

MEETING MINUTES

DOWNTOWN STRONG

July 16, 2019 @ 6:30 PM

Thomasville Parks & Recreation Administration Office

1 East Main Street

1. Welcome/Agenda Additions

Michael Brandt, Assistant City Manager, welcomed everyone to the meeting. A sign-up was provided for attendees.

2. Updates from City and other Organizations

M. Brandt updated group on activities of the City, including sidewalk improvements on Salem Street and crosswalk improvements at Main and Salem Streets.

Carol Brown, Chair of Beautification Committee, updated everyone on their current project. The Committee has received a donation of Christmas Figurines originally from the Belk Dept. Store. The figurines are in the process of being restored in NYC. The Committee is raising \$50,000 in private donations for this effort. To-date they have received approx. \$35,000. Donations are still being accepted and may be made through the City of Thomasville – care of the Beautification Committee.

Cory Tobin reported that the PACE Group still has funds available for Façade Improvements, but applications need to be made ASAP.

3. General Discussion on Downtown Strong organizational structure

M. Brandt led a long discussion of what the organizational structure of Downtown Strong group should be. This led to the naming of different groups or entities that should be involved (no particular order):

Faith-Based Organizations – CCM/Father’s Storehouse, various Churches near downtown

Bricks & Mortar Group – Retail shop owners on Salem and Main Street (mostly promotions through Social Media, have done some events).

PACE – Long-time advocate for Downtown; Infrastructure and Facades, limited availability to purchase properties for redevelopment.

Beautification Commission – Responsible for public space landscaping.

Tourism Commission – Responsible for promotion of Thomasville outside of Davidson Co.

Historic Preservation Commission – Oversees the local historic district rules and regulations.

Davidson Arts Organization – Provides funding for arts programs in Thomasville.

At-Large Resident –

At- Large Business Owner –

Non-Retail/Service Business Owner – Office-uses

At- Large Business Owner – someone that has been in business for +5 years

Chamber of Commerce

City Government

At-Large Property Owner

At-Large Event Space Owner

At-Large food/beverage Owner

A significant amount of discussion followed regarding the purpose of the organization, appointments of members, whether this organization should be a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization or a City Council – appointed committee. Scott Styers, Councilman, recommended that the group not be a Council-appointed committee so that it could act independently, but, if it wanted funding from the City it would need to be an IRS recognized not-for-profit.

As part of the discussion, the Main Street Program elements were outlined – which are Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. M. Brandt provided background on the Main Street Program history and current requirements for entering into the program. It requires a three-year affiliate period plus full-time staff to lead. At this time Thomasville does not have the funds available for this position.

The group agreed that the Main Street Program should be emulated, even if we cannot join officially. But that a clear Mission/Vision Statement would need to be created so that the everyone understood the goals of the organization.

The group also agreed that there should be a steering committee that would be made of representatives of the groups outlined above. Consideration to create sub-committees under the steering committee that would focus on Economic Vitality, Design, and Promotion. Organization would be handled by the steering committee.

Jarrold Dunbar stated that individuals that serve on the committees must understand that they are representatives of the whole, and are not serving for personal gain only.

The issue of dues payments was raised; no decision was made as to whether membership would be tied to dues.

M. Brandt stated that he would develop an outline of an organization that would be sent to everyone before the next meeting. The organizations that might want to be part of the membership need to hold discussions to decide if they want representation and who from their organization would serve.

4. Collaborative Opportunities for Downtown Businesses

- a. Home Town Throw Down (July 20, PACE PARK, 10 am – 2 pm) Thomasville Tourism is sponsoring event to welcome participants for the American Legion Baseball Tournament taking place at Finch Field this weekend. Music, activities, water slide, all free-of-charge.
- b. Senior Days – Frank & Barbara Ruglio (Avon Store) proposed the idea that the Downtown businesses work together to develop a “Senior Day” for both local and out-of-town seniors to come downtown. All retail businesses would offer discounts. This could be weekly or monthly.
- c. Chair City Music Festival (August 17 & 18, The Alibi Bar) Tony Crowder from Alibi Bar is hosting the festival – expect between 1,500 – 2,000 people from surrounding areas (GSO, HP) to attend, encouraged local businesses to be open, become a sponsor, and create flyers that can be passed around to the visitors.
- d. Pop-Up Park (TPR program) C. Tobin, TPR, stated that the City P&R has a Pop-Up Park program that can be brought to different locations to enhance special events sponsored by businesses.
- e. National Night Out (August 6, TPD, Lt. Raymond Widener) Reminder that National Night Out is coming soon, questions should be directed to Lt. Widener 336-475-5525.
- f. Sunset Sounds (July 18, August 15, Arts Davidson County)
- g. Everybody’s Night (September 27, Thomasville Tourism) Downtown music event the night before Everybody’s Day. For more information, contact J. Dunbar
- h. Everybody’s Day (September 28, Chamber of Commerce)
- i. Oktoberfest – Previous years sponsored by Bricks and Mortars, most likely will not take place this year, too expensive and time-consuming.
- j. Other Ideas/events?

5. Next Steps

Meeting adjourned 8:05 pm