

**MAIN STREET/DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023 – 8:30 A.M.  
MEETING HELD AT CITY HALL – CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Ray Bell  
Brian Chapman  
Craig Cooper  
Jessica Johnston  
Debbie Jones  
Sue Anne Wilkes  
Allison Youngs  
Mark Savoie  
Amy Goetz

**Absent:** Ray Bauer – City Commission Liaison

**I. Routine Agenda Items**

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 8:30 am.

**2. Roll Call**

Attendance was taken as noted.

**3. Discussion of Minutes**

**December 14, 2022, Regular DDA Board Meeting Minutes**

Sprecker noted that the former Administrative Assistant was not present to take the December 14, 2022, Regular DDA Board Meeting Minutes. Discussion was held on corrections to these minutes. Approval of the minutes has been tabled until the next meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

**January 11, 2023, Regular DDA Board Meeting Minutes**

*Moved by Ray Bell, supported by Jessica Johnston, to approve the January 11, 2023, regular DDA Board meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Approval of Agenda**

*Moved by Ray Bell, supported by Debbie Jones, to approve the February 8, 2023, DDA Board meeting agenda. The motion passed unanimously.*

**4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest.**

There were no conflicts of interest.

## II. **Business Items**

### 1. **ACTION ITEM – Approve 2023-2024 Event Schedule/Plans**

Discussion was held on the 2023-2024 Event Schedule/Plans. Sprecker provided Board members with a detailed event schedule along with a work plan for each event. The Winter Festival was an annual event that has not occurred in recent years. Sprecker has scheduled the Winter Festival to take place in February 2024, in partnership with Soo Events and Linda Hoath with the Sault Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). Sprecker noted that along with the events listed, she is looking at organizing a Beer Festival next Fall.

Discussion was held on the assignment of event champions. Cooper indicated that he would champion the Pub Crawl and Fall Festival events. Sprecker will champion the New Year's Eve Celebration/Anchor Drop and Winter Festival events. Johnston will continue to champion the Halloween Spooktacular and Parade of Lights events. Discussion continued regarding champions for each event.

Along with the event schedule and work plans, Sprecker provided the Board with the projected revenue and expenses for each event. Jones asked how Sprecker calculated the projected revenue and expenses. Sprecker explained that while these figures are subject to change, historical data was taken into consideration along with other factors, such as inflation and supply and demand of products.

***Moved by Jessica Johnston, supported by Debbie Jones, to approve the 2023-2024 Event Schedule/Plans. The motion passed unanimously.***

### 2. **CONSENSUS – FY 2023-2024 Non-Event Projects**

Discussion was held on the fiscal year 2023-2024 non-event projects. Jones explained that historically, the Flower Project has been completed in conjunction with the Chippewa County Community Foundation. This year, the project will be taken on solely by the DDA. During discussion, it was decided that the Downtown Cleanliness and Enhanced Maintenance Plan can be removed from the list of proposed projects as there is a City-Wide Cleanup that handles this. Additionally, the banner project can be removed as those are handled by the Chippewa County Community Foundation for the Hometown Heroes program.

Cooper reminded the Board that projects should not be cancelled due to lack of funds. Sprecker noted that the Sign Grants and Mural Grants are important because they improve the appearance of downtown. The Board came to the consensus that while none of the non-event projects will be removed from the list, the focus will be the Flower Project, Sign Grants, Mural Grants, Cross Walk Paintings, and the Mixed-Use Match Grant.

### 3. **ACTION ITEM – Match on Main Street Business Selection**

Discussion was held on the Match on Main Street Business Selection. Sprecker informed the Board that eight businesses submitted applications for the Match on Main Street Grant. The Review Committee selected Bird's Eye Outfitters and UP North Nutrition & Gym 906. The materials will be submitted to the MEDC by 2/24/23. Wilkes asked about the scoring criteria. Sprecker explained that the MEDC provided a scoring matrix, and the Review Committee considered the Board's strategic goals. Bird's Eye Outfitters and Gym 906 will both expand on services that can be provided in the winter. Bird's Eye Outfitters is expanding on outdoor dining services, including a service window, while Gym 906 is looking into creating a year-round outdoor fitness facility.

