

Sugar Hill Downtown Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes July 30, 2019 | 6:30 PM
City of Sugar Hill City Hall - Community Room

Members Present: ~~Allen Jorgenson~~, Jack Wolfe (Treasurer), Marc Orcutt (Chairman), Mason Roszel (Asst. Treasurer), Nic Greene (Vice Chair), Nigel Gray (Secretary), Rebecca Buckingham (Asst. Treasurer), Councilman Brandon Hembree, ~~Nancy Wren~~.

Staff Present: Mercy Montgomery (Dir. Economic Development), Frank Hartley (Attorney), Troy Besseche (Asst. City Manager), Paul Radford (City Manager).

Guests: Several members of the public were present.

I. CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 PM

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- a) Jack Wolfe made a motion to approve the agenda with one change (adding the Community Center to section V), 2nd by Nic Greene; and carried by 5-0 vote.

III. MINUTES

- a) Brandon Hembree made a motion to approve the minutes for June 25, 2019 regular meeting, 2nd by Nic Greene, and carried by 5-0 vote.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a) During this section a couple suggested having public comments at the end to allow for feedback from the community after the agenda items have been discussed. Members of the DDA explained that the comments section used to be at the end of the agenda, like was being suggested, but the DDA voted to move it to the beginning to allow for folks to provide comments without having to sit through the entire agenda. The DDA agreed on having two comment sections on the agenda; one at the beginning and one at the end. The chairman will accommodate this via the agenda going forward.
- b) Amber Rushing: recommended a Winter Wonderland and Santa with photo idea for the E Center. This setup would be done by her friend, who is professional photographer, in the space behind Rushing Trading Co (or a different space). It would produce awareness for the E Center and would be a benefit for other business in the area. It is not expected to interrupt the Sugar Hill Santa/Christmas program. The estimated duration is 5 days, in which there would be about 130 photo sessions.

V. ACTION ITEMS AND UPDATES:

- a. **E Center Project:** Asst. City Manager Troy Besseche gave the following updates:
 - 1. There are a few issues that are still being worked out, including building automation, HVAC, handrails, and software access, before closing the contract.
 - 2. There has been a lot of activity in and around the common areas. Lots of interested parties that want to see the space activated and programmed. The E Center is successfully accomplishing its original intent - to bring people downtown.
 - 3. The city will be adding equipment such as umbrella and patio furniture, to the outdoor spaces over time.
 - 4. Construction has begun on the monument sign on highway 20; it is also visible from West Broad Street. The sign will have LED panels on both sides and static panels for the tenants. It will be a great way to promote the E Center and the Bowl.
 - 5. The Arts commission has started an interactive and affordable activity of refurbishing machines and turning them into art.
 - 6. Jewelry is available in the elevator corridors of the E Center.
 - 7. Craig Tilley, a local artist that does the “Grape Vine Wall”, who was allowed to display his art in E Center, 2nd floor unleased space, is halfway moved in, and the space is looking great.
- b. **Broadstone:** Troy Besseche and Paul Radford gave the following update:
 - 1. Two stair towers and elevator towers have been erected and the team is pouring the concrete for the upper deck of the parking lot.
 - 2. The City is working on leases for the art gallery and the history museum. The design is being wrapped up, and buildouts are expected to be complete first quarter of 2020.
 - 3. The Veterans Memorial is under construction: Construction is expected to finish toward the end of September or the beginning of October. A public relations event is expected on September 19th, and Veterans Day activities will be on November 11th.
 - 4. The Business Alliance will be donating 50% of the proceeds from their annual golf tournament this year to the Veteran’s Memorial.

5. Paul Radford commented that the contractor has been very good to work with; they've been working to keep construction dust down. Vertical construction should be underway soon and continue for a few months.
- c. **Dogwood:** Troy Besseche and Paul Radford gave the following update:
 1. The developer has a term sheet from their equity partner (Berkshire). Paul Radford shared that the city hosted Berkshire the previous week. The project is a \$53M structure, which will be constructed of steel and concrete, not wood, therefore a very sturdy and costly product. The upper floors are uniquely designed to give a family member living space. More about this project was discussed in executive session.
- d. **The Suite Spot:** Mercy Montgomery gave the following update:
 1. Things are going well. 3 new members recently signed up. The City is working on getting someone permanent to manage the space, who also fill the Downtown Development Coordinator position.
 2. New column bases are expected soon, either this or next week. Construction to begin soon after.
 3. Regarding water usage - Joe Sekenis has found a cost-effective solution that allows the city to tap into the water line on the main floor in lieu of an ongoing water contract.
 4. Tim Schick and Joe Sekenis were commended by city manager Paul Radford for the phenomenal job they are doing for the city.
 5. Paul Radford and Mercy Montgomery spoke about the E Center at a municipal conference recently and both did exceptionally well. Paul was appreciative of Mercy's notes and preparation.
 6. Marc Orcutt asked about a water solution for the second floor. Mercy said that discussions have begun with Tim Schick regarding the second floor, however the current focus is on the first floor.
- e. **The Community Center:** Troy Besseche gave the following update:
 1. There is a MOU between the CSH and DDA regarding the use/sale of the community center.
 2. There is a party who is interested in the property; further discussions to be held in executive sessions; more information will be available to the public later. In the meantime, the facility is still available for rentals and events. City elections will be held there this November/December.

