

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016 – 8:00 A.M.
Avery Square – 2ND Floor Conference Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

MEETING MINUTES

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

Absent: Ray Bauer
Marla Bunker
Johann Ingold
Carl Stutzner

1. CALL TO ORDER.

2. ROLL CALL.

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- July 13th, 2016 regular meeting

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the July 13, 2016 regular meeting minutes, as amended, to include abstention of Michelle LaJoie due to conflict of interest from voting on Agenda Item No. 7.A. The motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Additions to the Agenda were discussed, as follows:

- Report on Snowplow Meeting.
- New Crossing Bollard on Ashmun Street.
- Under New Vacancies; Pat Cleary's Properties.

Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Greg Collins, to accept the additions to the Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

5. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.

None were indicated.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

A. PlacePlans Mini-Grant Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

Background: *PlacePlans RFQ has been listed on the City and DDA websites for the past two months, and the DDA has received limited inquiries. Director Knepper would like to re-double efforts to share the information via press release and targeted mailings to area and regional developers.*

Later in August Director Knepper would like to re-launch the RFQ in an effort to gain more interest in this project. To date, two Canadian developers inquired through Josh Billington of the Michigan Small Business Development Center and one local contractor contacted the DDA. Justin will present the re-launch of the PlanPlans RFQ at the September DDA Board meeting.

Home Renovation Systems has been working with the Templeton's who own the vacant lot between 1668 Winery and The Palace.

B. Michigan Mainstreet Program Select Level Application.

Recommendation: *Approve the use of the DDA travel budget to purchase rooms for Committee members and DDA board members who are interested in traveling to the Hart, Michigan conference on the night of the 15th.*

Background: *The Mainstreet Committee has been working as time allows over the summer to move forward with the application process. There is training in Hart, Michigan on August 16th; all are encouraged to attend. The Mainstreet Committee set up a booth at Sidewalk Sales and signed up 20 volunteers.*

The Michigan Mainstreet Committee met yesterday; Michelle LaJoie, Debbie Jones, Les Townsend and Director Knepper will be attending Mainstreet training on August 16th. The group will be departing on August 15th, meet with the Visitor's Bureau in Charlevoix for lunch, travel to Hart, Michigan, and spend the night and return to the Soo the evening of August 16th.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Les Townsend to approve the use of the DDA travel budget to purchase rooms for the night of August 15, 2016 for Committee members and DDA Board members who will be participating in Mainstreet training on August 16, 2016. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Mural Installation Crowdfunding Campaign.

Background: *Three of the four murals are underway. Pingatore Cleaners' mural is about 40% complete, as is the 1668 Winery mural. Island Books & Crafts' mural is just beginning. The Alpha Bar mural is on hold until the wall covering is demolished, which should begin in the next two weeks.*

Over \$20,000 was received during the Mural Fundraising Campaign, for a grand total of \$36,000. All but \$1,000-\$2,000 will be used for the four murals. Pingatore Cleaners' and 1668 Winery's murals are underway, with Island Books & Crafts' mural next in line. The owners of the Alpha Bar are still receiving bids for demolition of the wall covering and preparation of the brick. The Alpha Bar mural may have to wait to be completed until later this fall.

Postcards, mugs, T-shirts, and plaques will be sent out to everyone who made a donation. For those who donated over \$1,000 there will be a VIP unveiling event.

D. Crosswalk Art.

Background: *The crosswalk art project went off without a hitch; seven crosswalks were painted, and they're all receiving a lot of public attention.*

Seven sidewalk crosswalks were painted on Sunday, July 31st from 8:00 a.m. until approximately 10:00 p.m. City Engineer Linda Basista worked closely with Director Knepper to make sure traffic flowed on Portage Avenue in spite of partial closures of intersections. The crosswalk art has been a great hit with the public, and has been featured on the front page of The Evening News a couple of times. In the spring, the DDA will determine how the crosswalks fared through the winter, and whether they need touching up, etc. Sault Tribe through Building a Healthier Community has indicated that they would like to continue this program in the summer of 2017, perhaps on downtown side streets.

E. State Façade Grant Program.

Background: *Island Books & Crafts is nearing completion. Window trim, paint, and awning installation remains to be finished.*

The Historical Society building is done, Lewinski and Brewster Building needs one more piece of window trim, limestone polishing on the Island Books and Crafts building is progressing, and UP Engineers and Architects is finished. The State Façade Grant reps will be in town next week to audit the work done on the four buildings.

F. Business Expansion: Up North Nutrition.

Background: *Following the presentation by Phil Woolcocks at the July DDA Board meeting regarding his gym and business expansion, he was able to*

secure a location at the former Haller's Hallmark building. Renovations are underway.

G. Review of LSSU Signage Study.

In the spring of this year Director Knepper and Kristy worked with five teams of students from LSSU's retail class on multiple independent projects. One was a study of downtown signage throughout the City and on I-75. Director Knepper provided the power-point presentation that was produced by the LSSU students. Highlights of the study included:

- Blue tourist signs showing various attractions on I-75 and east on Three Mile Road do not give much direction as to where attractions are located.
- Some tourist signs lack the blue backer.
- Direction arrows (right/left) on some signs are confusing.
- An aerial map of the Business Spur, Three Mile Road, and I-75 showed specific location of signs. An aerial map of Shunk Road and Kewadin Resort and Casino also had signs marked.
- Recommendation to have more consistent colored signs, i.e. one color for restaurants, attractions, gas stations, etc.
- Recommendation to hire a company that specializes in wayfinding systems to refresh sign styles, and study strategic locations within the City.

