

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 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
Greg Collins
Michelle LaJoie
Scott Parker
Les Townsend
Oliver Turner
Justin Knepper

Also Present: Nick Nolan, *Soo News*

Absent: Greg Collins
Johann Ingold
Carl Stutzner

1. CALL TO ORDER.
2. ROLL CALL.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- December 14, 2016 regular meeting minutes.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Michelle LaJoie, to approve the December 14, 2016 regular meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Les Townsend, to approve the agenda for the January 11, 2017, 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: *Two dates are set for finalizing our Main Street application.*

1. *Michigan Main Street Center Executive Director Laura Krizov will be in Sault Ste. Marie for an application review on January 12, 2017. Main Street steering committee and DDA board members are invited to meet for lunch from 11am-1pm in the second floor conference room of Avery Square. Lunch will be provided.*

2. *The official presentation in Lansing is scheduled for 1:30pm on February 14th, 2017. The Main Street steering committee is organizing attendees and a presentation. The trip is planned to leave early in the morning and return late the same day.*

Michigan Main Street Director, along with three staff, will be in town tomorrow, Thursday, January 12th. A tour of downtown will take place at 9:00-11:00 a.m. and lunch at 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Avery Square. The meeting is basically a meet-and-greet that will include time to go over the Select Level Application.

Director Knepper is preparing for the live presentation to the Michigan Mainstreet Program in Lansing on Tuesday, February 14th at 1:30 p.m. to promote downtown Sault Ste. Marie as a Select Level City. There will be two City cars and two LSSU shuttles that will be transporting the Mainstreet Steering Committee, City staff, DDA Board, CVB, etc., to Lansing.

B. Principal Shopping District Approval.

Background: *The Principal Shopping District renewal process has begun. Public hearings are planned for February. Currently there are non-profit and other tax exempt entities that have not been assessed. These include: Salvation Army and the Soo Theatre, among others.*

Recommendation: *Discuss assessing non-profit entities for the Principal Shopping District renewal.*

At the October 12, 2016 Downtown Development Authority Board meeting, the DDA Board voted unanimously to recommend that the City Commission take the steps necessary to renew and expand the Principal Shopping District for another five-year period covering 2017-2020, and again up for renewal in 2021.

C. DDA Executive Director Evaluation.

Background: *The DDA Board voted to gather information from comparable communities regarding an appropriate salary level for the Executive Director, and planned to report back at the February meeting.*

D. Downtown Signage for the Snowmobile Trails.

Background: *DDA staff is working with the Snowmobile Association to formulate signage plans.*

The DDA is meeting tomorrow with the Soo Snowmobile Association to expedite the creation of up-dated signs to be placed at certain locations on the snowmobile trail coming in to town. Soo Printing is putting together an up-dated map with listings for the new signs.

E. 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 board meeting.*

A draft Request for Proposals will be brought to the Board when complete.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Resignation of Johann Ingold.

Background: *Johann Ingold announced his resignation in January 2017.*

Recommendation: *Accept Johann Ingold's resignation and sign letter recognizing him for his service on the Board.*

DDA Board member Johann Ingold resigned from the Board last week due to health issues. Director Knepper will prepare a letter of appreciation for the DDA Board to sign at the February 8th meeting and will add Mr. Ingold's resignation to the City Commission agenda. Director Knepper will provide applications of those interested in serving on the DDA Board at the February meeting, as well.

B. Easement for Up North Nutrition & Gym 906 at 327 Ashmun Street.

Background: *Up North Nutrition & Gym 906 is required to have an easement in order to install locker room vents onto City property on the rear wall of their building.*

There is an underutilized area of city property directly behind the building that is also the only location for a dumpster to be placed.

Recommendation: *Request the City Commission approve an easement on the rear of the building at 327 Ashmun Street to allow for ventilation and dumpster placement, at the cost of one dollar to the property owner, Phil Woolcocks.*

The 906 Gym is fully operational, but they are still waiting for more equipment to be delivered. Parking meters / permit parking is being reconfigured to offer more parking for Up North Nutrition & 906 Gym.

At the December 14, 2016 DDA Board meeting the DDA Board approved granting an easement to 906 Gym for a small portion (12' x 12') of the parking lot owned by the City to accommodate the dumpster and mandatory locker room vents.

Moved by Scott Parker, supported by Oliver Turner to request the City Commission approve an easement on a small area (12' x 12') owned by the City at the rear of the building at 327 Ashmun Street to allow for ventilation and dumpster placement, at a cost of one dollar to the property owner, Phil Woolcocks. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Soo Theatre Project Strategic Plan – Funding Request.

