

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, March 15, 2017 – 8:00 A.M.
Meeting Held at Avery Square – 2nd Floor Conference Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Ray Bauer
Raymond Bell
Marla Bunker
Michelle LaJoie
Les Townsend
Oliver Turner
Justin Knepper

Also Present: Nick Nolan, Soo News
Tony Haller, Chamber
Josh Billington, SBDC

Absent: Greg Collins
Scott Parker

1. CALL TO ORDER.

2. ROLL CALL.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- February 8, 2017 regular meeting minutes.
- February 22, 2017 goal-setting meeting.

Moved by Les Townsend, supported by Oliver Turner, to approve the February 8, 2017 regular meeting minutes, and the minutes of the February 22, 2017 goal-setting meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Oliver Turner, to approve the agenda for the March 15, 2017, DDA Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

5. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

None were indicated.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

A. 2017 Board Retreat and Goal Setting Session.

Background: *Members of the DDA Board met on February 22nd, 2017 and reviewed both City Commission goals for 2017/18, as well as the DDA goals from 2016/17. The following new goals were created for this coming fiscal year:*

- 1) *Host customer service training in partnership with the City/DDA/CVB/Chamber.*
- 2) *Host an employee event in the spring to improve referrals between businesses.*
- 3) *Increase the marketing/events coordinator position to a full-time status. Currently the position is at just 20 hours per week.*

Director Knepper went over the three new goals for the 2017 fiscal year. Discussion included increasing the marketing/events coordinator position to full-time status, which would allow Justin to focus on long-term development projects, building improvements, and grant funding.

The DDA Board members present at the 2017 Board Retreat and Goal Setting meeting reviewed the 2016 goals and made suggestions to keep some and remove others from the list, as noted in the goal-setting meeting minutes. The 2016 goals that remained “High Priority” and will carry over to 2017 are: Oaka Street, Sponsorship Program for Pocket Parks and Gardens, Relocation Assistance for Businesses and Business Succession, Improve Curb Appeal Downtown, Increase Media Exposure for Canada and Locals, and Fill Critical Vacancies.

Board member Marla Bunker reminded the Board of her request to include the partnership between the Hospital, the DDA and the City to relocate the Nursing Simulation Lab to the old Ganzhorn building on Spruce Street.

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Les Townsend, to accept the minutes of the February 22, 2017 DDA Board Retreat and Goal Setting Session, with corrections and add to the minutes Board Member Marla Bunker’s request regarding relocation of the Nursing Simulation Lab to the old Ganzhorn building on Spruce Street. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Michigan Main Street Program Select Level Application Successful.

Background: *The Michigan Main Street Center has confirmed our application to become a Select Level community. Our first official meeting with Michigan Main Street will take place on April 20-21. The following must be completed before the meetings:*

- 1) *Surveys: An online community survey must be broadly distributed throughout the community, including print copies to property owners, business owners, employees and residents.*
- 2) *Surveys: An online and print leadership survey must be distributed as well.*
- 3) *Background materials must be prepared including:*
 - *Existing DDA work plans (i.e. TIF plans, other work plans)*
 - *Business and property owners directory*
 - *Plans and studies (i.e. PlacePlans, Resident Survey)*

4) *Conference call with the Main Street Director and Board Chair / DDA board.*

Three Michigan cities were designated as Selected Michigan Main Street Communities; Lapeer, Charlotte and Sault Ste. Marie. Copies of the Trademark Sublicense Agreement and Michigan Main Street Program Community Requirements and Expectations Agreement were provided to the DDA Board. The five-year Expectations Agreement includes the minimum participation standards, i.e., full-time Michigan Main Street program director, an active Board of Directors and Committees, funding for the MMS program, participate in all scheduled MEDC / MMS Program services, complete monthly and annual reports, mandatory training sessions, etc. Director Knepper will be meeting with City staff to go over the DDA / Michigan Main Street budgets.

Sign-up sheets will be sent around to the DDA Board, the Main Street Steering Committee, business owners, and volunteers.

The community survey and leadership survey, and background materials must be completed before the April 20-21, 2017 meetings with Main Street representatives. A suggestion was made to schedule a workshop to follow the Chamber's Annual Economic Luncheon and include the MMS reps, along with other city entities. Also, at least 2-3 must attend the 2017 National Main Street Conference on May 1-3, 2017 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. All costs, or a portion of the costs, will be paid for by the Michigan Main Street budget.

C. Principal Shopping District Renewal:

Background: *The Principal Shopping District renewal process has been completed. The renewal was approved with an annual amount estimated at \$28,800. This is approximately a \$10,000 reduction from the renewal amount five years ago, due to tax valuation loss.*

The City Commission conducted two separate hearings that resulted in the renewal of the Principal Shopping District for the next five years. All property owners are on board with the renewal.

D. Parking Garage Lighting Upgrade.

Background: *City Finance Director Kristin Collins is proposing approximately \$80,000 be set aside for lighting changes at the parking garage, which will be worked into the 2017/18 budget.*

E. Easement for Up North Nutrition & Gym 906 at 327 Ashmun Street.

Background: *The DDA voted to approve that the parking fund cover survey costs to finalize a plan for the small piece of land behind Gym 906. This survey is underway.*

Kelly Freeman, Planning and Zoning Administrator, is working with the survey company.

F. Mural Project.

The Alpha Bar has opted out of the mural program, freeing up nearly \$10,000 for different murals in other locations this spring.

Recommendation: Discuss a 350th mural, other preferred themes and locations. Discuss how to choose locations fairly.

