

Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corp. August 3, 2021 board meeting was held at the Jacob Grant conference room – 490 Park Ave at 8:30am

Attendance: Lisa Farris, Brandi Newton, Jill Hansen, Emily Fitzpatrick, Antonio Meza, Chip Langerak, Shane Dial, and Anas Almassrahy.

Staff: Catherine Smith, Juan Hernandez and Mala Lyon

Minutes for July 13, 2021 were reviewed – but we did not have a full quorum to approve, so we will do that in September

Financial Report – Brandi – we are in a very stable position and can possibly look at pushing some funds to the Historic Foundation as we come to the end of our fiscal year. We budgeted for the Taste of Downtown event, but it was canceled. Parking is making money but that may not always be the case. It is common to over sell a parking lot by 25% - we do about a 12 1/2% over sell, but we should not budget that in as we may have to change that policy. It is hard to budget correctly for snow removal and credit card fees as they are unknowns. Catherine said we had 2,000 people use the parking pay stations (meters) last month that either paid with their card or coins. The PPP loan was forgiven, so we will not have to pay back any of the \$47,000, which is about the amount we would have made in income at our events. We did not have to dip into our reserves to keep going and we are very grateful to the Bank of Idaho for all their help. We did not have a full quorum to approve, so we will do that in September.

Catherine said we have discussed in the past a 'Welcome' arch to go over Broadway. It would be nice to have two arches – one by the Memorial bridge and the other by the Yellowstone Highway. Last May we contacted Sign Pro and they gave us a bid to do the engineering feasibility report at \$2,900. Have discussed with Lisa the possibility of façade grant money and we can maybe get \$1,500 and the IFDDC would pay the other \$1,400. This design is just an option. Jill suggested that the starting point is to talk to ITD before agreeing to spend any money on a report. Catherine said she would start a conversation with ITD and Chris Fredrickson at the city, then we will return to this report.

July 24th the merchants held a Block Party that was spearheaded by Marilynne from MarCellar's, Sheba from Cardamom, Bill from the pickle Deli and Hannah from Homemade Idaho. We supported their event with \$100 in Facebook advertising, the city application to close B Street and other advertising. The goal was to have 20 - 30 antique dealers on B Street, but they were only able to get two to come, so they just put them inside the Civitan Plaza and didn't close the street. We have received feedback from the merchants that they saw an increase of activity and sales by 30 – 35%. Customers that came were looking for the Taste of Downtown as a full-page ad had been in the I.F. Magazine that went to print before the decision to cancel was made. We had some push back from the Samoa Club group that were upset because we used their name of "Block Party" which was their event last summer. They didn't want to call it Summerfest as that made it sound like our brew fests. Chip said they had a number of people asking where the Tastes were. Catherine said we need to figure out how to make this event work as it is obvious that the public wants it, but it is hard for the restaurants who are understaffed and may not have the equipment to do an outdoor serving event. In the past we have done a 75-25% split with the restaurants. The tickets were sold for \$1 each, then the restaurants counted the tickets and we gave them back .75 for each ticket and the .25 was used to defray our costs. It is an expensive event when you must rent tables and other items and do advertising. Some of the restaurants sold items directly rather than using the tickets so we lost money. Chip said they do not look at it as a time to make money but as an exposure event to get people to know about them. It is a good weekend to hold that event with the Farmers Market and the Art Show going on already. People that came downtown liked it but were expecting more as only a few businesses set out sidewalk sales. The IFDDC always budgets and plans for a loss for the event to fund it. We need to have some more conversations with the restaurants to see how we can make it work.

Events coming up are the Oktoberfest on Sept 25th and Fallbrew on Nov. 6th.

Parking fees – in 2002 we raised the cost of hourly parking in the lots from .25 to \$1 per hour; monthly parking permits increased in 2002 from \$20 - \$25 and again in 2003 from \$25 to the current \$35. We would like to propose an increase to \$40 per month for a parking pass going into effect Oct 1st. That is a \$60 per year increase per permit sold. This will help offset the credit card transaction fees, maintenance, and improvements. Also, the Capital Lot has reserved parking where each person is assigned a space that is theirs and theirs alone. We have also only been charging \$35 per month for these permits and would like to up it to \$50 as it is a premium space. Brandi said we need to look at the reason for the increase if our goal is to get employees off the street by offering affordable parking so they can park all day. We should see an expense report that shows the increase is needed to cover our expenses. Catherine said she would create that report.

Public Art – We are looking at doing murals again but doing them by commissioning an artist, not the public ‘call-to-artists’ method. That way we can work directly with the building owner and one artist to have a mural painted. We can still use the Art Committee to get their input and suggestions, but the final mural will be between us, the building owner and the artist so the building owner is happy with the mural. The “Labs of Downtown” has stalled a little as we work with the INL, we still hope it get some installed before the end of the year. Brandi asked if they will be left out year-round? Or will the street salt damage them? Catherine said they are made of fiberglass and the location will be very carefully chosen to protect them.

Lisa reported that we city council approved \$36,000 for 2021 funding with \$1,000 of that for graffiti and we still have \$11,000 left from previous years.

Anas said the city is doing round 2 of the Imagine I.F. survey and encourage everyone to go online and give your input. It is open until the 11th.

Catherine reported that the Parking Committee did meet and there is still interest in exploring the install of parking pay stations on street. There is software that will allow a 20 – 30 minutes free parking option but it is more expensive. We are working with IE Productions to create an info video to help us education how it will work. We got an email from one of the salons saying one of her stylists has gotten 7 tickets and wanted to know what could be done and where could she park. Chip said in their 10 years being downtown not one ticket has been given to an employee because they have told them where to park and how easy it is. He often hears people from out-of-town comment with surprise that on-street parking is free for two hours. Change always happens with the way you do things and people adjust. Catherine said that after the discussion with Lott’s from Centre Theatre it was agreed for the purpose of gathering info, we would give them cards that they could give to people coming to movies in the afternoon so they could have extra time parked on the street. We gave them the cards a week ago and have not seen one used yet. We feel there was a day when quite a few tickets were issued, and people were upset and that is what they are basing their complaint about parking to us on – that one day. Chip said that it again the education that people need. He did a live video showing it only takes about 5 minutes to walk from the parking by the railroad tracks into the heart of downtown and then timed the walk at 3 minutes and 15 seconds to walk to the theatre. Brandi said we need to humanize it like that saying we care about you the downtown employee and here is how we can help by showing you where to park.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:36am

Our next board meeting is scheduled to be held September 14, 2021.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Hansen, Secretary and Mala Lyon