

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016 – 8:00 A.M.
Meeting Held at Bump & Tot, 119 Ashmun Street
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Ray Bauer
Raymond Bell
Scott Parker
Carl Stutzner
Les Townsend
Oliver Turner

Also Present: Tony Haller, Chamber
Nick Nolan, *Soo News*
Andrea Donmyer-Bump & Tot

Absent: Marla Bunker
Greg Collins
Johann Ingold
Michelle LaJoie

1. CALL TO ORDER.

2. ROLL CALL.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Les Townsend, to excuse the absent members of the DDA Board. The motion passed unanimously.

3. HOST PRESENTATION: BUMP & TOT, ISLAND BOOKS & CRAFTS.

Andrea Donmyer, with her husband, is opening a new business called Bump & Tot located at 119 Ashmun Street and she gave an overview of her background and the new store. Ms. Donmyer is a Certified Midwife who works for Sault Women's Health Care, and also teaches Obstetric Classes at LSSU. Bump & Tot will specialize in maternity and infant clothing, and products that enhance the new baby experience. They are working diligently to renovate the retail space that is owned by Les Townsend and is located around the corner from Island Books & Crafts. They hope to have the store open by late Small Business Saturday on November 26th.

Director Knepper indicated that this space was boarded up and vacant for over 40 years. New storefront windows facing Ashmun Street were installed, making it an attractive retail space.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- *October 12, 2016 regular meeting.*

Moved by Carl Stutzner, supported by Oliver Turner, to approve the October 12, 2016, regular meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Moved by Carl Stutzner, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the agenda for the November 9, 2016 DDA Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

6. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

None were indicated.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

A. Michigan Main Street Program Select Level Application.

Background: *The Main Street Select Level application question 42 states the following:*

“Provide a list of the proposed members for the local Main Street program’s Board of Directors. Note their relation to the downtown and include signed letters of interest that they are willing to serve on the Main Street Board of Directors if designated.”

Recommendation: *Each Board member shall provide a signed letter to Director Knepper by Monday, November 14th on their professional letterhead if available, stating your name, how you are connected to Downtown, and that you are willing to continue to serve on the DDA/Main Street Board, with the understanding that you will be expected to actively serve on a committee and volunteer for DDA/Main Street events, programs and activities.*

The DDA Board, at their October 12th meeting, voted to adopt a resolution committing to the National Main Street Center’s Four Point Approach and to requirements set forth by the Michigan Main Street Center’s Select Level.

The Michigan Main Street Select Level 40-page application is due on December 2, 2016. At the November 21, 2016 City Commission meeting, the City Commission will sign a letter of support, to be attached to the application.

B. Mural Installation Crowdfunding Campaign.

The owners of the Alpha Bar have completed the reconstruction of the east wall of their building, and have reviewed art submissions. They are

currently discussing how much of the historical mural should be re-incorporated.

The Alpha Bar mural will be painted in the spring/summer of 2017.

C. State Façade Grant Program.

Director Knepper has begun the closeout paperwork for the grant, which needs to be completed by Thanksgiving.

The final paperwork for the five buildings that received grant funding through the State Façade Grant Program is due in two weeks. The State Façade Grant Program covered a two-year period with over twenty local contractors.

D. Snowplowing Program.

Volunteers are needed to visit each business to sign them up for the snowplowing program and deliver invoices. A list will be provided if anyone is willing to volunteer.

Director Knepper is asking the DDA Board to help with the annual round-up of downtown businesses that prefer to opt-out for sidewalk snow removal, or have sidewalk snow removed by the DDA at a cost to the business owner per square linear foot of frontage.

E. Principal Shopping District Renewal.

The Principal Shopping District renewal process has begun.

Recommendation: DDA Board members are encouraged to attend the public hearings that will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

At the October 12, 2016 DDA Board meeting the DDA Board voted to request the City Commission to begin the renewal process for the Principal Shopping district special assessment of two mills on each property within the DDA/PSD boundary, by scheduling a Public Hearing of Necessity.

8. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Soo Theatre Project Capital Campaign.

Background: The Soo Theatre Project requests that the \$7 million capital campaign to restore the historic theatre be prioritized by the DDA Board and the City Commission to be funded by the City's 2018 - 350th Anniversary celebration.

Local business owner, Abby Baker, spearheaded the Raise the Roof Summer Concert Series at the Soo Theatre and raised \$20,000 to go towards the renovation of the Theatre's roof. With grant funding, there is \$70,000 available for this renovation.

An architectural rendering done in 2014 of the Soo Theatre estimated that it would cost near \$7 million dollars. Along with the estimate for the roof, and exterior renovation would be \$650,000.

Director Knepper would like to tie-in the Soo Theatre Capital Campaign with the City's 2018 – 350th Anniversary celebration. He would like to have a detailed package ready to go out soon and vigorously look for grant opportunities with the State of Michigan, various foundations (Ford and Kellogg), etc. During past City Centennials / Sesquicentennials, typically there were large 'unveilings' of special monuments. For example, in 1968 it was the completion of the Shrine of the Missionaries, which is now the Tower of History.

Recommendation: Provide a letter of support encouraging the Soo Theatre Project to launch their capital campaign to restore the historic theatre, and the commitment to provide human and financial resources to the project.

