

GDAC Meeting Notes for October 16, 2018

Meeting Structure

- General Discussion of Meeting Topics
- Review of Past Business
- Updates on the following topics and efforts: 1) Town Activity & Planning, 2) Gibsonville Merchants Association (GMA), 3) Parks & Recreation, 4) Real Estate / Recruiting / Economic Development, 5) CVB / Marketing, 6) Educational Efforts, 7) Current Events / Other.
- New Business
- Review of Meeting, Priority Efforts, & To Do's

Attendance

Members: Ricky Cox, Sean Dowell, Steve Harrison, Lori Lacassagne, Wanda Small, Dick Swank.
Not in attendance was Ben Baxley and Lance Wood.

Guests / Other: None.

Review of Past Business

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes: August notes were approved. Please note that the September meeting was skipped so there will be no meeting notes for this potential meeting date.

Inventory of Available Spaces: It was discussed that GDAC and the town website could use an updated inventory of available real estate. Landlords are filling spaces themselves at low rents, to avoid advertising and brokerage costs. GDAC and the town can provide this group aid with better advertising and such, if we knew what spaces were available. This was discussed as an immediate goal and GDAC was to come back to our next meeting with available information.

Improvement to the Town Newsletter: This was a project GDAC wanted to do in earlier 2018 meetings. Time overcame us and we did not meet deadlines. Rather than do a rushed product, the group decided to push this potential project into 2019.

Report on Rezonings & Development Activity: Steve Harrison did a report on current developments in Gibsonville. The goal of this report was to have an overview of current development information in one location. This would be both for us, Alderman, and citizens. This report is at the end of our meeting notes. Gibsonville is growing but there seems to be a steady resistance to increased population density and change.

Updates

Historic Approval at Gibsonville Mill: A portion of this asset received National Register of Historic Places acceptance. Reported by SD.

Alamance Chamber Business Afterhouse: The town recently sponsored the Alamance Chamber Afterhouse at the Burke Manor Inn. This brought the business community from across Alamance County to our downtown. The event was well attended and brought additional exposure to our downtown.

Alamance Living Press: The Burke Manor Inn was featured in this local publication. In fact, Lil Lacassagne made the cover. This was additional good press for Gibsonville.

Fall Festival: There was a solid showing despite two hurricanes and power outages. In fact, there was no power in downtown literally the day before the event. With a lot of effort and a teamwork, this was both pulled off and more importantly successful.

AirB&B Committee: There is a new committee to look at AirB&B as a use in the city in detail. GDAC member Ricky Cox is on this panel and will keep GDAC updated with progress.

New Business

Improved City Contact with Citizens: Even as a committee of involved citizens, GDAC has a hard time keeping up. This is the reason GDAC has suggested both 1) more newsletters per year than current annual publication and 2) newsletter improvements on content (see prior meeting notes). This topic came up again this meeting in the form of an improved zoning application. If rezoning information were more available, citizens would not feel “out of the loop” or “not informed” when projects go before Alderman. Current town policy is a rezoning sign with a phone number. Citizens have to call in and know what questions to ask in order to know what is going on. GDAC would like to see 1) an impact projection addition to the rezoning forms and 2) this information posted on the towns website *prior* to the meeting taking place. This would allow developers more contact with neighbors prior to town public meetings. Ideally, this will keep public meetings from being “torches and pitchforks” events. Finding out about significant city changes after the meeting does no one any good. GDAC to make specific suggestions to the current city zoning form after this meeting. Note: these final suggestions as they were submitted to city staff in November and are at the end of these Meeting Notes.

Extension of The Rezoning Activity Report: GDAC discussed impaction projections. Are future development's tax increases and impact to schools / infrastructure asked about and formally considered by zoning or the city? If not, how can these be? How does the city consider its long term planning? Is this on a five and ten year time frame? GDAC to continue to work on collection of “good information” for Alderman and the community to consider. This could specifically include a more detailed development report with information on future impact, traffic, taxes, and so forth.

Lack of Seating Downtown: GDAC discussed how we could best aid downtown business (besides better knowledge of vacancy and additional advertising). WS noted that the best means of doing this was increased consumer traffic. SD pointed out that we had 1) two roadways through downtown and 2) limited places to gather and sit adjacent to existing businesses. Per downtown development expert Roger Brooks, focusing on 1) one block, with 2) an intimate setting, and 3) curb appeal is how you start an active downtown culture. SD suggested 1) removal of the approx. 8 parallel parking spaces between Renos and Wade Jewelry and 2) making West Main Street on this block a one way (like on the other side of downtown). Use of this reclaimed parking space to create seating would limit the loss of parking and also put a nice seating area directly in front of numerous restaurants and the Diamond Room event space. The town could use currently owned planters (in storage) to make this area “nice” and protect people from car traffic. GDAC to float this idea in front of Alderman, building owners, and business owners.

Next Meeting: Meeting date to be determined. The third wednesday of November is the 21st, the day before Thanksgiving. Considering we are into the holidays, another meeting this year may not happen. GDAC to likely meet next in early 2019.