Background: *The Michigan Downtown Association referred Tom Gerdom, Michigan's top theatre expert, to the Soo Theatre. He met with the Soo Theatre management and Director Knepper to propose a strategic plan for funding the Theatre restoration project.*

His proposal includes:

- *An analysis of the building's relationships and the potential uses*
- *The impact within the downtown*
- *Market identification and analysis*
- *Recommended programming*
- *Competitive / complementary analysis*
- *Design and construction drawings and costs*
- *Potential ownership and management structures*
- *Analytical financial package including projected operating costs and funding options*

Gerdom's fee is \$5,000, and his completed report will allow The Soo Theatre, the DDA, and the City to all operate with a shared vision as we launch the capital campaign to begin the restoration.

Recommendation: Commit to funding 50% of the strategic plan, at a cost of \$2,500.

Tom Gerdom has worked on major theatre restorations in the State of Michigan, including the theater in Pontiac, Owasso and the Fox Theater in Detroit. He is proposing to analyze, and provide strategic plans for funding sources, and new programming for the Soo Theatre restoration project at a cost of \$5,000. Director Knepper is recommending that the DDA match 50% of Mr. Gerdom's fee at a cost to the DDA of \$2,500. There are funds available in the general supplies budget, as well as the advertising budget.

After discussion it was agreed that before committing \$2,500, the DDA should look into other sources for funding, MEDC, Michigan Preservation Project, and perhaps partnering with local entities (Sault Tribe for one), to help with Mr. Gerdom's fee. Director Knepper will move forward with looking for alternative sources. Further discussion on this will occur at the February DDA Board meeting.

D. Events and Festivals Review.

- *New Year's Eve Masquerade Pub Night*

The first annual downtown New Year's Eve celebration went well in spite of last minute promotion. Some downtown businesses indicated that they were busy on New Year's Eve day in the late afternoon and early evening. The DDA is planning to build on this and will be working on a larger event on New Year's Eve in the future, perhaps a ball drop of some sort to coincide with the 350th Anniversary of the City of Sault Ste. Marie in 2018. It was suggested that the ball drop structure be constructed by a local welding company, and that progress be publicized along the way.

E. Upcoming Events and Festivals.

- *Winter Ice Festival.* Set up for Winter Ice Festival will be on Friday, January 27th and a full day of ice sculpting will be on Saturday, January 28th. Over 30 sculptures have been sold. United Way is sponsoring a bonfire with a marshmallow roast at the Farmer's Market corner.
- *I-500 Pub Crawl.* I-500 week kicks off on Monday, January 30th. There will be a window decorating contest, as well as a signature drink contest at downtown businesses. The annual Pub Crawl is on Thursday, February 7th.
- *Outhouse Race.* Scheduled for Saturday, February 18th at 2:00 p.m. The race is usually held on the Templeton lot between Lockside Winery and the Palace Saloon however, the Templeton's have indicated that they do not want it on their property this year. Director Knepper is looking at other options: Closing West Portage Avenue and have the City Street Department put snow on Portage Avenue, or have the race at Moloney's Alley. Director Knepper hopes to have 10-15 teams participate in this event.
- *"Lockside Raid Jam."* The DDA is looking to host a new event prior to the Outhouse Race on Friday, February 17th that would showcase snowboard and ski runs in downtown Sault Ste. Marie. Searchmont Resort located in Searchmont, Ontario (45 miles from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario) would help with building snowboard and mini ski slopes to demonstrate what their Resort has to offer. Twenty or more volunteers would be needed to help build the snow runs; possible locations are Brady Park, bottom of Templeton lot on Water Street side. One suggestion was to partner with Minneapolis Woods/Sault Seal Recreation Area for this event. Insurance would have to be looked into, as well.

F. Proposed Event for Lockside Raid Jam.

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.*

F. 2017 Board Retreat and Goal Setting Session.

Background: *The DDA Board holds an annual goal-setting session each year. This year, the goal setting session could be combined with a board retreat to allow time for identifying mission and vision statements, discussing budget items, as well as the potential transition to the Main Street.*

Recommendation: *Schedule retreat and goal-setting session for February 2017. Review attached goal-setting minutes from 2016.*

Director Knepper went through the status of the Adopted 2014 DDA Goals and the Adopted 2015 DDA Goals. After discussion it was agreed to schedule the 2017 DDA Board Goal-Setting Session after the Michigan Mainstreet presentation on February 14th in Lansing; perhaps the week of February 20th.

8. DIRECTOR'S STATUS REPORT.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

10. BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

11. ADJOURN.

Moved by Michelle Lajoie, supported by Les Townsend, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:00 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

RAYMOND BELL, DDA Chair