Moved by Carl Stutzner, supported by Scott Parker, to provide a letter of support encouraging the Soo Theatre Project to launch their capital campaign to restore the historic theatre, and the commitment to provide human and financial resources to the project.

B. Events and Festivals.

- *Downtown Trick-or-Treat.* In spite of rain, the downtown was packed with Trick-or-Treaters. This is the 16th year of this community event.
- *Parker's ACE Hardware Parade of Lights.* The Parade of Lights will be held on Friday, November 25th at 7:00 p.m. beginning behind Parker's ACE Hardware and ending at City Hall to light the City Christmas Tree. Mayor Bosbous and Santa Claus will be greeting the crowd at City Hall and the Salvation Army will be providing hot chocolate. Director Knepper will be looking for a decent sound system to set up on City Hall grounds.
- *Small Business Saturday.* This will take place on Saturday, November 26th in lieu of Black Friday. Downtown businesses will be offering sales and specials. Chamber Director Tony Haller offered to send out to his contacts information for up-coming Christmas events happening downtown Sault Ste. Marie.
- *Christmas Open House Week One.* Director Knepper is working on securing horse and carriages for both open houses.
- *Christmas Open House Week Two.*
- *Restaurant Week:* This event did well considering it was the first year. The consensus is that it brought people out and about, and that there was a slight increase in customers in participating restaurants. All-in-all it was a positive event; a suggestion was made to make this an annual event with one week in the spring and one week in the fall. From the DDA

standpoint, Director Knepper indicated that the DDA broke even on advertising costs.

C. *New Businesses.*

- *Bump and Tot.* Was discussed as Agenda Item 3.

D. Vacancies.

- *Former Up-North Nutrition Located Near Checkered Flag.*
- *Ryan's Jewelry (Business and Building for Sale).* Canadian businessman is interested in purchasing the building/business.
- *Former Northpointe Images.*
- *Former Quartermaster Supply.*
- *Former Curves.*
- *Former Pet Salon.*
- *Courthouse Annex Building.* This building has been empty for 1-2 years. A company from Houghton is interested in leasing the building for an adoption, human health facility. They anticipate eight master social workers to work at the facility.

9. DIRECTOR'S STATUS REPORT.

A. Status of Retail Sector on Ashmun Street.

Background: *Three or four of Ashmun Street's anchor businesses have been struggling over the past year due to the weak Canadian dollar and major competition moving in on the Business Spur. This is the biggest challenge that the DDA is facing at this time. Director Knepper is working to organize retail meetings and has been holding consulting meetings with key businesses over the past month.*

Director Knepper will continue to hold meetings to brainstorm a way to re-fresh the downtown shopping image, as it seems that Ashmun Street is merely a thoroughfare from the Business Spur. The DDA website has been featuring downtown businesses daily, which has spurred some interest. Director Knepper will be planning a big meeting with Ashmun Street and Portage Avenue business owners. Discussion will include evening shopping, and marketing strategies.

B. Parking Garage Lighting Upgrade.

Background: *The parking garage is costing up to \$2,000/month in electrical expenses, and the metal halide bulbs and fixtures are burning out regularly. Replacement bulbs are quite expensive. DDA maintenance has begun the process of writing a request for proposals for an energy optimization conversion to LED.*

The cost of maintaining lighting in the parking garage is increasing; fixtures are old and the brightness of the lights is not sufficient. The current budget is \$17,000 per year (actual cost can be up to \$24,000) per year and Director Knepper is hoping to amend the budget before the next fiscal year. There has been some minimal trouble in the parking garage over the last couple months; kids have been rummaging through unlocked cars and taking change, and there have been reports of exterior damage to vehicles.

C. Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Six Year Schedule.

Background: *The City Engineering office is compiling and prioritizing CIP projects for the next six years; Director Knepper is completing a list of all capital projects downtown to be prioritized, including the continued prioritization of Oaka Street, the Fire Hall Lot, and the Parking Lot Four behind Barishes.*

Director Knepper will be sending the DDA Board a list of capital improvement projects that he will be submitting to the City's Engineering Department.

D. Vacation.

Director Knepper plans to take vacation from November 21-25 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Chamber Director Tony Haller invited the DDA Board to the Business After Five event on Thursday, November 17th in the lobby at War Memorial Hospital. There will be a demonstration of the Hospital's new Da Vinci surgical robot.

The Chamber's Fall Economic Luncheon was a great success with over 170 people in attendance. The Chamber's Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet is scheduled for February 2017. The guest speaker will be Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan native, Rosalyn Bliss, Mayor of Grand Rapids, and currently the 2016 President of the Michigan Municipal League Board of Trustees.

11. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Director Knepper was asked the status of the Events Coordinator Position. The job position was originally posted and only two people applied, so the application deadline was extended. At this time there are twelve applicants; interviews will take place later this afternoon and tomorrow. Director Knepper is confident that some applicants look like they could be a good fit.

The DDA Board agreed that it was nice to meet at the Bump & Tot location and perhaps the DDA Board meetings could meet at downtown business locations occasionally.

12. ADJOURN.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Carl Stutzner, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:45 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

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