II. CITY STAFF COMMENTS

- a. **City Manager Paul Radford:**
 1. We have a concert this Saturday (Blood Sweat and Tears) which is sold out. Trace Adkins which was canceled earlier this year is scheduled for September 19th is also sold out – tickets from the canceled event have already been refunded. The Commodores will be on September 21st, tickets are already on sale. Clay Walker will be on August 30th and tickets are still available (Matt Stills is on this ticket). The Marshal Tucker Band is coming to the theater on October 17th, but this event is already sold out. More artists to come in the Winter months in the theater, including a Christmas show with a big band. Thanks to the city staff for excellence with these programs and artists.
- b. **Asst City Manager Troy Besseche:**
 1. We have completed the road resurfacing and repairing project. We just submitted our request to GA DOT for 10 additional roads in 2020.
 2. We're past the halfway point of the sidewalk project on Suwanee Dam and Whitehead roads.
 3. Gary Pirkle Park natural turf project has been the subject of expansion plans – the design process will be starting early next year.
 4. Bowl improvements recently went to bid; bids came in last Thursday. The city will be making recommendations to Mayor and Council about building and seat improvements for the Bowl.
 5. Lots of other construction activity happening in our city.
 6. Paul Radford commented on the complexity and lengthy process for the Gary Pirkle Park turf project in order to meet the requirements and approval of the Army Corps of Engineers.
- c. **Director of Economic Development Mercy Montgomery:**
 1. July 16th, we hosted Apollo 11 celebration - launching rockets and enjoying a movie. It was well attended (approximately 200 folks).
 2. Indio Brewing celebrated their grand opening over the weekend. They are planning some future special events and programming.
 3. The last splash night of the summer, which happened last week, went well.
 4. The city hosted several tours last week: members of the UGA, members from Community Affairs. Sweet City Smiles will be hosting their grand opening in August.

5. Sugar Hill business alliance golf tournament is on August 21st, golfers needed.
6. In August the city will be hosting government leaders from around the county in the E Center.
7. Calendar Girls will be the next Players Guild event in the theater.
8. Gwinnett Great days of Service is coming up in October.

III. DDA MEMBER COMMENTS:

a. **Brandon Hembree:**

1. Thanks to all who participated in the last downtown cleanup; over 40 members participated. This is a quarterly event; Brandon Hembree will be sending as email reminder of the next one.
2. On August 31st at 1:00 pm the city will be dedicating the bridge over the railroad tracks to Marion Buice, who was a true advocate for this bridge.
3. Department of community affairs: Taylor Anderson and Brandon Hembree answered questions from the public about city planning, and how can the community get involved in this process.
 - a) Paul Radford commented that the city puts a lot of pressure on Kaipō Awana over the last few years because the city wants to have excellent and current information the housing market. The city puts a lot research into what its plan includes; the master plan has been updated three times since Paul Radford has been in office. The councilmen did a fantastic job answering question and talking through the decisions, and the city is honored for their representation.

b. **Nic Greene:** Looking forward to the Business Alliance Golf Tournament in August.

c. **Jack Wolf.** Excited about growth of the city and that growth is actually fun. Summer concerts were great.

d. **Rebecca Buckingham:** Great having the tours of different businesses. Social media has been well done.

e. **Mason Roszel:** Splash night has been great for his family who look forward to it. It's fun to see the turnout of people downtown.

f. **Nigel Gray:** Sparks in the Park was great; Concert was well done, and Mayor Steve gave a great welcome.

g. **Public Action to Entertain Public Comments:** Brandon Hembree made a motion to open the floor for public comments, 2nd Nigel Gray; carried by 5-0 vote.

h. **Public Comments:**

1. **Amber Rushing:** commented that the city events have been great, and there is something for everyone. Amber had a question regarding the status of parking signs. Troy Besseche stated that the city has received the signs and that preparation for installation (white markers) is underway.
2. **Amber Rushing:** question about who to contact with questions or maintenance needs/requests. Troy Besseche said that he can receive those questions and get them to the right person. Brandon Hembree said that he can be a resource for questions and needs as well.
3. There was a question regarding the development of the community center: The DDA explained that before any activity takes place the recommendation will be presented to Mayor and Council for final decision. Sale of the sale of the property is on the table. Because of the MOU between the city and the DDA, the next action will be by the DDA and eventual discussion and decision by the City Council.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. Marc Orcutt recommended entering executive session at 7:37 PM to discuss real estate, legal, and personnel matters; 2nd by Nigel Gray, and passed unanimously.
- b. **Public Action** Following Executive Session: None
- c. **Adjournment:** Moved by Jack Wolfe, 2nd by Nic Greene. Meeting adjourned at 9:25PM

Marc Orcutt (Chairman of the DDA)

Nigel Gray (Secretary of the DDA)