

Saluda Downtown Foundation Minutes

The Saluda Downtown Foundation held its quarterly meeting March 4th at 6:30 at the Visitors Center. Those board members present included Marc Blazer, Board Chairman, George Sweet, Vice Chairman, Glenn Franklin, Secretary, Jay Burris, Lynn Cass, Treasurer and Lynn Casey, Executive Director. Others present were Mark Oxtoby, Saluda Board of Commissioners, Bruce Jayne from Connections and Judy Thompson from Sister City.

The meeting was called to order by chairman, Marc Blazer. He thanked everyone for coming out on a Monday night. A motion was made by Lynn Cass and seconded by George Sweet to accept the December board minutes as modified due to spelling errors. The vote was unanimous to accept .

Reports:

Lynn Cass presented the Treasurer's report. See the attached report. George Sweet made a motion to accept the report. Lynn Casey reported that at the moment, SDF is in good shape as money has come in from sources such as the Sister City fundraiser, Mountain Song dues and vender fees for the Arts Festival in May. Lynn Casey said the SDF was holding approximately \$180 in amphitheater funds and suggested we pass that on to the city as they construct the new amphitheater. A motion was made by George Sweet and seconded by Lynn Cass. The motion was carried by a unanimous vote. The SDF uses their website and social media accounts. A motion by Lynn Cass and George to pay the \$75 membership fee was approved.

A report on Sister City activities was given by Judy Thompson. She reported that the Lasagna Competition was a success and that another dinner, this one at the Orchard Inn is planned for March 14th. This summer Saluda will have two Italian students for four weeks. Events are planned that are fun and broaden their understanding of America. An Italian blue grass band is scheduled to be in the U.S. If they are near Saluda in August there is a chance they will play on the Ella Grace stage. The full Sister City report is attached.

No representative from Mountain Song was present but it was reported that they will hold a concert May 7th at the Tryon Fine Arts Center. Additional information will be available closer to the concert date.

Top of the Grade Concerts for 2024: The concert dates will be the second Friday of each of the following months: June 14th, July 12th, and August 9th. Polk County Community Foundation is funding the Concerts this year.

Arts Festival: The 2024 Arts Festival will be held May 18th. The Polk County Community Foundation has awarded a \$5000 grant to fund the children's activity tent. See the attached map for stall placement. It was noted that the Children's Activity Tent will be on Ervin Street which will be closed to traffic. Music will be centered at Saluda Studios and Saluda Glass Moon Gallery.

Shuttles will include 8 golf carts and two 24 seat passenger shuttles. Public parking will be in several places: Clark Thompson property, the Episcopal church, the school and the municipal parking lot. For the first time, traffic will be encouraged to use Howard Gap road as an entrance into Saluda. Shuttle stops will be at the corner of Cullipher and Main Streets plus the Clark Thompson public parking area.

Stops will be on the hour and half hour. No flowers will be along Main St as before due to budgeting restraints. The city manager and police chief have been very helpful.

Old Business

Visitor Center numbers remain consistent, just under 10,000, and is running smoothly. A motion to handover the Visitors Center to the TDA was made by Marc Blazer and seconded by George Sweet. The vote was unanimous in favor of the handover. Lynn Casey said all documents pertaining to the running of the Visitors Center have been turned over to the TDA, and she is no longer involved in its running. The three parties, SDF, SBA and TDA will meet monthly to review the Visitor Center operation. The conversation continued with miscellaneous comments on the TDA's need to maintain the current level of volunteer participation. There is a possibility that Julie Osteen may be compensated for taking on the monthly job of scheduling. See the attached letter from the TDA.

New Business

Bruce Jayne from Connections, brought a mock up copy of a new manual outlining the various volunteer organizations and how they operate within the community. They are planning to print 200 copies, using a Tryon Print shop. Everyone agreed the manual was needed to showcase the essence of Saluda which is its giving spirit. The SDF will be a sponsor of the manual. A motion was made by Lynn Cass and seconded by George Sweet. The vote was unanimous to fund printing of the Connections manual.

Lynn Casey who is on a local Saluda Grade Trail committee gave a report concerning the slow down in progress for the trail. There is a push toward the final contract and to get the state to come up with the requested additional funding. The city manager suggested citizens make a trip to Raleigh to lobby the legislature to complete the funding. Those interested are encouraged to join the group. From the Conserving Carolina side, they are having difficulty getting Norfolk Southern to respond to their inquiries.

A slide show has been put together promoting the Saluda Grade Trail. Lynn said she would be glad to do programs for groups where she would use the slide show to promote the activities the trail would provide.

Marc Blazer opened up the topic of possibly investigating the installation of solar street lights. At present all the street lights were cut off as a budget saving effort during the pandemic. The lights that are currently on are paid for by individuals who request/ a light close to them be reinstated. An active discussion took place. In the end, it was agreed that Marc would look into the pros and cons of municipal solar street lights.

Lynn Cass made the motion to adjourn; it was seconded by George Sweet and was carried by a unanimous vote.

Glenn W. Franklin
Secretary