

Gibsonville Development Advisory Commission Meeting Notes
October 16, 2019

Attendance

In attendance were members Ben Baxley (BB), Ricky Cox (RC), Sean Dowell (SD), Steve Harrison (SH), Lori Lacassagne (LL), Seth Rosson (SR), Wanda Small (WS), and Dick Swank (DS). Also local resident Bobbie McAdam was a guest at the meeting.

Review of Prior Business

Meetings Minutes: Prior minutes were not yet prepared for review and will be completed by the next meeting.

Updates

Town Branding & Murals: Murals have been one of GDAC's major effort in 2019. As funding drives how this item will be accomplished, it was decided to wait until our next meeting to come up with formal, final recommendations. After our next meeting, elections will be over and GDAC can (attempt to) structure final recommendations in a way palatable to the new Board. It was noted this needs to be our best efforts as our downtown can handle multiple murals and public art. That said, a series of public art improvements will not happen unless we can get this first effort to be successful. GDAC "homework" was to be ready to discuss and make formal recommendations on this item at our next and final 2019 meeting.

Sidewalks: As sidewalks have been a prior point of conversation, BB offered GDAC personnel the opportunity to be on a "Sidewalk Steering Committee." This committee is the result of a grant Gibsonville received in 2019 and will improve town planning efforts for pedestrians. No one showed interest other than SD, whom volunteered. GDAC personnel did have ideas about community individuals whom might have an interest and were going to "get the word out."

New Business

Elections: It was noted the pending election could change town direction and leadership. GDAC in fact has two members running for public office (RC and SH). It was noted that there is active discussion in the community about how Gibsonville can best improve. This is a good thing overall, though not everyone will agree on how to get from here to there.

Grants: Discuss of the above sidewalk grants prompted GDAC to discuss grants in general. Grants are for specific uses limiting what money can go to. These also require a good writer, a compelling story, knowledge of where appropriate opportunities can be found, and time. Grants are excellent sources of funds if you have the knowledge, staff, and time to attempt them. Gibsonville may want to consider hiring a grant writer for specific economic development tasks it wants done.

A Big Year Verse "No Vacancy": In 2019, the town has seen a significant shift in business and buildings. This is in challenge to what RC called the "no vacancy" issue. RC mentioned that certain community members felt economic development could be ignored since there were "no buildings available." He noted that Gibsonville is "more than just its downtown". GDAC discussed that real estate is slow and secretive. This creates a public perception problem where people think nothing is going on, when the sand is shifting under their feet.

Reporting: To show the above mentioned changes, GDAC decided to do an accounting of new business which will 1) be submitted in the towns water bill under the guises of “News From GDAC & The GMA” and 2) in a formal report. This is one means to educate town leadership and the community about the many ways the last few years had changed our town landscape.

New Business Introductions: GDAC specifically discussed that new businesses should be welcomed into town. This should include both town staff as well as the Gibsonville Merchants Association. Small communities are known for “everyone knowing what everyone else is doing.” Let’s us that to our advantage and welcome our new neighbors. How we can best accomplish this is to be determined.

Limited Time in 2019 & Next To Do’s: GDAC will only have one more meeting in 2019. Priorities at our next meeting will be to complete 2019 action items and decide on general direction in 2020.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is planned for November 20, 2019 from 2 PM – 3:30 PM. This is a typical third Wednesday of the month meeting.