

## **BETTER HOMETOWN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**Minutes: June 9, 2009**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Mel Gordon, Maureen Grindstaff, Judy Malins, Erin Sheldon, Dick Smith, John Yarbrough

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** Cullen Chambers, Patricia Miller Wann

**VISITORS PRESENT:** (none)

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Erin called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

### **APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2009 MINUTES**

Judy voted to approve the May 12, 2009 Better Hometown Board of Directors meeting minutes. Mel seconded. The vote was unanimous.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Everyone welcomed the new board members, Mel Gordon and Maureen Grindstaff. Mel is associated with Atlantis Inn and Maureen is with Mogo's Scooters. Mel asked for clarification of the benefits of receiving Better Hometown designation. The Board and Chantel reviewed some of the positive outcomes possible with the Better Hometown Designation, which will over time create w a stronger "sense of place," give Tybee a more competitive edge for receiving grants, build stronger businesses, help to lessen commercial vacancies ,help to increase real estate sales, and make the Island more economically viable year round. This along with other Better Hometown benefits and more will help improve the overall tax base and further enhance the community's reputation even more.

Terms of office for Board members was discussed. Chantel reported that Patricia said she would like to commit for one year and Cullen would commit as necessary. The Board members present wish to wait until July to appoint terms with all Directors present and after the visit to St. Mary's.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### 1) Organization – John

- i. Chantel reviewed the concept of the Board being the main organizational arm. John has some individuals he thinks can assist. Outreach is a vital component of the organizational arm.

Chantel reported that Patricia and she are working on a Better Hometown article for the Tybee Times. This will elaborate further on the Better Hometown reminder and update email that went out to Chantel's e-list on April 17.

#### 2) Design – Cullen

- i. Chantel reported in Cullen's absence. Cullen and Chantel had the opportunity to meet with the property owners of Waves and Rockhouse on the South End. Cullen gave them Art Deco 20's/30's color suggestions to remain true to the area's era. The owners were receptive to the concept and will consider the options. Discussion ensued regarding other elements of design.

- ii. John mentioned the possibility of everyone downtown contributing to hire a professional pressure washer to clean the sidewalks once a week which would help to instill better maintenance practices.

### 3) Promotion – Judy

- i. Chantel reported on the last promotions meeting because Judy was unable to attend. The Holiday / Promotions committee continues planning for the holiday calendar and the holiday decorations. Diane Kaufman is working on [www.tybeefortholidays.com](http://www.tybeefortholidays.com) and hopes to have the site live soon. Starting a “Third Thursday on Tybee” was discussed during the shoulder season. It could be scheduled for a few hours (i.e. 4pm – 7pm) each third Thursday. If permissible, musicians and professional dancers could be stationed at select outdoor areas to create the atmosphere and encourage pedestrian traffic along the corridor. A gallery hop could also be implemented with artists working live during the hours of the monthly event.
- ii. Chantel also reported that she and Terry Spatz have been working on a “This I Know and Appreciate about Tybee’s History” game for the Tybee Breeze. This is intended to generate awareness and educate the community about the historical and architectural significance within the corridor.
- iii. Terry and Chantel are also holding a “Sharing Tybee” two hour event on the Walter Parker Pier and Pavilion on July 28. They are reaching out to Tybee Island Historical Society and various individuals. This is intended to continue the focus on the community’s historical assets through the gathering of oral histories.

### 4) Economic Restructuring – Erin

- i. Chantel reported that she and Cullen met with Mayor Buelterman about the possibility of the Historical Society creating a façade loan program that the City would eventually participate in as a partner with the Historical Society.
- ii. Erin reviewed Tax Allocation District (TAD) information with the Board. Chantel requested this information based on an inquiry by the Mayor when Cullen and she met with him. TAD is specific to Georgia and is a designated area which certain improvements are made by local government. Bonds are typically issued to pay for improvements and the added tax revenues are used to pay off the bonds. Bonds are secured by a “tax allocation increment,” which is an increase in property tax revenues resulting from the redevelopment activities taking place within the TAD. As public improvements and private development take place in the area, the taxable value of property in the TAD increases. TADs can be an excellent way to finance economic development in cities. There are pros and cons to TADs. Atlantic Station in Atlanta is an excellent example of a successful TAD.

- iii. Chantel reported that she and Jennifer Fordham, Economic Development Representative with DCA, met with one of the Rockhouse owners regarding the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund. We are waiting to see if they wish to pursue.
- iv. Councilman Dick Smith suggested members from the Audit Committee be considered and contacted to serve on the Economic Restructuring committee. Erin will look into this.

### **EDUCATION / DEVELOPMENT**

#### 1) Visioning and Work Plan – July 27

Chantel reminded everyone that the Department of Community Affairs will be here to facilitate the Visioning workshop from 5:00pm until 6:00pm on July 27. All Board members were encouraged to reach out to at least five individuals that would benefit from attending and that can assist with the program. The Board of Directors will meet for a work planning session following the visioning from 6:00pm until 8:00pm. Chantel has a list of items that can apply to the work plan. The list consists of ideas / concerns that businesses, organizations and residents have expressed regarding the corridor over the past few months.

#### 2) Stakeholders

See outreach efforts above

### **COMMUNITY VISIT**

Chantel reminded everyone of the Community Visit to St. Mary's on June 22. Everyone should meet at the Tybee Island Lighthouse parking lot at 9:15am. The meeting with their director, Alyse Thornhill, will take approximately two hours.

Councilman Smith suggested Pembroke and Sylvania be considered as visits also.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilman Smith urged the Board to talk with other city officials about the importance of the program and funding. He stressed that this is budget time and it is necessary to make sure everyone knows how this program can benefit the community and businesses over time.

Chantel reported that the Clerk of Council replied to her inquiry about the next Council workshop. The next Council workshop is July 18. Visitors are not allowed to speak at workshops unless invited by City Council. Councilman Smith will talk with Mayor Pro Tem Wanda.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Erin made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:10am. Judy seconded. The vote was unanimous.