

**BIA Ratepayer Board Meeting
November 13, 2017 – 1:00 PM
Auburn City Hall Council Chambers
MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 pm by Chairwoman White.

Board Members present: Chair Megan White, Vice Chair Giovanni DiQuattro, Board Members William Cowart, Kelly Gordon, Bob Klontz, Ronnie Roberts, Laura Theimer
Excused absence: Josef Forsberg, Darren Jones, Ruth Neil-Stover
Unexcused absence: Kirk Lantier

Staff present: Doug Lein, Economic Development Manager; Tourism Coordinator Chachere; and Holly Ferry, Board Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board Member Roberts moved and Vice Chair DiQuattro second to approve the October 9, 2017 minutes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. 7-0

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

Economic Development Manager Doug Lein reported that there had been only one change to the budget, which was the marketing campaign partnership with the Auburn Tourism Board for \$2,500.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Draft to Ordinance 6658

Manager Lein reported that at the November 6 Council Meeting, Council debated the passing of the draft to Ordinance 6658 and then voted 4-2 in favor. He stressed how it made a difference for a business, and the Chair of the Board, to address the Council. Council would like an update from the Board in 90 days

and made the comment that they hope the BIA takes this as an opportunity to bring them suggestions. They would like the Board to think about how a new start-up is considered. The Board will be sent the minutes from the Council Meeting when they are made available by the Clerk's Office. The Board will also be notified at the next BIA meeting when they are on the Council Study Session agenda.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of communicating with the entire BIA through the use of a newsletter.

Manager Lein reminded the Board that, when going through the process of reactivating the BIA Board last year, it was voted to move forward and reactivate it, appoint the BIA Board, and give it a couple years to evaluate how it is doing. He stated that now is the time to get the survey out, begin looking at the problems and concerns, and start filling in the agenda with things the Board wants to begin working on.

B. Main Street Design

There was no update on Main Street design.

C. Marketing Update

Tourism Coordinator Lorraine Chachere revealed the new Tourism video that promotes holiday happenings in Auburn and highlights businesses on Main Street. She thanked the Board for their support of the digital campaign. The video will be shown on Facebook and YouTube. Manager Lein informed the Board that the video was edited and produced entirely in-house by the City's Multimedia staff; therefore, the \$7,500 that will be spent jointly between Tourism, the City, and the BIA on the holiday marketing campaign will go entirely to airtime – no production costs.

Coordinator Chachere also presented an abbreviated version of the Tourism video, shown to the Board in April, that will be played prior to every movie at the Regal Auburn 17 theater as well as in the lobby. She informed the Board that around 80% of movie-goers to this theater live in Auburn or in surrounding communities. In the video, Mayor Backus gives an introduction encouraging people to buy locally, and the video encourages viewers to support retail and to enjoy the outdoor recreation and dining opportunities in Auburn. This ad will be paid for by Economic Development's marketing budget. Manager Lein reported that the Buy Local program is complete and will launch with this year's Business License Renewal Program. He also informed the Board that he and Coordinator Chachere have been interviewing marketing agencies who will help brand and market Auburn as a destination.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Marketing – Bob Klontz, Jr.

Board Member Klontz addressed the Board with the results of his marketing research, saying that, although the survey sample was small, the downtown rate payers are unhappy and want specific, target marketing.

Manager Lein stated that the direction he was given by City Council a year ago was to ensure that, when the media buy is done, the BIA's concerns are covered, the shoulder seasons are covered, and the general branding side of the City as a destination is covered. It was agreed that it is a body of work and shouldn't look fragmented.

Discussion followed about the need to make downtown look appealing for people to see. It was expressed that advertising and visual appeal won't matter if people come to downtown and the shops are closed. People have to have a reason to come downtown, and it is activities that will draw them. Members agreed that the Farmers' Market should not be located at the train station, but it should be located where it will draw people into the downtown corridor.

