



North Carolina Downtown News

Spring Edition
March 2011

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North Carolina Downtown
Development Association

President's Message... ...Randy Hemann

There are three words that often appear under the NCDDA logo: partnerships, advocacy, and revitalization. I was reminded of those words at the recent NCDDA workshop in Durham as we gathered to learn from each other in a wonderful informal exchange of ideas.

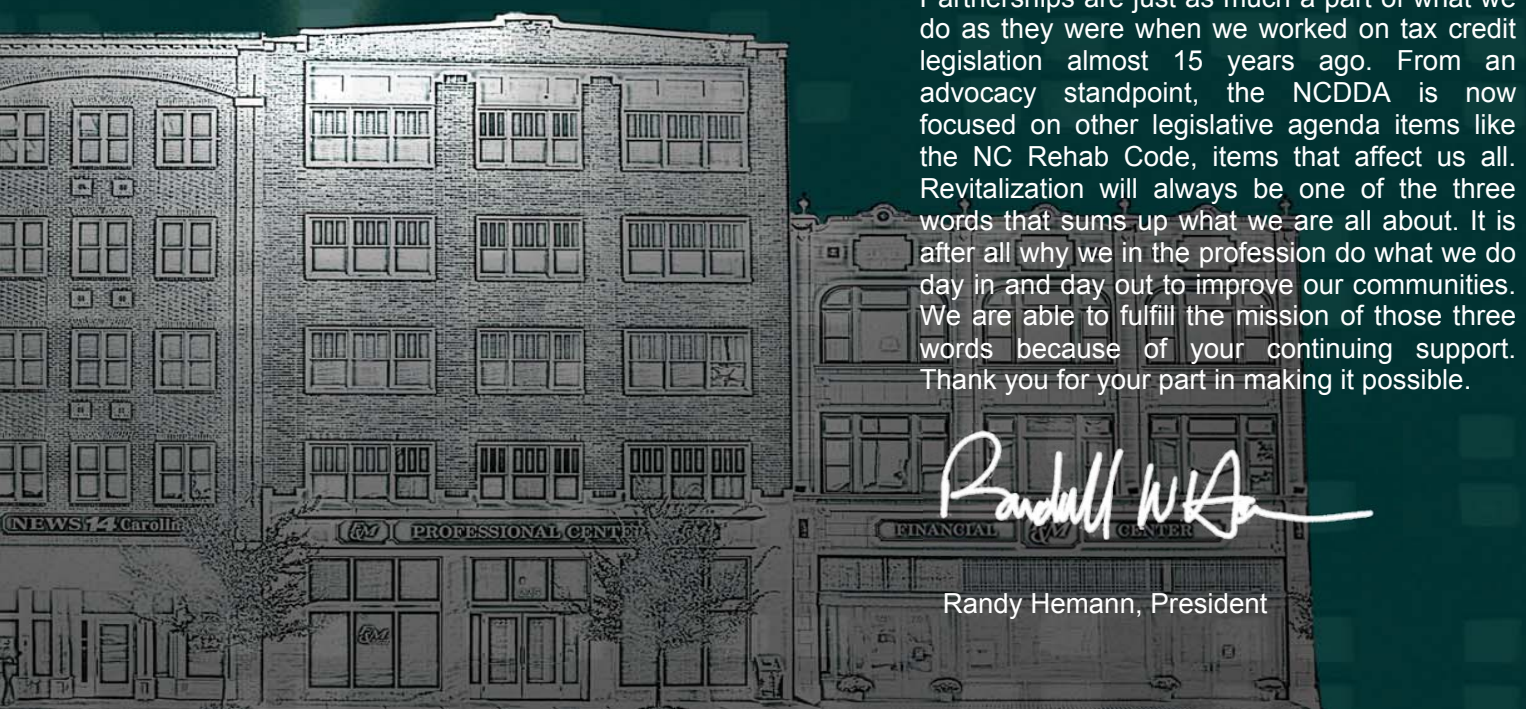


As we walked the streets of Durham, I was excited to see all of the positive change that has occurred in the last several years. Downtown Durham Inc. is to be commended for the energy that is evident in the Bull City. Seeing Durham and the sheer number of rehabilitations reminded me of the role that the NCDDA played in that development.

As a young man in his 30s (that was a few years ago...) I had the privilege to tag along with then NCDDA President Ray Gibbs as the NCDDA requested a Legislative Study Commission on Downtown Development. Those proceedings blossomed into a partnership with Preservation NC and the end result was the creation of the 20% NC Historic Preservation Tax Credit. Without a doubt, that tax credit is one of the greatest tools we have for our downtowns. North Carolina has seen hundreds of millions of dollars in rehabilitation projects that were spurred on by these tax credits.

Partnerships are just as much a part of what we do as they were when we worked on tax credit legislation almost 15 years ago. From an advocacy standpoint, the NCDDA is now focused on other legislative agenda items like the NC Rehab Code, items that affect us all. Revitalization will always be one of the three words that sums up what we are all about. It is after all why we in the profession do what we do day in and day out to improve our communities. We are able to fulfill the mission of those three words because of your continuing support. Thank you for your part in making it possible.

