Season Eight. With a second from Mrs. Goethe, it carried unanimously.
	2. **Review of 2024 Annual Assessment Affidavit and Checklist**. Ms. Deal referenced the checklist in the attached packet and explained the process of the accreditation, thanking the DDA directors for completing their required training. The full submission would be made today following the obtainment of Chairman Hall’s signatures. Mr. Clay Fisher motioned to approve the 2024 Annual Assessment Affidavit and Checklist. With a second from Mrs. Addison, the motion carried unanimously.
	3. **Tugalo Street Greenspace Brick Fundraising Campaign.** Ms. Deal explained that the Tugalo Street Greenspace was the topic of the work session on Monday, January 5th with the Toccoa City Commission. The commission approved the contract and the project would proceed with demolition immediately. Ms. Deal explained that in the process of working with the contractors to get the budget within range of the grant’s award amount, the cost of the brick pavers had been removed. Main Street Toccoa would launch a fundraising campaign to cover the costs of the brick pavers. In the attached packet, there is a breakdown of the total amount of bricks needed for the project, as well as the total costs. We have calculated that the costs of the campaign can be reasonable covered with the sale of 350 engraved bricks at $100/each. The campaign is scheduled to launch next week on January 16th, and run through at least two months, concluding March 15th. Ms. Deal explained the significance of the campaign and urged the DDA to be as involved as possible. She explained that the campaign would correlate with the commemoration of the 150th Celebration of Toccoa. The City Commission is considering names for the park that would align with the brick campaign, with the top contender being “Heritage Park.” The slogan for the campaign and the 150th would be “A Beautiful Heritage: Celebrating 150 Years of Toccoa.” Due to the nature of the project, Ms. Deal inquired with the DDA about leading the campaign as a primary “sponsor” or “presenter.” The required efforts would largely be in fundraising, with continued project management by Main Street Manager Kristen Deal. The DDA would have the opportunity to contribute in a very significant way to the park’s success. Mr. Fisher stated that with the support of the businesses, the SCDA and the Chamber, he believed the fundraiser would be a success. Chairman Hall mentioned the brick campaign at Camp Toccoa, which had a lower cost per brick and took a much longer time to reach 300 brick sales. Nonetheless, she stated that many people will buy more than one brick and she was optimistic as well. Mrs. Richardson stated that there would be dedicated rows for different facets, like Music Row, Business, History, etc. Mr. Ward stated that he shared the concerns about the aggressive target, but felt sincerely optimistic. Mrs. Goethe motioned to approve the Fundraising Campaign for the Brick Pavers at the Tugalo Street Greenspace. With a second from Mrs. Power, it carried unanimously.
	4. **Review DDA – TCC Goals**. Ms. Deal stated that every year the Downtown Development Authority Directors meet with the Toccoa City Commission to go over a list of annual goals at a work session. The work session is scheduled for Monday, February 12th. The DDA will confirm the 2024 goals and assign a spokesperson for each goal to discuss with the city commission.

Based on current projects and a general assessment of the downtown, the following goals have been selected by staff. DDA directors are welcome to discuss, revise or add any additional goals to the list.

1. Develop a Downtown Master Plan, including a Public Art Plan & an updated Work Plan (To be discussed by Marilyn Hall)
2. Complete Phase I of Tugalo Street Greenspace Project (To be discussed by Bryan Westmoreland)
3. Secure additional funding for next phases of Tugalo Street Greenspace Project (To be discussed by Kimberly Moavero)
4. Complete Ritz Theatre Annex Addition (To be discussed by Terri Goethe)
5. Continue Night at the Ritz (complete Season 7, begin Season 8) (To be discussed by Carrie Power)
6. Recruit Restaurant or Dining Option to Downtown District (To be discussed by Sarah Addison)
7. Enhance Beautification and Design of Downtown Gateways (To be discussed by Clay Fisher)
	1. Broad Street Underpass Lighting
	2. Breezeway Façade Grant, Signage
	3. Passageway Restrooms

Mrs. Addison motioned to approve the 2024 Goals for the Toccoa City Commission-Downtown Development Authority Work Session. Mrs. Goethe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Other Business.**
	1. **Chamber of Commerce Report.** Mrs. Paysen reported that the Night of Lights Christmas Parade was a huge success and that they would plan for a Thursday night in 2024 as well. There were an estimated 5,000 in attendance. She also stated that the Pre-Legislative Coffee was held January 4, 2024 and had a great attendance of 80 people. She mentioned that she had recent calls with a hotel developer and would be working with Mr. Ward and Mrs. Ivey to provide all information and coordinate communication with the developer.

There being no further business, upon a motion made by Mrs. Power and seconded by Mrs. Goethe, the regular meeting of the Downtown Development Authority was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

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Kristen Deal Marilyn Hall

Main Street Manager Chairman