

Iowa City Downtown District
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting Minutes from April 22, 2021

Voting Members Present: Greg Turner, Cady Gerlach, Nick Lindsley, Charlie Nusser, Karen Kubby, Nina Lohman, Ritu Jain, Michelle Galvin, Elsworth Carman, Jigna Jani, and Rachel Kilburg

Non-Voting Members Present: Nick Pfeiffer, Abby Restko, Chastity Dillard

Staff Present: Nancy Bird, Betsy Potter, Joe Reilly, Christopher Hunter

Call to Order: The meeting of the Iowa City Downtown District Board of Directors was called to order by President Lindsley at 9:01am on Zoom.

February Minutes: On motion by Nusser, second by Lohman, the minutes of the February meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

Financial Updates: Treasurer Turner presented the financial report, sharing the Balance Sheet of the organization and described the reserve accounts and project accounts of the organization, including the PPP on the balance sheet. Turner shared that the PPP has been spent on payroll and rent and utilities. Turner also shared the budget to actuals as we near the end of the fiscal year.

Block Captain Updates: Members shared their block captain updates, from retail businesses appreciative of the retail delivery and work of the district to restaurants seeing a few more older patrons and that they had issues relating to patio space and sidewalks. Office use spaces were by appointment still in some spaces, others were in full swing with protective measures. Concerts moving around were also a concern shared. Many businesses were feeling hopeful and signal boosts from the downtown district would be helpful as well. Road closures on the block were also well received for the Saturday concert series and a request for permanence on the road into patio closure. Businesses also shared that the ICDD was a leader for sharing COVID-19 protocols and COVID issues and safety, employment pages for hiring, additional support to reopening was requested. Some restaurants expressed that they were hopeful but still hanging on and just waiting for more improvement in the market. Some bars have shared they feel as though they are labelled as bad actors and had concerns with the 500 foot rule, as well as a concern with reduced policing in the area at bar closure time with increasing students downtown. Businesses across blocks are sharing a reduced foot traffic that is a major concern for their ongoing operations.

2am Restaurant Exception: Nancy provided an update on the 2am restaurant exception to the Board. The ICDD has now put out a survey to the area restaurants and bars to understand what the needs and better path forward is, and the Board reviewed it over the last meeting. There was no consensus and no push from restaurants and bars on the best path forward and ICDD does not have a consensus on a 2am exception or the best tool to use. The Board discussed the best path forward and what actions or abilities the ICDD has to move the needle on this issue.

Downtown and Summer Updates: Nancy and Betsy shared downtown event planning updates, specifically sharing that they spoke with SOTA to ensure no duplication of events and will be

contracting with local artists for June concert series to drive foot traffic for those who feel safe to attend downtown events in person between 5-7pm on the Ped Mall. Summer of the Arts has virtual programming planned at the same time. Micro events with permits will be applied for, and some people who are vaccinated will start to drive safe foot traffic downtown.

Better Bathrooms: Restaurants and nightlife venues share bathrooms are often the largest complaint point by patrons. ICDD would like to offer grant opportunities to venues who can update their bathrooms for safety, cleanliness, and the creation of a committee to develop the program. The board discussed that they request the Committee prioritize gender-neutral bathrooms as a part of that opportunity. There are opportunities for development with RVAP for safety and the PAS. The Board discussed opportunities with renovation and the costs that would need to be included, if permitting is required, and the costs associated therewith, including ADA braille and diaper changing tables. This program will be launched as a part of the new fiscal year budget.

Ex Officio: Chastity Dillard shared that the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County are getting closer to getting 100% back up and running. Nick Pfeiffer shared that the Project Better Together has a webinar for May 5 on lessons learned as a collective community. Think Iowa City is getting busier, and the Gran Gable bike ride will be starting with 600 riders registered, Senior Nationals, Hancher, and advertising increasing regionally on outdoor COVID-safe activities for leisure travelers. The Think Iowa City hotel group is providing \$15,000 to the ICDD and an additional \$10,000 to THINK Iowa City to support the downtown Creos public art installation. Rachel Kilburg shared that Councillor Thomas reached out about a 4 way stop at Linn and Bloomington. There are property owners supportive of it and the NHTSA requires that the City conduct a traffic study on the 4 way stop. This was requested in 2014, and none of the warrants were met. The criteria are unlikely to meet given the reduced traffic with COVID. The transit study is complete, and the public presentation on those changes will be next Thursday – and the FilmScene launch on Chauncey Park will be a great opportunity for residents. Lots of projects for the Climate Action plan, as well as ADA Committee updates. Abby Restko shared that Summer of the Arts concerts will be on Fridays again starting in July and online in June. Summer of the Arts larger festivals will also need swag for volunteer bags as well as special promotions to drive traffic to both business and events.

On motion by Nusser, second by Jain, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17am