Randy Hemann, President



NCDDA Round-up

Façade 101 Workshop Upcoming

NCDDA's next professional education workshop is set for May 12 in Salisbury. The session will focus on the basics of façade design and renovation projects and will feature experts in the field. Be sure to watch the listserve for sign-up information. If you have an idea for an education session, contact Bruce Naegelen or any Board member.

New Website in Development

NCDDA is working to improve its website. Last fall, the organization issued a request for proposals and received three bids from web design firms for the work. The Board has selected a vendor and the project is now getting underway. The goal of the effort is to improve the appearance and functionality of the web site for members and other users.

Booth at Main Street Conference

NCDDA again hosted a booth at the recently concluded North Carolina Main Street conference. Special thanks to Randy Hemann for transporting and staffing the display.

Durham Workshop Useful

The organization convened an educational workshop in February that was hosted by Downtown Durham Incorporated. The session focused on Low Cost/High Income Ideas to Activate the Pedestrian Environment. Thanks to former NCDDA Chair Bill Kalkhof and current Board member Mel Norton for coordinating the session.

By Laws Update

Jason Thiel with the Downtown Winston Salem Partnership has agreed to lead a task force to review and revise the NCDDA By laws. Like many organizations, NCDDA has evolved over the years and the by-laws need updating to reflect the current operating environment. The project should be finished later this year.

MSD's Under Consideration

Wilmington, Durham, Asheville and Winston Salem are all currently examining the possibility of creating Municipal Service Districts for Downtown. Each city is at a different point in the process. North Carolina has over 50 MSD's and the districts have a track record of success.

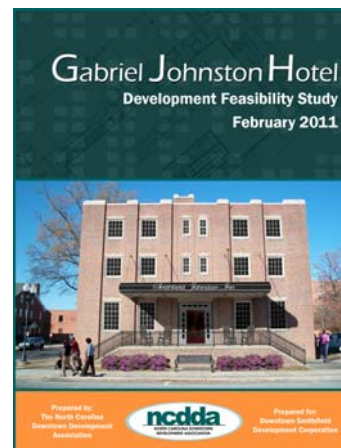


Technical Assistance Teams

Another critical service offered by the North Carolina Downtown Association is a Technical Assistance Team (TAT). The TAT is comprised of professionals who work with communities to review Downtown development efforts and help chart a course for future action. TAT visits can be structured as either a one day or a three day visit, depending on the needs of the community. Costs generally range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 plus travel expenses but can vary based on the team size, skill set and composition.

NCDDA has conducted dozens of TAT visits through the years for communities all across the state. The visits can be useful for brand new programs or mature organizations.

The most recent TAT was for Downtown Smithfield and the Town of Smithfield and included: **Randy Hemann, Jason Epley, AICP, Ray Gibbs, ASLA, Gray Stout, AIA, James Meacham and Rebecca Clark.** For more information about scheduling a NCDDA Technical Assistance Team, contact Brian Borne at 704.292.1705 or bborne@monroenc.org.



Façade Grant From NCDDA Helps Warsaw

After being selected as one of two winners of NCDDA's Façade Grant Program (see related story) the Town of Warsaw re-activated its Community Appearance Grant program. The newly revamped program is already working to improve Downtown Warsaw.

As part of the award, NCDDA provided a one day technical assistance team. The group met with 3 owners of 3 different properties to provide recommendations on how to address their facades. One buildings has already been renovated and attracted a new tenant.

Former Downtown Manager J.R. Stiegerwald is the Warsaw town manager. He noted another outcome of the grant award was the re-ignition of the Town's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to serve as the review committee for this program.

Finding volunteers to serve on commissions can be difficult, especially for a town with less than 3,300 residents like Warsaw. By involving the HPC, the Town was able to provide meaningful work for their volunteers, avoid duplication with other groups and save time for the applicants.

Warsaw officials will keep the membership apprised as to the success of this approach. NCDDA will also consider future education sessions for finding and engaging volunteers for towns of all sizes.



Existing building in Warsaw



Proposed renovation

Downtown Raleigh Holiday Promotion

For this holiday season, the Downtown Raleigh Alliance implemented **Shop Downtown**, a new program to showcase downtown's emerging role as a shopping destination. The campaign positioned Downtown as a culturally exciting, artistic community with a wide variety of appealing places to shop for everyday or specialty items.

The campaign consisted of a detailed map highlighting 31 participating retailers, a website featuring gift ideas, a holiday shopping passport with incentives and prizes and special events.



The promotion also included a **Taste of Retail** that paired shops with area restaurants to offer food samples inside the stores. **Shop, Sip & Cinema** featured retailer discounts, trunk shows, and wine samplings. At the end of the day, shoppers were invited to the NC Museum of Natural Sciences for a mini reception followed by a **FREE** screening of *Sex and the City 2*.

