

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 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
Scott Parker
Les Townsend
Oliver Turner
Allison Youngs
Justin Knepper

Also Present: Nick Nolan, *Soo News*
Tony Haller, Chamber
Alexander Robinson, EDC

Absent: No absent members.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER.**
- 2. ROLL CALL.**
- 3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

Current DDA Board officers are: Chair-Raymond Bell, Treasurer-Greg Collins, and Secretary-Scott Parker. Michelle LaJoie nominated Raymond Bell for Chair and Scott Parker for Secretary. Les Townsend nominated Allison Youngs for Treasurer to replace Greg Collins who was appointed to the City Commission.

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Scott Parker, to appoint DDA Board officers as follows: Raymond Bell as Chair, Allison Youngs as Treasurer, and Scott Parker as Secretary. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

- June 14, 2017 regular meeting minutes.

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the June 14, 2017 regular meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

- 5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Allison Youngs, to approve the agenda for the July 12, 2017, DDA Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

6. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

There were no conflicts of interest declared at this time.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

A. Mural Project.

Detail: *Tom Fornicola is preparing the surface of Subway for the 1800s portaging ship mural. Cindy Fowler is still discussing her potential mural for the side of Side Street Salon on Spruce Street.*

Tom Fornicola is working with Jeanne Tubman on the Subway mural. Cindy Fowler is soliciting artists for the mural on the side of Side Street Salon on Spruce Street.

Director Knepper is getting plaques engraved with the names of people who donated \$500 to the mural campaign. The plaques will be permanently secured to the LSSU mural, 1668 mural, the Edmund Fitzgerald mural, and the two new murals going up this summer/fall.

B. EUP Regional Planning Grant.

Detail: *Huntington Bank is working on details to allow park amenities to be added to their property next to the Sault Tribe offices on Ashmun Street.*

At the June DDA Board meeting the Board accepted a grant for \$2,000 from the EUP Planning Office to upgrade the grassy area next to Sault Tribe offices that will include addition of a small trail, an atrium, picnic table and a sculpture. This project will take place this summer.

C. Peddle Pubs.

Detail: *DDA and City staff are working to clear the way for bar and restaurant owners to collaborate on the purchase of a peddle pub.*

Police Chief Riley and City Administration are researching ordinances, etc., to allow a peddle pub to exist in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.

D. Cancellation of the Carson & Barnes Circus.

Detail: *The Carson & Barnes Circus has cancelled their show for Sault Ste. Marie that was previously scheduled for August 12th.*

Due to an emergency, Carson & Barnes Circus has cancelled their circus show.

E. Reschedule Moloney's Michigan Beerfest.

Detail: Due to the challenging summer schedule that includes Downtown Days on August 4th and 5th, the emergency need for short-term planning and launch of a new shopping event, and the Harley Owners Group (HOG) Motorcycle Rally taking place on August 19th along Portage Avenue, DDA staff requested that Abby Baker from Moloney's Alley consider the postponement of Beerfest until later this fall, or to plan it to be held in 2018.

Director Knepper explained that the DDA is strapped for time to successfully promote Moloney's Michigan Beerfest properly, due to many upcoming events. He would like to push this back to September or October this year.

Director Knepper continued with an update on the HOG Motorcycle Rally that will take place on Saturday, August 19th. The group is staying at Kewadin Resort and Casino and the event will include 4-5 days of road trips, a downtown celebration with an old-fashioned stunt team exhibition, a party downtown at the Farmer's Market, live bands and food trucks.

F. US Coast Guard Decal Order.

Detail: : The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation is creating a website that the DDA will share on downtownsault.org, featuring businesses that choose to participate in the USCG decal program. The EDC is requesting funding to cover a portion of the decals ordered. Each decal costs approximately \$2.50.

Recommendation: Order 75 decals at a cost of approximately \$187.50 and provide the Sault EDC with a list of downtown businesses to contact and disburse the decals.

In an effort to better connect the Coast Guard with the City, the USCG decal program will offer incentives for Coast Guard families to shop and dine in local businesses. There are approximately 50 businesses in the DDA District that can choose to participate in this program.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Michelle LaJoie, to order 75 decals at a cost of approximately \$87.50 (\$2.50 each) and provide the Sault EDC with a list of downtown businesses to contact and disburse the decals. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Director's Evaluation and Salary Adjustment.

Detail: Director Knepper's evaluation took place in February and the evaluation committee recommended an adjustment to the director's salary to bring it closer to comparable communities.

