



Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
8:15 a.m. July 11, 2023
111 S Tejon St Ste 703, Colorado Springs, CO

Meeting minutes

Board members present: Chris Lieber, Michelle Talarico, Dave Lux, Laura Neumann, Amber Brannigan, Jeremy Shirley, Patrick Stephens (remote)

Board members absent: Jeff Finn, Troy Coats, Carrie Bartow, Jordan Empey

Staff members present: Susan Edmondson, Carrie Simison, Chelsea Gondeck, Austin Wilson-Bradley, Ana Valdez, Jessica Vasquez

Guests: Diane Stine (Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum), Peter Wysocki and Ryan Tefertiller (City of Colorado Springs)

Call to order and welcome

8:16 a.m. Chris Lieber called the meeting to order and welcomed new board members Amber Brannigan and Jeremy Shirley.

Peter arrived 8:18 a.m.

Minutes

The board reviewed minutes from the June 13, 2023, board meeting. On a motion by Dave, seconded by Laura, the minutes of June 13, 2023, were unanimously approved without change.

Financials

The board reviewed financials dated June 30, 2023. Susan shared that it was again an ordinary month with revenue increasing in both general fund and TIF fund as the majority of revenue is received in the spring. She is in the process of calculating TIF reimbursement payments and cross-training Austin and Chelsea in the process.

Grants

Grant updates

Austin provided an overview of each grant program available, complete with examples of some of the more notable grants awarded in 2022-2023. While no Tree Canopy or Energy Efficiency Grants have been awarded thus far, Austin shared details of several Building Enhancement Grants and Retail Incentive Grants that have greatly improved several properties and helped bring a greater variety of businesses Downtown. Chris noted that he appreciated the appropriate diversity of projects and the DDA's ability to meet projects where they are and help them thrive.

Loan updates

Susan provided updates on the three loans that have been granted by DDA to date:

- The Garden's loan has been forgiven, as the original owners have sold the business.
- 3Es Comedy Club recently made a payment, with two payments still outstanding.
- Bread & Butter Neighborhood Market has repaid their loan in full, have always made timely payments.

The business owners dropped off treats from local businesses they sell in the market along with a letter of gratitude to the DDA board of directors.

Patrick joined remotely at 8:54 a.m.

Special Project application: Pioneers Museum

Susan introduced Diane Stine, Development Director for the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum (CSPM) and shared that the museum is preparing for a lengthy and much-needed renovation project to replace the HVAC system. CSPM has raised the \$6.2 million necessary to fund the HVAC replacement and plans to make best use of the closure by tending to other identified needs and upgrades, including renovating an upstairs courtroom into additional exhibition space, and renovation of the front desk area to meet ADA accessibility and improve retail operations.

Staff recommends a \$25,000 Special Project Grant to help fund the additional renovations, citing that CSPM is an exceptional, highly attended cultural anchor to Downtown, its grounds now are the site of numerous festivals (Pride, Fiestas Patrias, etc.), and the museum continues to activate its grounds through events such as Food Truck Tuesday and the Farm & Art Market. This proposal meets Goals 7 and 8 of the Experience Downtown Master Plan: An Unforgettable Visitor Experience, and Honoring History While Facing the Future.

Dave moved to award Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum a \$25,000 Special Project Grant. Laura seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Diane thanked the board and before departing, invited them to attend the August 24 Gift of History Fundraiser held at Plaza of the Rockies.

New business

New business update and Business Pulse survey

Austin directed the board to the memo in their board packet that highlights a variety of key performance indicators on the overall economic health of storefront businesses Downtown. Sales tax revenue indicates that retail establishments are struggling more than bars/restaurants and the service sector, which is a challenge not unique to Downtown, as citywide numbers reflect similar challenges. These numbers are echoed by a recently launched Business Pulse Survey, which, through early responses, indicates that about half of the respondents (largely from the retail sector) are just getting by and keeping the bills paid. Austin will continue to solicit responses from storefront businesses to better paint an accurate picture of the well-being of small businesses Downtown.

Austin also shared the list of 12 businesses that have opened thus far in 2023, and a list of anticipated openings and their timelines.

Lastly, he and Susan shared concerns about challenged properties to include Kimball's, the former Boulder Street Gallery, and unlisted vacancies in the building at Bijou and Nevada. With these challenged properties also comes small wins including the former Mountain Chalet now being a retail concept with Hunt & Gather, and that the former Independent Records finally undergoing construction and remodeling. This shows that despite economic conditions, many entrepreneurs are taking the risk of opening a brick-and-mortar business Downtown and working to make a more vibrant city center.

Public realm improvements

Project updates

Chelsea shared an update on each key public realm improvement project to include Tejon Street Reconfiguration, streetscape improvements, AdAmAn Alley, Front Range Passenger Railway, the dog park in Antlers Park, Car Jail, and that a meeting with Colorado Springs Utilities has prompted the possibility of a dedicated account manager for Downtown businesses.

Michelle left at 9:35 a.m.

Marketing

Summer tourism updates

Carrie shared an overview of the Downtown summer tourism marketing strategy, which included a multi-pronged approach including an updated tourism map, ads in Broadmoor Magazine, CVB Visitors Guide, Colorado Fun Guide, Thirst Magazine, content in the Indy Summer Guide, a direct-mail piece, and a strong showing for Patio Passport. She also shared digital and social media reach, which has been steadily increasing.

Susan reminded the board of the following upcoming events:

- Meet and Greet with Councilwoman Michelle Talarico, July 12 at Trainwreck
- The Hunter groundbreaking, July 13
- Urban Living Tour, August 19
- Fall member mixer, August 30

Board meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.