Manager Lein discussed how Economic Development is focused on regional marketing to drive people to Auburn, while the BIA and Tourism could focus on local special events. He also mentioned helping the ADA become active again with some financial support to enable them to hire an events coordinator. It was suggested that the ADA should be made aware that the BIA will help them fund some activities.

Member Roberts urged the Board to start making a list of things they want to accomplish. Manager Lein recommended using the top five survey responses as a place to start. The recommendation for additional downtown lighting was given. Doug informed the Board about additional down-lighting for the sidewalk behind Rottles, which would be wired to existing City-owned poles, and the City would pay for the installation.

Manager Lein also mentioned that he has \$15K in his budget to help support ADA activities but has not yet been able to execute a contract with the committee because they do not have a plan in place for how they would spend the money. The question was raised about whether the ADA would hire someone again. Member Theimer responded that it would be all volunteer; however, for each quarterly event, there would be a contract for a non-employee event coordinator who would get a small stipend up front and a percentage of the profits from the event afterwards. Currently, the only event planned at this time is the Mardi Gras Parade. Member Theimer informed the Board that the ADA already has start-up funds in the bank, but what they really

need is physical support. Discussion followed about the need to convince downtown business owners to stay open later when there is a special event.

Manager Lein explained a handout showing the GIS mailing list from the IT Department, the business list from the Planning Department and another list showing the discrepancies between the two. With the addition of those recently identified, the BIA should have an additional \$7.5K - \$10K revenue annually. Going into 2018, the BIA will have around \$160K to work with. The Board is open to budget their money however they would like. There are no reserves, unless the Board would decide to create that as a Board rule. Manager Lein suggested that, if he gets his additional budget support in December, the Board may choose to use the same ad agency as Economic Development and Tourism so BIA funds would not have to be used to hire an ad agency on their own.

B. Discontinue BIA Operations

Board Member Klontz stated that the survey results showed that 11 out of 12 people said they didn't want the BIA to continue operating. He talked to 12 people and they all said to abolish it. He said the Ratepayers don't want to pay in anymore because they see no value. He encouraged continued discussion. Member Gordon stressed that they are not happy with the BIA because they haven't been given the information they need, and the BIA Board needs to communicate to them how the Board is working on the issues that concern them. The question about whether the BIA is valuable to the business community was discussed.

Manager Lein suggested that having a contract employee that can coordinate events in 2018 will get the BIA back on track. A year ago in January, when the conversation was had, it was thought to give it two years – the first year to get somewhat organized and moving and the second for implementation. He reported that he has talked to seven business owners on Main Street who have all agreed to go on the ADA Board to get involved and push to get the Main Street events started. There was concern about how it could be successful on just a volunteer basis.

Discussion continued concerning the issues of businesses that have been around for many years that are unwilling to change and the fact that downtown will never be the way it was years ago due to shopping centers in outlying areas drawing people away from downtown.

Manager Lein suggested giving an event coordinator that is a contracted employee a chance, and if it doesn't work, then possibly try partnering with Tourism. Member Roberts stated that the BIA Board is there to fund and push things forward, but they haven't had the opportunity to do that yet. Members

agreed that the ADA should put together some ideas and propose it to the BIA so they can move forward.

Manager Lein commented that we could send out a new survey with updated questions to try to get answers to some of the Board's concerns. He also talked about providing a sample electronic BIA newsletter at the next meeting.

C. Review 2016 Survey for New Ideas

There was no discussion on this.

VI. **BIA PARKING SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

There was no update given.

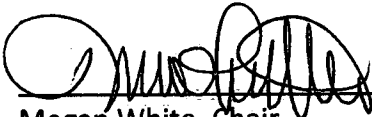
VII. **AUBURN DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

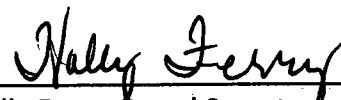
There was no update given.

VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm.

APPROVED this 11th day of December, 2017.


Megan White, Chair


Holly Ferry, Board Secretary