

Downtown Lexington Management District
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 1, 2023
McBrayer and Zoom

Present Board Members: Dougie Allen, Clay Angelucci, Liza Betz, Council Member James Brown, Juan Castro, Scott Davidson, Jason Ervin, James Frazier, Councilmember Hannah LeGris, Thomas Pettit, Woodford Webb

Advisory Board Members: Beverly Fortune

Others Present: David Warren (Block-By-Block), Anthony Boone (Block-by-Block), Allen McDaniel (Downtown Lexington Partnership), Jennifer Taylor (Downtown Lexington Partnership) Kate Savage (Arts Connect), Nicole Saitta (LFUCG), Heather Lyons (LFUCG), Hannah Eiden (CM LeGris' office), Dudley Webb (Webb Companies), Carla Blanton

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Jan. 4 Board Minutes

The minutes were amended to correct a typo. W. Webb made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. J. Castro seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Downtown Lexington Partnership Update

A. McDaniel provided a DLP update – with Mayfest, Thursday Night Live and the annual meeting upcoming this spring. He has been on the job 16 days and is excited to be here.

Art Cart Update

H. Lyons stated that a number of cities have reached out about replicating the program, which was featured in *Municipal*, an online magazine. The initiative started during COVID as a way for artists to market and sell their products year-round as well as a way for visitors to find local art downtown. Funding was provided by the Mayor's office, Blue Grass Community Foundation and the Knight Foundation as well as sponsorship with VisitLEX.

Artists can apply online any time for one of the eight mobile carts. There wasn't enough traffic at the initial locations along Vine Street, so the program was shifted to other places, such as Tandy Park, Triangle Park, and the corner of Vine and Broadway. The carts also became popular at events such as the Farmers Market and Thursday Night Live.

There were 23 artists who participated, and sales reports were received from 13 artists who used the carts 95 times and sold 195 items for \$16,117. Buyers include local residents as well as visitors from other states and across the globe. Artists also were contacted for commissioned work as a result.

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Season 2 has already attracted 55 artists. The initiative also will host artists and music in Tandy Park on the third Friday of every month. Sales reports will now be required.

Financial Updates

J. Castro provided the financial update.

The financial year-to-date of more than \$492,000 is the most ever in February. Because more was collected, the percentage paid to the Sheriff's Office also was larger.

There was \$353,453.74 in the bank as of February. DLMD will surpass its annual budget and have extra funding that can be allocated for whatever is needed. It should finish the year with an extra \$20,000 to \$25,000 beyond what had been budgeted.

The lease for the Kawasaki MULE was fully paid as of January. The partnership with Block-by-Block is going well.

There was discussion about whether to change banks as well as the idea of having a sweep account to earn interest and finding a bank that would be a sponsor/partner in DLMD efforts. J. Frazer advised that because DLMD is a quasi-governmental body, an RFP would need to be issued.

W. Webb made a motion directing DLMD to explore setting up a sweep account with the current bank, Bank of the Bluegrass. S. Davidson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

L. Betz made a motion to approve the financial report. D. Allen seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Phoenix Park Update

CM H. LeGris stated that in 2022, funding was provided to create a site plan for the park. She presented that plan, which includes removing the broken water feature, raising up the sunken park, improving the dog park, a stage, slatted canopy, trees, lighting, tables, a kiosk and rest room. The goal is to activate the underutilized space in the center of downtown. There are 3,000 people who live within a 10-minute walk of the park.

The cost is \$4.6 million – with about \$3 million needed from the city and the remainder to be raised from private companies, sponsorships, etc. The council began redirecting ARPA funding that originally had been designated to other programs that weren't successful. She reported

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that CM J. Brown offered an amendment, which includes \$1 million for Phoenix Park. There also is expected to be funding included in the Mayor's upcoming proposed budget.

Questions were asked about safety and homelessness. She has been working with police and the Office of Homelessness Prevention and Intervention. In addition, the project has been value-engineered to reduce the estimated cost from a high of \$6 million to \$4.6 million.

She asked people to advocate for the park, provide feedback and give ideas for partnerships.

Chairman's Report

C. Blanton will leave her role as executive director at the end of June.

Block-by-Block Report

D. Warren provided additional information about the trike, which would serve as a mobile visitors' center for informational brochures. VisitLEX would provide half the funding. It would provide a greater opportunity to engage with visitors and residents. The total cost would be \$3,500 -- \$1,750 for each entity.

He addressed concerns raised at the last meeting about liability and ownership details. DLMD could either purchase the trike, or it could be leased from Block-by-Block in a similar arrangement to the Kawasaki MULE. There would be no additional liability, which would be covered under Block-by-Block the same as it is when the ambassadors are on foot.

Discussion included revenue from advertising space and how it would be used.

L. Betz made a motion to approve. W. Webb seconded the motion. The motion failed unanimously after J. Castro stated that this is not the mission of the DLMD and not how the DLMD should be spending tax dollars. He stated it would be better suited to the Downtown Lexington Partnership.

Executive Director Report

C. Blanton provided an update on social media activity, the February newsletter distribution and speaking engagements.

The next meeting will be held in person at 8:30 a.m. May 3. [Note: The meeting date was later changed to May 9.]