

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2016 – 8:00 A.M.
Meeting Held at Avery Square – 2nd Floor Conference Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Greg Collins
Michelle LaJoie
Scott Parker
Les Townsend
Oliver Turner

Also Present: Tony Haller, Chamber
Nick Nolan, Soo News
Lindsay Ellis, DDA

Absent: Ray Bauer
Raymond Bell
Marla Bunker
Johann Ingold
Carl Stutzner

1. CALL TO ORDER.

2. ROLL CALL.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- November 9, 2016 regular meeting minutes.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the November 9, 2016 regular meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the agenda for the December 14, 2016 DDA Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

5. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

None were indicated.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

A. Michigan Mainstreet Program Select Level Application.

Background: *The Select Level application has been submitted and is available for review. The final step in the process will be a presentation in Lansing, Michigan in February, 2017. The date for the presentation has not been scheduled yet.*

The Select Level application was submitted by the December 2nd deadline. Director Knepper passed around the 400 page bound application, and spoke highly of volunteers who worked so hard to accomplish this huge endeavor. He will be sending out thank-you letters to all of the volunteers.

B. Mural installation Crowdfunding Campaign.

Background: *An art decision from the Alpha Bar is forthcoming.*

C. State Façade Grant Program.

Background: *Paperwork has been submitted for final closeout. The next round of buildings are being identified. Interested parties include:*

- *Arfstrom Pharmacy*
- *Three One Three on Ashmun*
- *906 Gym*
- *Moloney's Alley*
- *Community Action Agency*
- *Haunted Depot*

Properties Director Knepper is interested in targeting include:

- *House of Bargains*
- *Shad Miller Farm Bureau Agency (former //dotgames)*
- *Law Office of John Underhill*
- *Pingatore Cleaners*
- *Former Quartermaster Supply/Northpointe Images*
- *Alpha Bar, Zorba's, and Black Dragon Martial Arts*

D. Snowplowing Program.

Background: *Winter snowplowing invoices are being prepared, along with letters explaining the program.*

E. Principal Shopping District Renewal.

Background: *The Principal Shopping District renewal process has begun. Public hearings are planned for February.*

F. DDA Executive Director Evaluation.

Background: *The Evaluation Committee has prepared a report for review.*

Moved by Oliver Turner (per Public Act 267 of 1976), supported by Les Townsend, at 9:10 a.m. to adjourn the public DDA meeting to allow for a

closed session of the DDA Board. The motion passed unanimously. Lindsay Ellis left the DDA Board Closed Session.

The public meeting reconvened at 9:20 a.m.

The DDA Board discussed adjusting Director Knepper's salary. Director Knepper indicated that when he came to work in Sault Ste. Marie he took a significant pay cut from his employment in Grand Rapids. He stressed his concern with the DDA's budget difficulties and a pay raise for him. It was suggested that the DDA Board and Director Knepper work together to help to bridge the gap between his current salary and where he would like to be in the next 3-5 years. A DDA Downtown Director Compensation Committee comprised of Greg Collins, Les Townsend, Oliver Turner and Scott Parker was formed to look over updated information on various DDA Director's salaries in Michigan.

It was decided that Sue Goetz, DDA Secretary, update the survey done in 2015 of similar Michigan community's regarding DDA Director's salaries, number of DDA staff, etc.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Scott Parker, to move forward with the DDA Director Compensation Committee, as listed above, which will meet in mid-January to review the updated comparison information, and make a recommendation in February to the DDA Board. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Parking Lot 4 Proposed Changes.

Background: *The DDA Board recommended that the Parking Advisory Board meet regarding changes to Parking Lot 4 that would support the needs of 906 Gym and the various other businesses/organizations that rely on that parking lot.*

The Parking Advisory Board asked that a meeting be held with the various businesses/organizations. This meeting took place on 11/29/16. Present were:

*Kristin Claus representing the Courthouse Annex Building
Bill Oberman from Barishs'
Pastor Oberle from Central United Methodist Church
Jim German from Chippewa County*

Upon discussion, the following changes were agreed upon:

- 1. Change the layout of permits and meters to add more metered parking behind 906 Gym and Barishs'. Relocate most of the meters from behind Three One Three on Ashmun and exchange for permit parking.*

2. *Change the decals on the meters in Parking Lot 4 behind 906 Gym and Barishs' to clearly explain that parking is "free" before 9am and after 5pm. Many of 906's customers work out at the Gym before and/or after work, so decals indicating free parking before 9:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. would be beneficial to business at the gym.*
3. *Add year-around overnight residential permit parking next to National Office Products, to accommodate apartment tenants (this parking area would be exempt from the winter parking ban). National Office Products re-built four apartments located above the first floor retail and office space.*
4. *Prioritize the reconstruction of P4. All users complained about the condition of the lot. Along with Oaka Street, the Fire Hall Parking Lot, and Parking Lot 4 are high priorities for repair. Director Knepper will be researching grant funding for these parking lots.*
5. *Grant an easement to 906 Gym for a small portion of the parking lot directly behind the southeast corner of the building (to accommodate the dumpster and ventilation). The City owns a small space (one vehicle size) on the back southeast corner of the 906 Gym. The owner of 906 Gym would like to use this space to accommodate a vent out from the restrooms and a dumpster.*

Recommendation: Approve the changes as listed above.