The promotion was successful in attracting new activity to area shops and generating customers to Downtown. For more information about the promotion, contact mail:

ellenfragola@downtownraleigh.org

NCDDA Façade Grant Program

As part of the NCDDA Board of Director's goals in 2010, a façade grant program was created to help promote the improvement of downtown storefronts across the state. The Board allocated funding to assist two towns. The goal was to help one town establish a façade grant program and to help a second town re-establish a façade grant program that had lapsed. Following the review of fourteen applications for the two grant categories, the independent selection committee selected the towns of Burgaw and Warsaw to receive the façade grant awards.

As part of the project, NCDDA provided each community with professional guidance to establish, or re-establish, a successful façade grant program. Members also volunteered their time and knowledge for site visits to give design assistance for three buildings in each town. In terms of funding, NCDDA awarded the Town of Burgaw \$3,500 in start-up money for its façade grant program, and the Town of Warsaw \$2,500 to re-start its program. Each town was required to provide matching funds.

NCDDA Team Members assisting on the project were **Gray Stout**, AIA, Stout Studio Architecture; **Randy Hemann**, Downtown Salisbury; and **Jason Epley**, AICP, Benchmark CMR, Inc. During the site visits in August, team members conducted meetings in each town with property owners and town officials. After working on design and program issues, the team then gave presentations to each town. Both communities are continuing to work towards completing the suggested improvements.

What's Next for NCDDA Façade Grants

Building on last year's success, the NCDDA Board has revised to the grant program and will select one building to renovate this year but increase the grant amount to \$5,000. The grant will be made through a competitive application process and all NCDDA members are eligible to apply. Applications are due March 31st. Please see the detailed application on the homepage of our website – www.ncdda.org.

For more information regarding the facade grant program, please contact Jason Epley, Past-President and façade grant coordinator at: jepley@benchmarkplanning.com.

Pre Application Workshop for Small Town Main Street Program

The Division of Urban Development is hosting two workshops for communities interested in applying for the Small Town Main Street Program. This program is oriented to incorporated communities in North Carolina with a State certified population of not more than 7,500. Communities must also have an identifiable downtown business "core" and cannot currently be or have been designated a "Main Street" community. The workshops are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday April 5th

11:00 AM

Wilkes Heritage Museum

100 East Main Street, Wilkesboro, NC

Contact: sadams@nccommerce.com

828-251-6914

or

Thursday April 7th

1:00 PM

Town Conference Center

300 East Church Street, Benson, NC

Contact: rmurphrey@nccommerce.com

919-218-2934

Attendance is mandatory for all program applicants. The registration deadline is April 1.



Emerging Issues: Late Night Public Safety

With success comes new challenges. There was a time not so long ago when many Downtown's had little activity after 6 p.m. Today, most cities have re-energized Downtown by adding more nightlife including restaurants, theaters and clubs. With this success comes the issue of public safety for nighttime workers and visitors.



Taverns and clubs are filling storefronts, creating new jobs and attracting new customers

Over the past few years, Wilmington, Greensboro, Winston Salem, Greenville and others have all experienced late night safety issues. Unfortunately, this includes violence ranging from shootings, stabbings and fistfights.

Problems are especially prevalent after 2 a.m. when nightclubs close for the night and hundreds (if not thousands) of often intoxicated young adults are put out on the Downtown sidewalks. The crowds can be overwhelming for police and pose public safety risks for the entire community.

The problem may be most acute in Downtown Wilmington. John Hinnant, Executive Director of Wilmington Downtown Incorporated (WDI), has been tackling the issue head on. Due to a number of high profile incidents, WDI brought in national consulting firm, Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI), for a community engagement and assessment process about the Downtown entertainment district. WDI also hosted a

workshop that attracted both locals and visitors from surrounding communities to learn more about the issues and potential solutions.

As a result of this process, WDI worked with the City to develop new procedures for issuing alcohol permits in Downtown. New owners must voluntarily agree to adhere to certain operating standards in order to receive the city's support for an ABC permit. WDI is also working to increase the police presence during the late night.

Greensboro is taking a similar approach. Over the past five years, Downtown Greensboro Incorporated (DGI) worked closely with the police and city leaders to make incremental enhancements to manage the nightlife. Some steps included helping to establish a nighttime police bike control, toughening anti-loitering ordinances, clarifying the noise ordinance and tightening parking requirements. DGI also brought in the RHI to evaluate past efforts and identify new approaches. Based on this review, DGI and the City are currently working on a proposed Entertainment License to create a permit that sets mandatory operating standards and provides for greater enforcement of violations.



At closing, club patrons can overwhelm sidewalks and streets and cause public safety problems

For more information, please contact any of the communities mentioned in this article.

Membership Application

Community Member - (Based on Community Size):

Large City (50,000+):	\$300
Medium City (25,000 - 50,000):	\$200
Small City (7,500 - 25,000):	\$150
Town (under 7,500):	\$ 95

Associate Member: \$50 ~ Professional Member: \$100 ~ Corporate Member: \$250

Name: _____ Title: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____ Web Page: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

County: _____

Signature: _____

Make check payable to NCDDA.

Send to: NCDDA Central Office
PO Box 1795,
Morehead City, NC 28557



Post Office Box 1795
Morehead City, NC 28557
252.422.5300
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