

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting of September 15, 2015
Meeting Room – 8:00 A.M.

The regular meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:04 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Mary Starring, Mayor Chris Johnson, Lynda Heaton, Shawn Riley, Jim Long, Carolann Ayers, John Casey*

Absent: *Greg Presley, Excused; Margene Buckhave, Unexcused*

Also Present: *City Manager/Patrick Sullivan, School Board Liaison to the DDA/ Matt Wilk, DDA Director/Lori Ward, DDA Planning Coordinator/ Courtney Miller*

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Ward gave an introduction of new staff member Courtney Miller, who will be assuming the DDA Planning Coordinator position.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Consent agenda as follows:

- Minutes of DDA Meeting of August 18, 2015
- August 2015 Financial Statement
- August 2015 Financial Report

Motion by Ayers, seconded by Heaton, to approve the Consent Agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Design Committee

Wayfinding Signage: The first phase of wayfinding signage was installed on September 14. Ward informed the board that all of the pole mounted signs were installed yesterday. There was one directional arrow error, which has been returned for correction. Decorative parking entrance signs will be installed later today (September

15). Miss Dig identified utility locations last week, as all signs require a foundation. This phase of the project will be completed for Victorian Festival.

The bid package for the larger Mile road signs has been completed. Oakland County has responded regarding permit application submission, waiting to hear from Wayne County.

The Comerica Community Connection Exhibit: The Comerica Community Connection Exhibit was scheduled to be installed before the Victorian Festival. Ward reported that she was notified last Thursday that it will be delayed, and is now scheduled for the 21st.

There is currently a structural issue in the walkway. The historic brick in the north vestibule is deteriorating. This brick was originally intended to be part of an interior wall. The brick is an odd size, and the City does not have a surplus of historic brick of the same dimensions to replace it with. It has been recommended by a mason that the old brick be removed and replaced with the new type of brick that is on the east wall. The estimate received for the work is about \$3200, and staff is in the process of getting 2 additional quotes.

Downtown Repairs: Recent accidents in the downtown resulted in the destruction of a decorative fence inside of a raised planter, a fence section on Mary Alexander Court, and a bollard in the Connection Plaza. Replacements are in the process of being ordered. The new raised planter fence will take about 6 weeks to fabricate, and then some electrical work will be needed. The security cameras caught the collision with the bollard. The cost of the new bollard is \$1200. The total cost of damage was about \$1500, and police have been in contact with the driver.

Ward met with Arica Raab from Stewart Leve, and three maples will be planted today (September 15th) and the new tree grates set. There are still 8 additional trees that need to be replaced in the downtown. Raab recommended additional pruning to trees that are not healthy. Raab also recommended that an urban forester evaluate the trees along Northville Square. Ayers inquired as to whether or not we spray. Ward replied that the DDA does not, but it was recommended that the DDA contract for that work as well.

Hutton and Main Sidewalk Replacement: Sidewalks were poured earlier this week by Groetski. The area of new sidewalk is located by Monroe Bank and Trust from the corner to the entrance north to the entrance to the parking deck.

Marketing Mix Committee

Riley updated the Board that the food truck rally was very successful. He stated that the Marketing Mix Committee discussed creating another market study, and has had an ongoing conversations about parking studies. A large portion of the discussion at the meeting was regarding non-retail businesses coming to Northville. Branding was also mentioned as a means to get people and businesses into town. Ward summarized that all of that will be accomplished through updating the Strategic Plan. The Board

discussed currently available real estate and recent developments with the properties, as there continues to be an interest in buying and developing property in Northville.

Parking Committee

Parking Counts: The Parking Committee has not met recently. Ward presented a graph and a spreadsheet indicating the parking counts for this year. Parking lot occupancy counts so far this year indicate that East Cady Street remains underutilized (under 10%), Main Center parking lot is around 30%, Northville Square parking lot is at 50%, Cady Deck is 70%, and the most highly utilized lot is the Marquis Lot, which is consistently 80% occupied. Counts are taken 4 times a day, but only recorded on the graph at noon, because this time period traditionally has the highest use.

MainCentre parking Deck Repairs: Ward updated the Board on the progress of the MainCentre parking deck repairs. The east wall has been repaired and sealed off. The repair work came in under budget. A proposal including prioritized construction projects will be put together this winter, and brought to the Board in the Spring. Long asked that since the project was under budget, can we carry that money forward? Ward responded that the money can be carried forward to this year's projects, and the Board can reallocate the leftover funding if they wish. If there is money leftover in that line item at the end of the year, it will be reallocated by the Board during the budgeting process.