***Moved by Craig Cooper, supported by Debbie Jones, to approve Bird's Eye Outfitters and UP North Nutrition & Gym 906 for Match on Main Street Grant submission to MEDC. The motion passed unanimously.***

### **III. Director's Report & Updates – Stephanie Sprecker**

#### **1. Main Street Accreditation Requirements**

Discussion was held on the Main Street Accreditation Requirements. Sprecker, Youngs, and Cooper met with MEDC to discuss accreditation. MEDC provided eight baseline requirements that must be met by 2024 to continue receiving Main Street services. The MEDC will check-in throughout 2023 regarding these requirements. At the end of 2023, if we meet the requirements early, the Board will report the changes to Main Street to receive accreditation early.

#### **2. Main Street Recommendation/Discussion – Board Member Responsibility Agreement**

Discussion was held regarding a Board Member Responsibility Agreement. Sprecker informed the Board that other Main Street communities implement a Board Member Responsibility Agreement. The MEDC suggested this as it shows dedication and commitment. Sprecker will draft a Board Member Responsibility Agreement and provide it to all Board members.

#### **3. 2023 Main Street Technical Assistant Application Update – Downtown Future Services**

Discussion was held on the 2023 Main Street Technical Assistance Application update. Sprecker informed the Board that we were not selected for the Downtown Future Services as the MEDC believes we need to get back on track overall with Main Street goals and objectives. Main Street suggested the Board complete the Business Recruitment Primer and the Main 5 Communication Plan in 2023. The meeting for the Main 5 Communication Plan will take place on April 10, from 1pm to 3pm. Wilkes, Cooper, Savoie, and Goetz will attend the Main 5 Communication Plan. Jones, Bell, and Chapman will attend the Business Recruitment Primer.

#### **4. Optimize Main Street Grants**

Discussion was held on a recent grant opportunity provided to our downtown area called, "Optimize Main Street." This was a first come, first serve opportunity for Main Street communities. Sprecker was able to lock in spots for two business. She passed on the

information to all downtown businesses, requesting that they apply if interested in the opportunity. Crooked Music and Northern Life Yoga Studio were selected. More updates to follow.

## **5. Grow with Google Opportunity**

Discussion was held on an upcoming “Grow with Google” training opportunity, made available to our community from Wayland Main Street and Google. Sprecker explained that Wayland Main Street has reached out to her as they have received a grant with Google and are looking to train small business in marketing and advertising. Sault Ste. Marie has been selected as one of the locations for this event. The event will take place at the Kewadin Conference and Convention Center on April 5th and October 17th. Details to follow once announced by Google.

## **6. Bylaws Update**

Discussion was held on Bylaws updates. 1980 was the last time the DDA Bylaws were approved. Sprecker received sample Bylaws from other DDAs in the State of Michigan to use as a reference point.

# **IV. Budget Items**

## **1. Budget/Capital Project Review – Budget Ending 12/31/22 Kristin Collins, Finance Director**

Finance Director, Kristin Collins, provided a review of the budget/capital projects for the budget ending 12/31/22. Collins started by reviewing the TIFA 1 Fund, which shows that tax proceeds are currently at 100%. The Hospital tax shortfall and Tribal Offices tax shortfall, billed in April, are currently delayed. Wilkes asked why the DDA would pay more to debt service than required. Collins explained that the parking garage has not made the revenue it had anticipated, so the TIFA fund is in place to account for the shortfall. Wilkes requested to receive information on the DDA Board’s legal obligation to the parking garage to see how the figures are generated. Jones asked if the TIFA 1 and TIFA 2 funds increase, would all excess funds go to debt service. Collins stated that would be up to the City Commission.

Collins next reviewed the DDA operating fund. Collins noted that the MEDC Match on Main Grant, appropriation, sidewalk plowing, and downtown dollars are all delayed. Cooper asked about the Co-Ed Flowers grant extension as they have not finished the project to receive funding. Jones believes that the Downtown Dollars funds should be set aside to benefit businesses, as it was intended. Jones suggested budget amendments for Downtown Dollars, organizational income, and sidewalk plowing, be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Collins reviewed the DDA Capital Projects Fund. Collins noted that Building Improvements is a carryover budget used for capital maintenance at the parking garage, managed by the Engineering Department. Jones asked how much of the ending fund balance is unrestricted that the Board can utilize. Collins explained that although these funds are committed to specified projects, if the project were to come in under budget, the funds would be transferred to the operating fund. Jones asked if the difference between the ending fund balance and the total expenditures can be used for a different capital project. Collins will look into the restrictions on these funds and provide the information to the Board at the next meeting.

