



MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Steven McDowell welcomed members to the meeting at 8:40am. Members present: Steven McDowell, Evie McNiece, Jay Shell, Ann Pullen, and Steve White. Absent: Alice Herring and Barbara Ware. Staff: Ann Arnold, Patrick Eidson, Becky Smyth and Amanda Carter. Media present: Doug Walker, Rome News Tribune and Tori Hughes, WRGA. April Minutes were approved by common consent.

ACTION ITEM

River District Rezoning Recommendation - White presented a proposed zoning change in the River District from the DDA Business Development Committee. McNiece abstained from discussion and vote. Maps were reviewed and hereby attached and made a part of these minutes. The proposal is to change the area zoned C-C to U-M-U. This is similar to downtown with the parking and set-back. White stressed that the Committee discussed all options with Planning Director Sue Hiller and greed this is the best fit. The city made a change in the area where the hotel is being developed for the same reasons. Members discussed changes in detail and pointed out that all non-conforming businesses in the area will not be able to return once they have been closed for twelve months. On a motion by White, second by Pullen, members approved the zoning change with all in favor. Hiller will take to the Planning Commission.

Sidewalk Café Ordinance Amendment - Arnold presented the amendment which was placed as First Reading at the May 11th City Commission meeting. McNiece abstained from the discussion and vote. The changes will call for an annual review and renewal. The review will take place in the first quarter of each year and will check for compliance issues. She stated a fee was included in the renewal. Arnold stated that communication is an issue as some owners purchase items or make changes without notifying the office. Another addition is that tables shall be no more than thirty inches in height. This is for safety reasons. All members agreed. Members expressed how important the sidewalk cafes are to the community. Several members voiced they did not see the need for another fee. Arnold said once the amendment is adopted, a letter will be sent out to all restaurants. Members discussed that smoking is a big issue downtown even with signs posted in cafes. Members questioned the rules on vapor smoking. Eidson mentioned the Rome Police Dept. Bike Patrol will return to downtown and hopes this will eliminate the issue with friendly enforcement and education. Eidson feels there is a need to set down with staff to work on the issue. Arnold will work with the building inspection department for the review/inspection process. Shell motioned to approve the ordinance amendment with the elimination of the fee, second by White. All members were in favor. The wording "for a fee" on page 1, item 5 will be deleted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach - Carter stated the next Coffee Break is at Living & Giving on May 29th. There will be an update on the Water Main Project and a presentation about Unexpected Canvas along with event updates.

Design - Pullen reiterated that the committee has been working on the sidewalk café ordinance and discussed no smoking.

Promotion - Shell stated that May First Friday Block Party was a success. The next concert is at Bridgepoint Plaza featuring the Shawn Mack Band. He is really excited to see Timmy Reynolds play at the next July 3rd block party.

Parking - In Herring's absence, Smyth will give a committee report during her staff report.

Business Development - White thanked the board for approving the previously presented zoning change. The loft tours will take place on August 29th and he encouraged everyone to participate. The committee is currently working on an *Invest in Downtown* brochure which outlines loan programs and other useful information.

BID - McDowell was happy to report that 66% of BID petitions have been obtained, while the legal requirement is 51%. It was on the city commission agenda as First reading and will go before the city commission on May 26th as a Public Hearing. Everyone is encouraged to attend. McDowell took the time to acknowledge the hard work of all BID Commission members.

STAFF REPORTS

Parking Report - Blumberg has taken on the residential growth portion of the work plan. They meet next Tuesday. Smyth attended the Parking Association of GA Conference last month and took back some great ideas. The next big thing in enforcement is license plate recognition. This is a great technology and hopefully will be in Rome in the future. The Annex Lot meter use continues to grow. Now the Pay by App will have no charges attached. Rick Waters celebrated his 7 year anniversary. Allen Mull, deck attendant, celebrated his 1 year anniversary. Smyth stated The Forum is working with the Sheriff's Office for assistance with graduations.

Director's Reports - Arnold was proud to announce recent staff accomplishments: Smyth graduated from Shorter University and Carter graduates from Leadership Rome today. The State Downtown Conference dates were announced, March 9-11 in Athens. Arnold mentioned some member's board term will expire at the end of this year and asked them to let her know if they wish to stay on. The DeSoto grant was awarded for the catering kitchen. Pro-Active Contractors won the bid. The Heart & Soul Tour was a success. Arnold was given a copy of the Rider's Guide and showed the board the Rome section. Wonderful feedback was provided. This was Rome's third time hosting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:41am.
Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Carter, Recording Secretary