Director Knepper indicated that hiring a company that specializes in wayfinding systems would be a very costly project. He will follow-up with the DDA Board this winter/spring with a long-term objective as to signage.

H. New Agenda Item: New Crossing Bollard on Ashmun Street.

The DDA Board agreed that the Bollard on Ashmun Street crosswalk from Avery Square to the Sault Tribe building was working very well with traffic stopping to let people cross. One more bollard is being assembled that will be placed on the crosswalk under the hospital skywalk on Osborn Boulevard. The cost for each Bollard is approximately \$400. A suggestion was made for a temporary bollard to be placed on East Portage Avenue on the crosswalk from the Soo Corner Store to City Hall when there are events on City Hall grounds.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

- A. Establishment of "Mainstreet General" Account. *Recommendation: Rename the DDA "Miscellaneous" account to "Mainstreet General" account, to accept all revenues not directly associated with existing***

expenses. For example, Mainstreet t-shirt sales, unrestricted Mainstreet pledges, and perhaps a stage rental fee.

After discussion it was determined that Director Knepper will meet with Greg Collins and Finance Director Kristin Collins to discuss setting up a new account fund for Mainstreet. Director Knepper will follow-up with the Board at the September DDA Board meeting.

B. Resignation of Kristy Wyngaarden. Recommendation: Hold special meeting to discuss downtown events and festivals, the role of Sault Events, Inc. in downtown event planning, and develop a plan for Kristy's replacement.

Background: Due to being overly busy with various projects this summer, Director Knepper requested a raise for events coordinator Kristy Wyngaarden before finding out she was moving to be with her husband who took a new job in the Holland, Michigan area.

Kristy will be leaving next week to move downstate. She has written a transitional outline of her job description that includes an overview of planning various downtown events. Director Knepper will be scheduling a meeting to expedite hiring a new events planner as soon as possible.

C. New Agenda Item: Report on Public Snowplow Meeting.

A public hearing on downtown snowplow issues was held on July 14, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers. Turnout was very low, with only City staff and one downtown business owner in attendance. Discussion included going out for snowplow bids for three areas; downtown sidewalks, City Hall grounds and the parking garage. Matheny Lawn Services' 3-year contract ended this year, so Director Knepper would like to revise the RFP to include the above areas, and add "salting" areas after snow removal. The cost for downtown business owners per linear foot of sidewalk frontage will go from \$1.60 to \$1.80. Director Knepper will be meeting with City Clerk/Deputy City Manager Robin Troyer regarding the RFP.

D. Events and Festivals.

- *Gus Macker Review.* More teams participated this year than in past years.
- *Sault Arts Festival Review.* Due to challenges on mandatory insurance specifications for events on City Hall grounds the Arts Festival moved to the LSSU campus this year. It went well; vendors were happy.
- *Downtown Days Review.* By all accounts Downtown Days was well received, with good crowds, and many vendors. The band Firehouse did not perform due to lack of sponsorship needed to hire the band.

- *Moloney's Michigan Beerfest to Benefit the Soo Theatre.* Portage Avenue will be blocked off from Ashmun Street to Osborn Boulevard on Saturday, August 13th. Approximately 30 Micro-brewery's will be participating in the Beerfest. All proceeds are earmarked for the Soo Theatre Raise the Roof Campaign.
- *LSSU Summer Bash.* This welcoming event for LSSU students will take place at the Farmer's Market Corner on August 27th and is sponsored by Soo SuperValu and will include local bands, WSOO Radio, etc.
- *Antiques on Ashmun.* This will take place in the area of Spruce and Arlington Streets on September 10th.
- *Oktoberfest.* Scheduled for September 27th.

E. New Businesses.

- *B Boutique.* Located in the old Tuxedo store next to Ryan's Jewelry. The boutique will feature prom/tuxedo clothing.
- *Up North Gym.* Mr. Woolcocks, who made a presentation to the DDA Board at the July Board meeting, is now occupying the old Haller's building and is expanding his business to include a retail store and fitness center.
- *Space Needs:*
 - Computer Store*
 - Massage Business*
 - Children's Clothing Store*
 - Photography Studio*

F. New Vacancies.

- *GLAD Dance Studio Near Austin's Oak.*
- *Former Up North Nutrition Location Near Checkered Flag.*
- *Ryan's Jewelry (opening in Autumn).*

New Agenda Item: Report on Pat Cleary's Properties.

All of Mr. Pat Cleary's downtown properties (approximately 10-12 properties) are now up for sale. Mr. Cleary is not working with a realtor, but is selling them on his own. Director Kenpper would like the DDA to assist Mr. Cleary in successfully selling his properties and will be meeting with him to encourage getting an appraisal on all properties, clean/sprucing up of interiors, and to discuss a possible property management agreement with the DDA (for a fee) to help facilitate the sale of these properties. Director Knepper will be investigating property management agreements with other peer cities in the State.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

9. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Turner commended the DDA Board on the good meeting and effective discussion.

10. ADJOURN.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 a.m. upon motion of Michelle LaJoie and support of Les Townsend. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ray Bell
Chair – Downtown Development authority Board

sg