Recommendation: Discuss the findings of the evaluation committee and take action on the proposed adjustment.

Oliver Turner indicated that the Evaluation Committee met in February to go over Director Knepper's evaluation scores, and at that time decided to move forward with salary increases in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years. Said salary increases are per the City Commission approved budget, and will bring Director Knepper up to par with other DDA Director's in comparable communities.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Michelle LaJoie, to approve Director Knepper's salary increase to \$54,700 for the 2017-18 fiscal year and a salary increase to \$59,800 for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Said salary increases are per the City Commission approved budget. The motion passed unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Bus Stop Upgrade.

Discussion: *Director Knepper attended a conference in Dearborn in which Bus Stops decorated with functional public art have been drawing attention to public transportation in municipalities. Our bus stop is in dire need of attention. Currently 3,000 riders per year travel on the international bridge bus, and improvements to our downtown bus stop may incentivize even more riders.*

The City's bus stop on Court Street is in disrepair; the plexi-glass is scratched, there is graffiti, garden is overgrown, and it needs re-painting. Approximately 10 people utilize the bridge bus per day and in an effort to raise the number of daily riders, Director Knepper is recommending a face-lift for the bus stop. Discussion also included re-locating the bus stop to Ridge Street near Hantz Financial, or on Ashmun Street near Avery Square.

Recommendation: *Set aside \$500-\$1,000 to repaint, decorate, and add signage, as well as maps, bus times, and other information to the bus stop on Court Street. Consider relocating the bus stop to a more centralized, visible location.*

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Oliver Turner, to set-aside \$500 to repaint, decorate, and add signage, as well as maps, bus times, and other information to the bus stop on Court Street. Funds will be used from TIFI 1 \$4,000 budget line-item budget. The motion passed unanimously.

B. DDA Board Openings.

Discussion: *DDA Board members Abby Baker and Greg Collins have both been selected to fill vacancies on the City Commission. There are now two vacancies to fill. Consideration: The DDA Board currently does not have representation from the restaurant or bar sector.*

The following individuals have expressed their interest in serving on the Board:

*Ben Duff, Main Street committee member – application received
Christine Stutzner – Penny’s Kitchen – application received
John McLeod, resident – application received
Stephanie Woods – Sherwin Williams
Former owners of Independence Produce
Ron Donmeyer, bUmP & Tot*

Recommendation: Discuss the needs of the DDA Board and make a recommendation to the Mayor and City Commission.

The DDA Board discussed advertising for openings and reaching-out to various food service businesses and bar owners, in an effort to have a solid mixture of citizens on the DDA Board.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Les Townsend, to accept the resignation of Greg Collins to serve on the DDA Board. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Shop the Block Event.

Discussion: *Discuss the creation of “Shop the Block,” a roving shopping event that would feature the eight blocks of retail Downtown over an eight month period, or perhaps more frequently.*

The opening of Meijer’s has caused some businesses on Ashmun and Portage to lose customers. Director Knepper is proposing a roving evening shopping event to make a positive change in the shopping culture downtown. The Shop the Block event would encourage Friday night shopping from 5-9 p.m. and feature one block in the 8 block Ashmun/Portage shopping district. The block would be decorated, entertainment provided, vendor booths, etc. After discussion, it was determined that the DDA do a survey of downtown businesses that would like to participate to see if this is a viable event.

D. Wayfinding Signage on West Portage.

Detail: *After observing tourists on West Portage, as well as the request of Ashmun and East Portage businesses to place signage in the tourist district, and those businesses using such things as sandwich boards to encourage people to continue to walk, a pedestrian plaza and wayfinding sign matching our current style should be constructed on West Portage.*

Wayfinding signs are needed on West Portage Avenue to encourage tourists to visit businesses on East Portage Avenue and North/South Ashmun Street. Director Knepper will continue to investigate wayfinding signs on West Portage.