Moved by Greg Collins, seconded by Les Townsend, to approve Director Knepper to move forward to make the five changes as listed above. The motion passed unanimously.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Events and Festivals Review

- *Parker's ACE Hardware Parade of Lights.* The Parade of Lights was a huge success, with a record number of lighted floats, and people in attendance. Thank you to Scott Parker, Parker's ACE Hardware, for sponsoring this annual event.
- *Small Business Saturday.* There was a lot of people downtown shopping during the day. Some businesses expressed their desire to reinstate Black Friday shopping the day after Thanksgiving.
- *Christmas Open House Week One and Two.* This was another successful downtown event. Santa was at the Avery Square, with a long line of kids waiting to see him! Mrs. Claus (Linda Hoath) visited downtown businesses, went for carriage rides, and had kids following her around. Two Percheron Draft Horses and sleigh were provided by Horse Powers

Farms in Pickford. Sault High students sold hot chocolate and S'mores and wrapped gifts, to raise money for their trip to Guatemala.

B. Upcoming Events and Festivals.

- *New Year's Event Pub Event.* The Downtown Bar Owners' Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month. The committee discussed an event on New Year's Eve to include a Masquerade Ball, photo booths with pictures to be placed on Facebook, a prize for best costume(s), and a ball drop of some sort at midnight.
- *Winter Ice Festival.* This will take place on Saturday, January 28, 2017. The DDA and Soo Events/CVB is hoping to have more businesses participate with ice sculptures. Blocks of ice can be purchased for \$250 or more with artists sculpting during the day. United Way is looking into sponsoring a Fire and Ice Festival on this day, as well.
- *I-500 Pub Crawl.* The Pub Crawl has grown over the years and has been a much anticipated event for downtown pubs/bars and Pub Crawlers. DDA Board Chair Ray Bell attended an I-500 Committee meeting in an effort to connect I-500 week with downtown Sault Ste. Marie. Discussion included a competition with I-500 specialized drinks, I-500 button discount at downtown businesses during I-500 week, a snowmobile parade, and a vintage snowmobile show. Another idea is to up-date the snowmobile trail map to include downtown businesses, showing where in town snowmobiles are permitted, parking lots, and perhaps providing a bus to run people from the Race to downtown and back.

C. Proposed Event for New Year's Eve.

Background: *New Year's Eve is a busy night downtown, and a pub event will increase business. More importantly, the DDA, CVB, and certain downtown businesses have been discussing a ball drop, and what would be appropriate for Sault Ste. Marie. Ideas include an anchor; a freighter; a hockey puck; or a simple sphere.*

Recommendation: Organize the pub event to correspond with a community-wide vote for what to drop in December 2017. Coordinate with the CVB.

D. Advertisement in the Sault Ste. Marie Visitors Guide.

Recommendation: *Approve purchase of half-page ad for the new Sault Ste. Marie Visitor's Guide for 2017 at \$1,550.*

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Greg Collins to approve the purchase of a half-page ad for the new Sault Ste. Marie Visitor's Guide for 2017 at \$1,550. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Downtown Signage for the Snowmobile Trails.

Background: *Stathi Kritselis, the owner of Zorba's and the Alpha Bar, has suggested that the DDA coordinate the installation of signage (perhaps the*

addition of a downtown directory wayfinding sign) in two key spots on the snowmobile trail coming in to town.

Recommendation: *Discuss whether this should be funded by participating businesses or by the DDA (or both).*

The first sign location would be on South Street and 12th Street where an arrow/signage points to the trail that goes downtown. The second sign location is on Ashmun/M-129, next to the Sault Tribe Health Center where an arrow/signage points to the trail that ends up downtown. Planning Director Kelly Freeman has suggested that the signs be upgraded in coordination with Sault Snowmobile Association.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Greg Collins, to move forward with two wayfaring signs on the snowmobile trails coming into downtown Sault Ste. Marie at South Street and 12th Street, and next to the Sault Tribe Health Center. Funding for the new trail wayfaring signs will be carried over from Capital Projects/signage budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Also discussed, was to incorporate summer ATV trail information with the winter snowmobile trail information. A suggestion was made to contact All-Star Graphics, as they carry a durable product that lasts a long time under all weather conditions. Director Knepper will provide the DDA Board with a draft of the trail signage in early January 2017.

F. Capital Project Carryovers for FY 2017/18.

Background: *The DDA has funding left over from a project. \$5,408 remaining in "Downtown Signage." This was originally set up for the restoration and update of the various wayfinding signs downtown. We need to update our business directory maps for 2017.*

Recommendation: *Leave funding in place to update the various wayfinding directories annually (approximately \$1,000 per year).*

Downtown wayfinding signs/business directories have to be updated due to business changes, etc., at a cost of approximately \$1,000 per year. Also note, as moved in Agenda item 7E, to use part of the remaining signage fund balance for new snowmobile trail wayfaring signs.

Moved by Greg Collins, supported by Oliver Turner, to move forward with updating downtown wayfaring signage. Funding to update the signs will be carried over from Capital Projects/signage budget. The motion passed unanimously.

8. DIRECTOR'S STATUS REPORT.

A. 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. Reports will be provided at the next board meeting.*

B. State TIF and Opt-Out Legislation Update.

Background: *The State Legislature is voting on a number of bills that would negatively impact the DDA. These include opt-outs for library millages and tax capture exemptions for all future millages.*

The State Legislature is voting today on TIF reforms; one is opt-outs for libraries and another would block tax capture of existing and future millages, which will undermine economic development to keep our downtowns thriving. These two tax reforms will cause large losses in the budget of the Sault Ste. Marie DDA. Director Knepper will keep the DDA Board informed on the outcome of this issue.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

10. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

11. ADJOURN.

Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Les Townsend, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:35 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

RAYMOND BELL, DDA Chair

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