



CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE DOWNTOWN ADVISORY BOARD - SPECIAL DATE -SEPTEMBER 15



Hive on 5 - 125 5th Avenue W | Hendersonville, NC 28792
Tuesday, September 15, 2026 – 4:00 PM

MINUTES - DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER – In attendance- Jenny Breedlove, Yvonne Hill, Gary Heisey, Patsy DuPre, Mark Pavao, Nancy Neikirk, Terry Young, Scott Gash, Erica Hodges, Aaron Adams, Lyndsey Simpson (Council Liaison)

Absent: Joe Dinan, Oliver Wall, Sheryl Solomon (called in virtually)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 2026 Downtown Advisory Board – correction to be made under public comment to “Mark requested to move public comment from Caroline Gunther to treat street discussion”

Patsy Dupre made motion to approve as amended, Nancy Neikirk seconded. All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comments

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

TEAM & STAFF REPORTS

1. **Bearfootin’ Program 2027 Costs** – Jamie Carpenter reviewed the document that was included in the agenda packet regarding bearfootin’ auction costs, along with a staff recommendation:

Background: Over the last several years, the Bearfootin’ Auction has experienced increase in costs. For 2027 we will need to increase the sponsorship and/or auction split to keep up with the increased costs.

The cost of bear sponsorship has increased due to the cost of the production of the bears:

- 2021: \$800 (had been this price for many years prior to 2021)
- 2022: \$1000
- 2023: \$1200 – have not increased since 2023

The SPLIT for the Bear Auction has not changed in over 10+ years.

- Up to \$3000, proceeds are split between the Friends of Downtown and the nonprofit partner – Friends of Downtown will max out at \$1500 per bear (except our bear).

Expenses have increased:

- Per bear production cost – in 2026 the cost increased from \$1200 to \$1300, and this will likely increase again
- Shipping
- Clear coat

- Approx. every 5 years new molds have to be produced (\$2900 each)

If we do not increase sponsorship and/or nonprofit split over time, our revenue will continue to decrease.

Revenue Details:

- The total cap that the Friends of Downtown can currently receive from the bear auction is \$38,500. This is if ALL Bears sell for at least \$3000, plus the bear that supports the Friends of Downtown sells for \$10,000
- Friends of Downtown have 'eaten' the costs of shipping, materials, and production costs, sponsorship has historically covered the cost of the individual bear alone.
- The NET proceeds from the Bear Auction are our biggest way to fund programs like façade grants, mural grants, etc.
- Rhythm & Brews has not been a revenue generator for several years – mostly breaking even. This is due to cost increases and is heavily weather-dependent.

Staff Recommendations:

- Increase sponsorship from \$1200 to \$1300 (will increase total sponsorship by \$1900)
- Increase nonprofit split to \$3500 (will increase potential revenue for the Friends of Downtown by about \$4000)

Board discussion: There was board discussion regarding increasing the revenue for the Friends of Downtown to a larger portion, noting from several board members that we should be taking a larger portion of the split than proposed by staff.

Aaron Adams made a motion to increase sponsorship price to \$1300 for 2027 bears. Erica Hodges seconded the motion. All were in favor

Jenny Breedlove made a motion to increase to \$4000 split – Nancy Neikirk seconded. Discussion: Terry Jacobs, downtown coordinator, and coordinator of the bearfootin' program explained the concerns regarding the nonprofit impact and participation by increasing the program to a higher amount than the staff proposed \$3500.

Vote was taken: No one in favor, all opposed.

Patsy Dupre made a motion to follow the staff recommendation to increase the split to up to \$3500, Erica Hodges seconded. All in favor.

2. **Downtown Staff Updates:** Jamie Carpenter provided the downtown updates to the board, and asked that the board members distribute them to downtown businesses. Information in the update handout included:

- Treat Street Closure
- Downtown Business Improvement Grant Program
- New Website information

- 500 block - Jenny
- 400 Block – Yvonne
- 300 Block – Mark
- 200 Block – Nancy
- 7th Avenue District – Patsy and Terry Young
- Staff will take the Courthouse and S 100 block.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. Future Agenda Items – Add item for January to review the Bearfootin’ auction for 2028

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

The City of Hendersonville is committed to providing accessible facilities, programs and services for all people in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should you need assistance or an accommodation for this meeting please contact the City Clerk no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting at 697-3005.