E. Billboard Partnership with Lamar Advertising.

Detail: *The retail committee, and specifically Bill Oberman from Barish Bros., has suggested billboards be utilized to promote downtown shopping. Lamar Advertising has offered a discount to the DDA if we were to coordinate messaging, design, and sale of the billboards. Each month the location would change within and around the City limits. Billboards would cost \$525 each; \$400 for the billboard and \$125 for a design fee.*

Recommendation: *Offer businesses a billboard featuring their business for one month, with a general DDA “shop downtown” overlay and link to our business directory. The businesses could pay \$400 with the DDA covering the design fee.*

In working with Lamar Advertising, Director Knepper indicated that the original cost per month for a billboard is \$600 per month; however, Lamar is willing to discount the monthly fee to \$525. The featured business will pay \$400 and the DDA will pay the \$125 design fee for the billboard. Lamar will design each billboard to highlight the business with a unique design, with a general DDA shop downtown overlay and a link to the DDA’s business directory. The yearly cost to the DDA will be up to \$1,200, and is available in the advertising fund. The billboards will change location monthly within and around the City limits. After discussion it was agreed that the DDA move forward with this as soon as possible.

Moved by Allison Youngs, supported by Michelle LaJoie, to move forward with “shop downtown” billboards at a cost to the DDA of \$125 each, for up to a 12 month period, and a cost to the business owners of \$400.00.m The motion passed unanimously.

9. DIRECTOR’S STATUS REPORT.

A. Business News.

-Alpine Chocolate Haus. Alpine Chocolate Haus is moving to the corner of Ashmun and Easterday in the old Look Insurance building. They will be hiring 4 new employees.

-Stringing Things. Stringing Things is moving across the street from the stores current location on Ashmun Street.

-Mid American Title. Ribbon cutting for Mid-American Title is scheduled for Tuesday, July 18th at Arlington Plaza.

-Independence Produce. Independence Produce is closed due to tough competition from Meijer.

B. Maintenance Staff Changes.

Detail: *The DDA has a full-time maintenance position open, following an employee departure. Josh Jezewski has worked seasonally for the DDA the past two years, and is interested in the full-time position. However, he is also hoping to complete his final year at LSSU. Director Knepper is considering*

offering him the full-time position, and covering his school hours with a seasonal staff person.

Kevin Killips is no longer working for the DDA; he has been working full time for the DDA for 2 years. This leaves a full-time, with benefits, maintenance position open.

C. Events and Festivals.

Master Events Calendar Review. A master calendar of events is available on the downtown Sault website.

D. Road Closure Discussion.

Detail: *Various business owners have expressed concern about the amount of road closures and the poor communication regarding reasons, dates and times. The Great Race, Sidewalk Sales, Gus Macker, the HOG Rally, and Oktoberfest are all slated to impact traffic downtown this summer alone.*

Downtown year-around events have been increasing over the past few years resulting in many more street closures in the downtown area. There are concerns from business owners regarding detour signage that does not follow-through with an alternate route, and signage does not indicate the certain event that is taking place. Another concern is that business owners are not aware of street closures prior to the event. Director Knepper will be meeting with the CVB and Sault Events to discuss these concerns for future events.

E. Michigan Main Street – Upcoming Trainings.

- *Main Street Quarterly Training (Replaces August training in Boyne City)
September 18th and 19th
Howell, MI*
- *Main Street Quarterly Training
November 6th and 7th
Oakland County, MI*

F. Michigan Main Street Program Next Steps.

Detail: *The DDA/Main Street board's final training meeting takes place on July 27th. Discussion: Choose the location for the meeting; Northern Life Yoga (room rental \$150), Avery Square, or City Hall.*

Strategy Implementation – 4pm-8:30pm on the evening of Thursday July 27th Time: 4.5 hour session. Location TBA

- *Invite: All Board Members and All Committee Members and interested volunteers*

- *Identify projects and programming to implement transformation strategies*

G. Façade Grant Application.

Detail: *Jen Tucker from the MEDC will be meeting with the DDA to review façade grant applications on July 20th.*

- *Arfstrom Pharmacy*
- *Second Childhood & Adults Too*
- *Downtowner*
- *Three One Three*
- *Barish's*
- *Gym 906*
- *Former Kuhl's Coffee building*
- *Haunted Depot*

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Tony Haller, Executive Director of the Sault Chamber of Commerce, ran-through upcoming ribbon-cuttings at Mid-American Title on July 18th at Noon, Oh Crepe and Cultured Pop at 5:00 p.m. on July 18th and the Lockview Restaurant on July 20th.

11. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Ray Bauer indicated that the Little Italy Festival is on Saturday, July 22nd, at the pergola on Brown and Pine Streets. The 5K St. Mary's Catholic School Proverbial run/walk starts at 11:00 a.m.

12. ADJOURN.

Moved by Les Townsend, supported by Oliver Turner, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:50 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

RAYMOND BELL, DDA Chair

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