

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, April 12, 2017 – 8:00 A.M.
Meeting Held at Avery Square – 2nd Floor Conference Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Abby Baker
Ray Bauer
Marla Bunker
Greg Collins
Michelle LaJoie
Scott Parker
Les Townsend
Oliver Turner
Allison Youngs
Justin Knepper

Also Present: Nick Nolan, *Soo News*
Tony Haller, Chamber
Tracey Laitinen, EDC Specialist

Absent: Raymond Bell

1. CALL TO ORDER.

2. ROLL CALL.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- March 15, 2017 regular meeting minutes.

Moved by Marla Bunker, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the March 12, 2017 regular meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Moved by Greg Collins, supported by Abby Baker, to approve the agenda for the April 12, 2017, DDA Board meeting, with the addition of a formal introduction of new DDA Board members Allison Youngs and Abby Baker. The motion passed unanimously.

5. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Due to a conflict of interest, DDA Board member Michelle LaJoie will abstain from commenting and voting on agenda item 6.E. under Unfinished Business: Avery Square Green Space Land Acquisition Request.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

New Item: Introduction of two new Board members, Alison Youngs and Abby Baker. The two new DDA Board members, Alison Young and Abby Baker, and the DDA Board introduced themselves. Both Alison and Abby are very active in downtown events, fund-raising and the Michigan Main Street Program.

A. **Adopt-A-Park Program.**

The DDA Board has recommended the creation of an adopt-a-park program. The park next to Three One Three has been adopted by the staff and parents at St. Mary's School; Theresa Miller is the contact.

Recommendation: Assign a Board member to meet with Theresa Miller to ensure appropriate supplies, signage, and other items are provided.

Greg Collins indicated that he would meet with Theresa Miller and help in overseeing St. Mary's School renovation of the pocket-park located next to Three One Three on the corner of Ashmun and Spruce.

Director Knepper indicated there are 3-4 other pocket-parks downtown that need attention: Weber Park on the corner of Ashmun by the bridge, next to National Office Products, and the Farmer's Market corner on Ashmun and Portage. Funding for soil, mulch, flowers and plants will come out of the supplies budget, along with the \$1,500 mini-grant awarded to the DDA through Malcolm School. Each park adopted will have a sign/plaque in the park indicating the sponsor.

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.*

Recommendation: Our first official meeting with Michigan Main Street will take place on April 20-21. Please review the included itinerary and plan to attend.

Director Knepper went over the itinerary and mandatory meetings that the DDA Board and Michigan Main Street Steering Committee must attend. The kick-off is a two day event that begins on Thursday, April 21st at 9:00 a.m. at Island Books and Crafts, and after all day meetings, and a press conference at 5:30 p.m. at the Ramada Inn, the day concludes at 8:00 p.m. The morning wrap up is on Friday, April 22nd from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Avery Square.

C. **Mural Project.**

Background: *The mural project has approximately \$10,000 left in the budget. Location options include:*

- 1) *Northpointe Images wall across from the LSSU mural*
- 2) *Salon C/Midwest Wealth wall, either north or south side*

- 3) *Side Street Salon wall on E Spruce*
- 4) *Army Corps walls near Marchetti's*
- 5) *Stringing Things wall near the Downtowner*
- 6) *Subway*
- 7) *Others?*

Greg Collins talked about his building, Salon C/Midwest Wealth, and placing the mural on the south wall of the building.

D. Public Meeting Regarding Woda Group's Moloney Alley Plan.

Background: *The Woda Group has entered into an option agreement on the Atto property generally referred to as the Clairmont lot / Moloney Alley lot. A payment in lieu of taxes has been approved by the City Commission and the Woda Group is beginning the application process for a MSHDA low-income housing tax credit to assist with the construction of a 65 unit, four-story building, with some commercial on the first floor. The project is estimated at \$11 million.*

The Woda Group will hold a public meeting on April 25th, most likely at 6pm at the Ramada Ojibway to answer any questions or concerns regarding the project. Please plan to attend.

The Woda Group is nationally known and recognized for its diverse and high-quality affordable housing projects. Several downtown businesses are highly opposed to low-income housing in downtown Sault Ste. Marie. The public meeting scheduled for April 25th will allow Woda Group to go over their latest renderings of the Osborn Commons project.

E. Avery Square Green Space Land Acquisition Request.

Background: *CLMCAA Head Start located in Avery Square is interested in procuring the land owned by the City, located directly behind the Soo Theatre Project. The land was the site of a house that was demolished a number of years ago. Head Start has received funding from Health & Human Services to design a green space to be used by both children enrolled in their program, as well as seniors living at Avery Square, and perhaps other area residents.*

Recommendation: *Discuss whether the City should dispose of the land to be used by CLMCAA Head Start to develop a green space.*

Community Action is required to have a safe outdoor space for their Head Start program. The fenced-in space would also provide outdoor seating for Avery Square seniors and citizens. The City purchased a home that was located on Oaka Alley, and thereafter razed the home, which is now the location of the proposed green space. Community Action Head Start received a grant from Health and Human Services in the amount of \$77,500 to fund this project. The Oaka Alley/Street improvement project has been on-

going for years and the green space could tie-in with it. The proposed green space would not affect parking for Avery Square residents.

