

**Sault Ste. Marie  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
November 11, 2015**

**MINUTES**

Present: Tony Haller  
Michelle LaJoie  
Ray Bell  
Greg Collins  
Tammy Cook  
Will Karr  
Justin Knepper  
Carl Stutzner  
Les Townsend  
Oliver Turner  
Kristy Wyngaarden

Absent: Scott Parker, Johann Ingold, Ray Bauer.

**1) CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Carl Stutzner, DDA Board Chair at 8 a.m.

**2) ROLL CALL:** Attendance was taken as noted.

**3) CONSENT AGENDA:**

- **Approval of Minutes: November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 special meeting.**

*Moved by Oliver Turner, supported by Will Karr, to approve the consent agenda.  
The motion passed unanimously.*

**4) SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS:**

**A. Capital Improvement Project List – Recommendation: Review then approve the Capital Improvement Plan project list prepared at the DDA board meeting on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015.**

Oliver Turner suggested keeping all projects listed so City Hall will keep front of mind for planning. Justin Knepper suggested amending scope of work.

*Moved by Will Karr, supported by Michelle LaJoie, to approve the Capital Improvement Plan project list. The motion passed unanimously.*

**B. Crosswalk Bollards – Recommendation: Request City Engineering to work with MDOT for crosswalk bollards to be installed at the following crosswalks:**

- a. Dawson/Ashmun intersection
- b. Avery Square/Sault Tribe mid-block crosswalk
- c. Arlington/Ashmun intersection
- d. War Memorial Crosswalk under the skywalk

Linda with City Engineering will send regulations for design. MDOT does not want bollards where there are bump-outs. There will not be bollards where there are stop lights/signs. No ideas presented for other locations. Les Townsend suggested pedestrian signage to look both ways.

*Moved by Michelle LaJoie, supported by Ray Bell, to approve the bollard request. The motion passed unanimously.*

**5) UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- 1) PlacePlans mini-grant  
Director Knepper and Planning/Zoning Administrator Kelly Freeman are working with the Michigan Municipal League team to finalize draft marketing pieces and renderings. These pieces should be ready for review by December or January.
- 2) Major Events Sponsorship  
Parker's ACE Hardware has agreed to sponsor the Parade of Lights. The \$2,500 sponsorship will be instrumental in improving the parade and in promoting Small Business Saturday. Primarily DDA will focus on Small Business Saturday instead of Black Friday.
- 3) Crosswalk Art  
Director Knepper is in discussions with four artists who live or work downtown to prepare art samples for spring installation primarily on Portage. Grand accepted for \$4,000 with no match requirements.
- 4) DDA events fundraiser  
Abby Baker has secured a number of donations to support the fundraiser she plans to host on behalf of the DDA; she has decided to hold the event on January 14<sup>th</sup> at Maloney's.
- 5) Michigan Mainstreet Program select level application  
The Committee met and a list of names for a steering committee is being compiled. Director Knepper will call a meeting. Michelle LaJoie suggested we wait until January.

- 6) 2016 Property Improvement Program  
Director Knepper has secured a 20% paint discount at Parker ACE Hardware and wholesale pricing on paint at Sherwin Williams. Central Savings Bank has offered a 1.5% discount on commercial loan projects up to \$50,000. Director Knepper will talk with other banks and credit unions to create a list. Businesses will need to submit a form through DDA and will be required for approval prior to work being done. The website will include all this information as a benefit to opening a business downtown. Discussions are underway for a parking lot maintenance discount with Superior Sealcoating.
- 7) South Ashmun Streetscape – 2015 Construction  
Streetscape is nearing completion; street lights are expected within two weeks. Garland and bows for the 27 news polls is \$5900. If businesses gave 200 each, it would cover the cost. Burger King agreed that grass can be removed to install a wayfinding sign. The DDA will work with the City engineering office to install a crosswalk on the north side of the Ashmun/Easterday intersection in the spring when final line painting occurs.
- 8) Events Assistant Job Position  
Kristy Wyngaarden began this week.
- 9) BMX/Skateboard Park relocation  
BMX is in capital improvement plan. City Administration is considering the DDA Board's suggestion of the fire hall lot as a potential location.
- 10) Pedestrian walkway from Smith Lot to Hudson Lot/Ashmun Street  
Recommendation: Finalize plans for the pedestrian walkway over the winter and then wait for the repaving of Prospect Alley next spring.
- 11) Downtown garden enhancements for spring 2016  
Director Knepper will solicit estimates from area greenhouses and landscaping companies to assist with maintenance of gardens and coordinate with Becky Bottrell to acquire additional funding. DDA has a small grant from community foundation. Director Knepper will ask for an increase. Other small DDAs spend over \$10,000 a year on flowers. Michelle LaJoie suggested we engage Steve.
- 12) National Register historic district update  
Director Knepper is searching for a new intern to assist with the research for Ashmun Street properties. It will be 3 to 4 months before completion.
- 13) Review original DDA bylaws  
Steve Kendal will review bylaws, then committee.
- 14) Downtown Manager evaluation

Evaluation committee: Scott Haller, Oliver Turner and Carl Stutzner have reviewed all but one evaluation. They will meet on Tuesday to compile the evaluations and will present at the December meeting for approval.