## **2. ACTION ITEM – Elimination of Expired Downtown Dollars Program**

Discussion was held on the elimination of the expired Downtown Dollars Program. Cooper asked if once the Downtown Dollars Program are eliminated, can the funds be used to support downtown businesses instead of being transferred to the operating fund. Jones agrees the funds should be used to benefit downtown businesses as intended. Sprecker reminded the Board that the canopy for the Farmers Market needs to be replaced.

***Moved by Sue Anne Wilkes, supported by Jessica Johnston, to approve the elimination of the expired Downtown Dollars Program. The motion passed unanimously.***

## **V. Transformation Strategy Plan Updates**

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **1. Promotions Committee – Jessica Johnston/Stephanie Sprecker**

##### **a. Pub Crawl Update – Champion – Craig Cooper Thursday, February 2, 2023**

Discussion was held on the Pub Crawl that took place on Thursday, February 2, 2023. Cooper informed the Board that the weather was not great, which put a bit of a damper on the event. Nonetheless, approximately \$3,000 was raised from the event. Cooper added that he obtained a lot of useful information on how to cut costs and raise funds for next year's event. Cooper will provide the Board with the work plan once completed.

##### **b. Music in the Park – Stephanie Sprecker**

Discussion was held on Music in the Park. The first planning meeting took place regarding reaching out to sponsors. Last year, the sponsorship amounts were \$500, \$1,000, or \$5,000. Wilkes added that she would like the incentive for each sponsorship level to be uniform and ensure that each sponsor receives due recognition. Jones reminded the Board of the one-time ask per year for donations, which has worked very well in the past.

#### **2. Organizations Committee – Sue Anne Wilkes**

Discussion was held on the Organizations Committee. Wilkes informed the Board that she has a list of contact information for individuals willing to volunteer.

#### **3. Design Committee – Stephanie Sprecker**

Discussion was held on the Design Committee. Sprecker explained that the Flower Project is currently the main focus for the Design Committee as the Chippewa County Community Foundation will no longer be handling this. The Flower Project needs a chair, which Sprecker is currently acting as until that position is filled. Goetz expressed that she would be willing to work with another Board member on this project. Sprecker will obtain all relevant information regarding the Flower Project.

#### **4. Economic Vitality Committee – Craig Cooper**

Discussion was held on the Economic Vitality Committee. Cooper informed the Board that he is working on the Mixed Use Match Program, which will work with existing buildings downtown that have available space upstairs to use as apartments. Sprecker spoke with Lindsey Miller, a Director through the MEDC and received valuable information regarding these programs and buildings downtown. Cooper reminded the Board that one of our goals is to increase investment in upper-level apartments to get more people downtown.

#### **VI. Public Comment and Announcements**

Justin Mendoskin explained to the Board that in 1923, City Commissioner Adams introduced Homecoming Week, which took place the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The Homecoming Week event held in 1923 was a great success with a parade, picnic, and huge crowd in attendance. Justin would like to see this event reinstated for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and would like to champion the event. Justin intends to present the idea to the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians at their next meeting on February 17.

Sprecker explained that the DDA currently does not have a weeklong 4<sup>th</sup> of July event planned. Sprecker added that although this may not be an event that the Board would single-handedly take on, it may be something that the Board wishes to take part in. Johnston suggested Justin work with the Tribe to organize the event and the DDA would then help promote it. Wilkes reminded the Board that one of its organizational strategies is promoting historical and cultural events, which is what this would be classified as. Sprecker received Justin's contact information and will be in contact closer to when the event will take place. Additionally, Justin brought up Native Music being performed at Music in the Park. Justin suggested Native Music be performed during the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to be incorporated with the other events.

#### **VII. Board Comments and Announcements**

Wilkes believes that hiring an Administrative Assistant for Sprecker should be the top priority regarding budget amendments. Wilkes suggested hiring a high school student during the school year who would work 20 hours per week at a rate of \$14.50 per hour. Goetz suggested checking with Bay Mills Community College (BMCC) and Lake Superior State University (LSSU) as they have programs in place for both paid and unpaid Administrative Assistants. Savoie added that Michigan Works also has programs for hiring an Administrative Assistant where Michigan Works would pay half the wages, while the DDA would pay the other half. Sprecker indicated that she would like to see this accounted for in the budget for the next fiscal year. Additionally, Sprecker expressed that her preference would be to hire someone at the college level as opposed to the high school level to ensure they would be capable of the job and provide a high level of professionalism.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

***Moved by Jessica Johnston, supported by Amy Goetz, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:15 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

blm