



**Greater Downtown Colorado Springs Business Improvement District  
Board of Directors Meeting  
8 am November 17, 2020  
Convened via Zoom**

**Board Attendees:** Carrie Baker, Eric Brenner, Julie Brooks, Lauren Ciborowski, Sarah Gonzales, Uyen Le, Simon Penner, Ann Sebastian and Russ Ware

**Staff:** Tim Archer, Jan Branham, Susan Edmondson, Laurel Prud'homme and Ana Valdez

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### **Welcome / Call to Order**

Russ Ware called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Russ extended a warm welcome to new board member Eric Brenner, owner and chef at Red Gravy. Eric brings a wealth of experience to this board. Eric thanked the board and stated he looks forward to contributing during these challenging times.

### **Minutes**

Board reviewed minutes dated September 15, 2020. Ann Sebastian moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Sarah Gonzales and approved unanimously.

### **Financials**

Board reviewed financials for the period ending October 31, 2020. Sarah directed the board's attention to the balance sheet and tax receivables. Sarah noted that ownership tax was down, which can be attributable to covid and the recession. Budget vs. Actuals shows an increase in Utilities expenses. Tim Archer explained that due to aging irrigation system, the BID experienced quite a few undetected leaks this past year. Staff is submitting forms to Utilities asking for reimbursement because the increased water usage was not known or detected for a while.

Susan announced that the BID budget hearing is scheduled for 8 am on December 9, 2020. She asks to accept or decline the calendar invite to determine a quorum. It will be a very brief meeting so please attend if you are able.

### **Holiday updates**

Laurel briefed the board on holiday marketing efforts. She showed a short video to promote support of small business. The marketing campaign to make every Saturday Small Business Saturday has garnered a lot of earned media. Staff is increasing digital marketing efforts with lots of paid targeted advertising. Skate in the Park opened Nov. 13. Changes this year include an online reservation system for the public to buy tickets ahead of time to manage rink capacity. With my Gnomies, a text game adventure will kick off this month. Kudos to Claire for doing most of the work on this. As part of Gnomies, Downtown is promotion a series of "Adventures" that are unique experiential activities such as Brewer for a Day, floral design or custom walking tours.

Susan drew board's attention to the improved online shopping directory. The directory is more robust and searchable. Katy has worked hard on improving the directory with this new format.

*Carrie Baker joined the meeting at 8:33 a.m.*

### **COVID updates**

The governor has announced he is calling the Legislature for a special session to address COVID relief programs.

### **Open discussion**

Susan asked board members to share their thoughts and observations during these times. Eric stated he is optimistic and encourages his staff to remain hopeful. Eric likes the messaging that “Smaller is Safer” for shopping and dining. Red Gravy rearranged its dining room to spread out so the new 25 percent capacity order is not affecting them too badly. Red Gravy is ramping up take out order again and uses its own staff to deliver meals. Eric has also started up Meals to Heal again, a community effort to deliver meals to hospital workers. Eric pointed out that while capacity is reduced, utilities and rent costs remain the same. He asked if something can be done to help small businesses such as forbearance (repaying in summer when business can expand). Susan will look into Utilities relief, but stated that rent is a trickier issue because landlords must pay bills too. Eric is hopeful there won't be a complete shut down but if that comes, he hopes government will roll out relief packages. Russ shared that there is government relief if employees need to take sick leave for COVID related reasons. Two weeks sick leave time is reimbursable.

*Sarah Gonzales left the meeting at 8:53 a.m.*

Carrie Baker, owner of Terra Verde, voiced her concerns for retail over the next two months. Sales this time of year determine a business' success for the following year. She has had to cut all staff hours by half because they can only have 25 people in the store. Carrie is concerned that the Shop Small Every Saturday campaign is hurting her weekday business because her regular customers wait to see what Saturday specials they will have.

*Russ Ware left the meeting at 9:01 a.m.*

Susan asked Uyen of Beauty Bar to share how things have been. Uyen shared that they already had to be 25 percent capacity due to being personal care. However, the last two weeks have been slower than usual. Many clients have come in to plan ahead by removing nails, etc. Their gift certificate program has helped. Employees are told to go home if they don't feel well and not spend more than 15 minutes with other employees to limit possible exposure.

Lauren shared her experience of shopping Downtown last weekend. Not many people were in shops which seemed sad, but reframing to demonstrate it is safer.

Susan announced she is thankful for everyone on the board. We know there may be rough patches ahead but we will work to keep messaging positive.

Eric offered to have merchant collateral on display if that would be helpful. Susan offered to give some Holiday Coupon Books to hand out. Eric also noted that the addition of air purifiers has made customers feel more comfortable indoors.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 a.m.