## **6. New Business**

### **a. Retailers Meeting**

There was a substantial discussion regarding the state of retail shopping downtown:

Regular meetings should be held with retailers to discuss ways to pool resources to combat the flagging economy. Director Knepper suggested a meeting before the holidays to inject a burst of energy into retailers and noted that the board is a DDA and a Principal Shopping District Board. It was recommended that a downtown marketing plan would be developed to support retailers in 2016. Suggestions were made to revitalize retailer meetings; DDA prepare an agenda and be more proactive, meeting in the next few weeks to focus on combating the worst months downtown (January through March) with unique events to bring customers, focus on buy-in/shared costs/cross promotion, Shop Small quarterly events, special business workshops, marketing consultants, specific marketing for each audience (Canadians, Sault Ste. Marie residents, out-of-towners from Petoskey, Cheboygan). The Mole Hole and Das Gift Haus feel out of the loop and other stores forget to direct people there. Stores don't know what other stores provide; need to get to familiarize themselves with all stores. A Cut Above has a display with other stores' information. Use downtown bucks for prizes instead of cash to encourage visits to retailers. Director Knepper will work on quicker reimbursement to businesses.

Downtown has never had an official marketing plan since perhaps the Hyatt/Palma study in the early 2000s. There have been marketing analyses done by LSSU in the past, but mostly focused on overcoming detriments and less on promotional strategies. Director Knepper is working on pulling a team together from LSSU for spring 2016..

Becoming a Main Street Association will get us more assistance, but we are a year away from a review and still may not be selected. If we are selected, we will rebrand.

Petoskey does a great job. Tony Haller does not think of the next event when he thinks of downtown. The new big stores coming on 3-Mile (Meijer, Kohl's) will bring more people from out-of-town. But why do people come here? Should DDA embrace the college town feel to bring in more families visiting their students? History and the Locks? Older generation Canadian's think of SSM as downtown. Young Canadian's think of SSM as Walmart and bypass downtown. People now come to downtown for the look and feel, best food and drinks & tourism since loss of anchor stores. More restaurants will bring people downtown. Ray Bell said LSSU Hockey weekends bring him more business. Oliver Turner said we should market

together and pool resources like SOO United and that SSM is a college town. Carl Stutzner suggested having the college step in more. According to LSSU presentations, LSSU brings in \$4500 in economic impact and DDA should embrace it and working with the college is a two-way street. It was mentioned we should have special workshops and marketing consultants. DDA needs to be more active in setting an overall marketing plan. Are we marketing differently to each audience? (Canada, in-town, out-of-town - Petosky, Cheboygan).

Downtown Trick or Treating. Great for brewery combined with the hockey game. Employees don't think like owners when passing out candy. Event used to be more like a festival / carnival.

**B. Maloney Alley ice rink.**

Ice rink will be up in the next month or two.

**7. Downtown Manager's Report**

**A. Events Update**

Parade of Lights is November 27. Route has changed and the parade will end at City hall.

Small Business Saturday/Small Business Selfie Event. DDA will focus on Small Business Saturday on November 28 instead of Black Friday this year. DDA is promoting a Shop Small Selfie event to increase social media about the event.

Christmas Open House Weekends will be December 5 & 12 and include horse drawn carriages with Avery square as the hub. Walk for Warmth 5K will be on December 5. There are concerns about getting people to turn the corner. Win Shopping Spree- get 5 businesses to sign sheet. Snowmobile bean pot, hot chocolate stand. Alpha Bar Parking lot could host something.

**B. State Facade Grant Program**

Grand Opening was at Historical Society last night at Island books. Next is the UPEA building.

**C. Light up the Soo**

**D. Mural Project**

Mason for quotes and raise \$15,000 in grants to paint 2 or 3.

**E. Home Renewal Systems developer visit.**

**F. Snow Removal.** DDA is behind on contract because there are new sidewalks this year. This is the last year with the current contract and then next year we will put the contract out for bid. Calls are in for parking lot snow removal.

**G. Business after 5 at Island Books on November 15 from 5 -7.**

**8. Matters to be presented by the Board**

**9. Matters to be presented by the Public**

**10. ADJOURN.**

*In that there were no other issues the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20 a.m. upon motion of Michelle LaJoie and support of Carl Stutzner. The motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Downtown Development Authority Board

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