Moved by Greg Collins, supported by Les Townsend for the City to move forward with disposing the land to be used by Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency Head Start to develop a green space. The motion carried with one dissention, and one abstention.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

A. DDA Façade Grant Request From Bob and Misti Collia, Owners of Second Childhood and Soo Brewing Company Building.

Background: *The DDA has approximately \$4,500 remaining in the TIF 2 façade mini-grant account. The owners of the Second Childhood / Soo Brewing Co. building is preparing to apply for an MEDC rental rehabilitation grant with a construction cost of nearly \$600,000. The exterior of the building needs minimal work to rehabilitate to SHPO standards, and the owners are willing to invest in the exterior prior to the interior grant application. The construction cost for the exterior is estimated at \$15,000.*

Recommendation: *Offer a \$2,500 matching grant to assist with the rehabilitation of the exterior of the Second Childhood / Soo Brewing Co. building, with a work scope consisting of replacing the awnings with historically appropriate canvas, replacing boarded-over storefront glass, repainting the storefront, repairing trim, and washing the brick.*

See attached rendering.

Mr. and Mrs. Collia are proposing to construct seven market rate apartments (approximately \$700-\$900 per month) on the second floor of their building and are preparing to apply for an MEDC rental rehabilitation grant with a construction cost of nearly \$600,000. Prior to applying for the MEDC grant they would like to renovate the exterior of their building.

Moved by Greg Collins, supported by Oliver Turner, to offer a \$2,500 matching grant to assist with the rehabilitation of the exterior of the Second Childhood / Soo Brewing Company building, with a work scope consisting of replacing the awnings with historically appropriate canvas, replacing boarded-over storefront glass, repainting the storefront, repairing trim, and washing the brick. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Consider Reserving Remaining local façade grant funding for the former H & R Block Building near SuperValu, and for the Haunted Depot Building.

See attached photos and renderings.

C. Tree Removal Requests.

Background: *Certain business owners have requested trees be removed in front of their businesses:*

- 1) *Three One Three on Ashmun – tree is growing into the building sign, blocking advertising.*
- 2) *Solomon’s Tattoo Parlour – tree completely covers the storefront, blocking signage. The tree also is diseased.*
- 3) *National Office Products – tree is growing into the building awning, blocking signage. It also is terribly diseased, and continues to lose branches.*
- 4) *A Cut Above the Rest Salon & Spa – there are two trees planted in the “bump out” garden in front of A Cut Above Salon & Spa. One tree could stay, and one tree would be removed to allow pedestrians and drivers to see the restored storefront.*

Recommendation: *Allow the above property owners to pay the full cost of removal and brick replacement, estimated at \$600 per tree, based on landscaping company estimates.*

Several businesses on Ashmun Street have trees that are overgrown and encroaching on their awnings and blocking their signs. And, many of the trees are diseased, dropping limbs, etc. The Board discussed removing trees and bricking over the location of the tree, replanting with a new, young tree, and researching grants that may be available for tree removal and replacement. Director Knepper indicated that he will take photos of the trees in question and e-mail them to the Board.

Moved by Greg Collins, supported by Oliver Turner, to table tree removal requests until the May DDA Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Upcoming Events and Festivals.

- 1) *Ladies’ Night Out. May 28th at 4:00-8:00 p.m.*
- 2) *Music in the Park. Starts for the summer on June 14th. This year is the 20th Anniversary of Music in the Park.*

E. 2017 / 2018 Budget.

Update: *City Manager Oliver Turner is currently reviewing the DDA budget and preparing for final budget meetings over the next few weeks.*

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/>

Board members Abby Baker, Allison Youngs and Michelle LaJoie volunteered to go to the National Main Street Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on May 1-3, 2017 at a cost to the DDA of approximately \$300 per person.

8. DIRECTOR'S STATUS REPORT.

A. Light Post Removal at the Soo Theatre.

B. ISD Student Work Group.

Through the Intermediate School District approximately 8-10 students will be working downtown during the months of July and August – 20 hrs. per week. The students will be cleaning, weeding, gardening, etc., in the DDA District.

C. 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.*

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Tony Haller, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce reminded the DDA Board of the Annual Spring Economic Luncheon on Thursday, April 20th at 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at LSSU Cisler Center.

10. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Oliver Turner welcomed the new DDA Board members and requested that Director Knepper provide the new members with the DDA By-Laws, Open Meetings Act, City Ethics Policy and Freedom of Information policy.

One Board member indicated that the downtown streetlight timers are not turning on/off the lights at the right times.

Director Knepper indicated that he is scheduling a Spring Real Estate Workshop in May. Discussion will include vacant properties in the DDA District and how to promote them for possible sale / lease / rent, etc. He would also like to have a work-bee to spruce up the vacant buildings, by washing windows, vacuum the floors, etc.

11. ADJOURN.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Greg Collins, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:20 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately

Respectfully submitted,

RAYMOND BELL, DDA Chair

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