Casey asked for a status report on the MainCentre parking lot negotiations and the new contract. Ward stated that she and Sullivan will be setting up a meeting with the attorney soon.

Organizational Committee

Ayers informed the Committee that the only topic of discussion has been the Strategic Plan. There will be new City Council members beginning in November, which she believes would be a good time to address the Plan. City Council will be setting goals in January, so between November and January would be the best period of time for the DDA board to discuss the Strategic Plan. The first Strategic Plan was created 10 years ago, and the composition of the City has changed – there are currently more restaurants and retailers – an update to this Plan is necessary for recruiting new business and knowing which types of businesses to target for the process. Also, almost every item on the previous Plan has been addressed. Ward stated that the partnership with City Council on this project will be critical, as most of the larger parcels poised for redevelopment are outside of the DDA boundaries.

Ward stated that she and Sullivan have been discussing a new tax capture issue that has come up. The capture involves Wayne County communities that have passed a special 1 time 9/10 of a mill Judgement Levy (when a judgement is made, it can automatically be put on the tax roll), because the County was not putting money into the pension fund and the judge ordered them to. Ward stated that the current question is whether or not the DDA should capture the revenue from the levy. Johnson replied that he doesn't think we should, as the purpose of the levy is to pay for the mistake that was

made – he thinks it is a bad idea. Ward contacted other Wayne County communities, to find out what they are doing. The situation is similar to the Zoo/ DIA millage in that there are some communities, like Plymouth, that are not capturing, – however, Dearborn, Wayne, Wyandotte have stated that they are capturing the levy. Detroit is still in discussions as to whether or not they will capture. Casey stated that he agrees with Johnson, and he feels that it would create bad publicity for Northville to be viewed as taking part of someone’s pension. Ayers stated that she thinks we need to be careful what we are doing about millages and how we handle them. She feels it would set a bad precedent to capture. Ward stated that the state statute for DDAs and Tax Increment Financing states that “you shall capture all levied millage”, not “you may”, which is why some communities are deciding to capture. Johnson stated that the Judgment Levy statute predates the creation of TIFs. He says that there will be litigation involving the communities that are capturing, and raises the question of whether or not we want to get involved in litigation.

Ward asked if we need to take action. Sullivan responded that we would need to take action if we were going to fight it, and we would need a legal opinion as to what basis we have for not distributing the money to Wayne County. If we are not going to challenge it, we will not need to do anything. Johnson stated that it might be a City Council decision, and that there is a communication from Wayne County stating that if you capture, they will litigate. Wyandotte informed Ward that they communicated the fact that they are keeping the money to Wayne County. Ayers asked the timeline on this decision. Sullivan responded that we have already collected some of the money, and he is not sure what will happen if we do not pay. He feels that if the DDA does not want to begin this battle, the money should be distributed to Wayne County. Last time, the City went to Circuit Court and got a Declaratory Judgment. Ayers stated we should figure out what the capture would be and how much the legal fees would cost. Johnson replied that we should ask the attorney for a cost estimate. Dearborn Corporation Council was one of the attorneys during the Zoo/ DIA situation and they might be involved. Ward stated that she will check in with them, and will send an email informing the board of the financial impact.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Casey reported that Northville Sports Den has been sold. He also stated that one of the tasks of the Food and Beverage Owners Group is to hold a restaurant week. This includes menus that are \$15, \$25, \$35 and each restaurant would have a special based on their price point. The main goal is to promote the restaurants. Ward explained that some of the goals of this group are promotion, events, and an opportunity to get involved in the community – which culminates in Restaurant Week.

Sullivan reported that the new Ribfest event will be executed by a professional event production company from Ferndale. The company has a permit to use Ford Field for a barbeque (15-17 barbeque vendors) plus other vendors (craft beers and wines), and entertainment, such as a monster truck ride, music. Sullivan reported provisions necessary for permit as requested by Council are: providing security; turning off the

music during the weddings at Mill Race Village; and securing a permit to use the North End of the Downs parking lot.

The next DDA Board meeting is October 20, 2015.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Miller
Northville DDA
Planning Coordinator