The owners of the Alpha Bar renovated the entire wall on the east side of their building. They have decided to pursue an outdoor seating area with an awning on their newly renovated wall instead of a mural. Approximately two murals can be completed with the \$10,000 that is now available. Several downtown business owners are interested in creating murals on their buildings, and the DDA will ask for community input as to location. Future murals would be similar in theme to the four murals done last summer.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Review Woda Group Plan for Osborn Commons.

Background: *Woda Group, a regional developer, has entered into a purchase agreement for Shawn Atto's lot that the DDA has been working to redevelop. Woda Group proposes a four story affordable housing project that would result in 63 affordable housing units, two higher-end rental units, and one commercial unit on the first floor.*

They require a Pilot (payment in lieu of taxes) to be offered by the City Commission in order to apply for federal tax credits that would fund a portion of the project. The City Commission approved the first reading of the Pilot ordinance and will be discussing the second reading of the ordinance at the March 20th.

The proposed housing development fits in with the Moloney's Alley vision that has been a goal of the DDA for several years. The housing development, called Osborn Commons, would be located behind Moloney's Alley on Osborn Boulevard, where the old Clairmont Trucking Building is. This has been somewhat of a controversial issue; local business owners and citizens are questioning the need for more low / mid-income housing downtown.

B. Review Home Renewal Systems' Plan for the Templeton Lot.

Background: *Home Renewal Systems visited Sault Ste. Marie in 2016 and is interested in developing a market-rate mixed use structure in downtown Sault Ste. Marie. They have created a concept plan which would include first-floor retail and 20-30 units.*

Home Renewal Systems has developed a housing unit in Marquette, and is interested in the Templeton lot, on West Portage Avenue, to develop market-rate apartments and retail space.

C. Events and Festivals Review.

- 1) *Outhouse Race and Kayak Race.* This was a huge success, with more participants than prior years. Jim Le hockey, through the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, created an awesome video of the Outhouse Race, and the Lockside Rail Jam.
- 2) *Lockside Rail Jam.* The first annual Rail Jam was a success, as well, with twenty snowboarders and skiers participating. The City Street Department did a great job providing snow on north Ashmun Street for this event.

D. Upcoming Events and Festivals.

- 1) *Ladies' Night Out.* This is scheduled for Friday, May 19th. The cost is \$150 for downtown businesses to buy-in. Approximately twenty businesses participated last year.
- 2) *Music in the Park.* Performers have been booked, with one left to find; an oldies rock and roll band.

The DDA is thinking about having a pet parade this summer called 'Animals on Ashmun' or 'Pets on Portage'. Also, the DDA is in discussions to extend downtown business hours on one Friday per month during the summer.

E. 2017 / 2018 Budget Review

Recommendation: Review Main Street budget and proposed 2017 / 2018 – 2018 / 2019 DDA budget. Schedule budget committee meeting.

F. National Main Street Conference (Attendance Required).

Recommendation: discuss how many individuals should be sent to the Main Street conference in Pittsburgh, PA on May 1-3, 2017.

<http://www.mainstreet.org/main-street/training/conference/2017---pittsburgh/main-street-now-2017.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

G. Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program Request for Lindsay Ellis.

Marketing and Events Coordinator Lindsay Ellis is interested in joining the Chamber of Commerce leadership program that begins this spring. The fee is \$375.00.

Recommendation: Sponsor Lindsay's leadership program fee.

Moved by Marla Bunker, supported by Les Townsend, to sponsor DDA Events Coordinator Lindsay Ellis' Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program fee in the amount of \$371. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Equipment for Parking Enforcement.

Parking Clerk Natasha Dewey has requested a set of walkie-talkies and an extra radio to ensure safety and communication during coin collection procedures.

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Marla Bunker, to purchase a set of walkie-talkies to ensure safety and communication during coin collection procedures. The motion passed unanimously.

8. DIRECTOR'S STATUS REPORT.

A. New Hire: Parking Enforcement Officer. Sharolyn Reed has been hired as the new Parking Enforcement Officer. She will begin working on Monday, March 20th.

B. ISD Student Work Group.

- *The ISD will assign up to eight students to the DDA for the months of July and August to work 20 hours per week.*

The students, provided by the Intermediate School District, will be working on downtown beautification. ISD will pay the students, but do not provide transportation for the students. Director Knepper would like the students to keep the parking garage clean, work on pocket parks, paint/detail work, etc.

C. Director Knepper Vacation Request – March 17-24, 2017.

D. Façade Grant Application.

1. *Arfstrom Pharmacy.*
2. *Second Childhood & Adults Too.*
3. *Downtowner.*
4. *Three-One-Three.*
5. *Barish's.*
6. *Gym 906.*
7. *Former Kuhl's Coffee Building.*
8. *Haunted Depot?*

Façade Grant applications should be locked in by mid-May.

E. Board Vacancy Update. Six Board applications were received. Two will go before the City Commission at the next City Commission meeting.

F. BHCC / PICH Tribal Grant.

The DDA received 100% funding for a new farmer's market awning and \$2,500 toward the cost of creating a crosswalk / pavement art trail from Penny's Kitchen to Ashmun Street.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Josh Billington, Small Business Development Center Business Consultant, indicated that SBDC is hosting a Restaurant Workshop, sponsored by Old Mission Bank, on Tuesday, April 25th from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Huntington Bank.

Tony Haller, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, indicated that there will be a Job Fair on Thursday, March 23rd at 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the LSSU Cisler Center. The event is sponsored by Michigan Works, Sault EDC and the Chamber of Commerce.

10. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Oliver Turner congratulated the DDA Board for their continued work in serving downtown Sault Ste. Marie; decisions made at the Board meetings are well thought out and it is a pleasure to work together.

11. ADJOURN.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RAYMOND BELL, DDA Chair

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