

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting of December 15, 2015
Meeting Room – 8:05 a.m.

The regular meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Chairman/Greg Presley, Mary Starring, Mayor Ken Roth, Lynda Heaton, Shawn Riley, Carolann Ayers, Margene Buckhave, John Casey, Jim Long*

Absent: *None*

Also Present: City Manager/Patrick Sullivan, DDA Planning Coordinator/Courtney Miller, DDA Executive Director/Lori Ward, Concours Volunteer/ Fred Sheill

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda as follows:

- a. Minutes of DDA Meeting of November 17, 2015 (Attachment 4.a)
- b. November 2015 Financial Statement (Attachment 4.b)
- c. November 2015 Invoice Report (Attachment 4.c)

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

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2016-2017(ATTACHMENT 5)

Ayers began the discussion of the 2016-2017 Goals and Objectives by directing the Board to the second page of the Marketing Committee goals and objectives, specifically the objective "Attract potential new businesses to the Downtown Area". She stated that she does not recall the DDA ever being tasked with business recruitment in the past. Ayers said that if the Board is interested in the DDA taking on this task, additional assistance would be necessary, and budgetary research would need to be done to prepare for this. Starring stated that this objective has been in the Goals and Objectives for the Marketing Mix committee for many years. Riley stated that other communities have additional assistance for recruiting businesses that are appropriate for Downtown areas. He stated that he believes the pursuit and recruitment of more established businesses with professional business owners will result in fewer vacancies. Riley

suggested that recruitment might best be performed by an outside consultant, instead of DDA staff. Ayers stated that the Marketing Mix Committee will need to discuss this objective further.

Ayers asked if an exit interview is performed when a business leaves Northville. Ward responded that currently, departing businesses are not asked for an exit interview.

Ayers then directed the Board to look at the last page of the Goals and Objectives, specifically the objective "Reduce number of office and service businesses on first floor." She asked for information on any ordinances that the City currently has on this topic. Ward responded that there is an ordinance involving parking relates to the differentiation on the first floor between retail and office. The ratio of parking for offices locating on the second floor was relaxed, making parking easier, and therefore incentivizing placing an office on the second floor. Ward stated that the former Goody Two Shoes, located in a first floor space on W. Main Street, was purchased by a law firm that was interested in the visibility of being on the first floor. Long suggested that the DDA partner with a specific broker, and offer the broker incentive to bring in desired business types, possibly a percentage amount of a lease. He stated that absentee building owners also make it difficult to recruit desired businesses, and maintain the balance of first floor retail.

Presley asked Ward's opinion on the possibility of DDA staff working on business recruitment, and whether or not it was feasible with current staffing and resources. Ward responded that it was most likely not feasible, but there would need to be a discussion about the role that the Board envisioned DDA staff would have in business recruitment, and the Board would need to create a strategy and define a level of involvement. Ward stated that most DDAs in the area do not have a staff member dedicated to Business Recruitment, based on a recent inquiry with directors and staff. Birmingham does not have a TIF, but is a Principal Shopping District, which is a Special Assessment District, and has a dedicated person on contract for business recruitment. Presley asked if the other communities Ward spoke to had anyone working on business recruitment. Ward responded that some communities, like Plymouth, have a group of individuals from the community that act as ambassadors for new businesses, and interested businesses meet with the group to discuss possibilities. Buckhave stated that the level and intensity of business recruitment depends on the type of businesses that you are recruiting – small, local businesses versus national chain, for example – which will require different types of recruitment. Ayers stated that until the Strategic Plan is updated, there is no sense of what the community currently wants. Presley stated that the update will be accomplished this year, and will help direct this objective further.

Riley stated he feels that there are not enough testimonials from current businesses as to why businesses should locate in Northville. He stated that he feels the current approach to business recruitment is passive, and the proactive approach to seeking of new business is missing. Ward responded that it should be noted that recruiting businesses for Northville Square only would be a full-time position, due to square

footage, and the response to this question would need to take into consideration the percentage in larger square footage facilities. If Northville Square were not in the Downtown, and the business recruitment responsibility were small storefront businesses, the turnover would be 6-7 businesses per year, and adding Northville Square into the equation triples this responsibility. Ward suggested a more holistic approach to business recruitment and the consideration of how it would apply to every building in the DDA district.

Ayers asked the Board for clarification of wording for the Action Item (bullet point) being discussed. She suggested including the point “Develop a proactive business recruitment strategy to attract new businesses that will add to the success and vibrancy of the area.” Presley agreed with including that point and the point underneath “As part of the updated strategic plan, develop a list of targeted businesses for Downtown”. Reilly suggested that all Action Items on the list be included. Ward responded that if all points are included, the only phrase that is tenuous is “actively recruit”, and perhaps “actively” does not mean “proactively”, but the meaning of the phrase will be determined once the strategy for Business Recruitment is developed. Long clarified that the current low number of vacancies in the DDA, excluding Northville Square, indicated that the Board might be overthinking a topic that they might not need to be thinking about. He stated that getting a broker might not be useful, as many of the stores that are interested in locating in Northville are small, entrepreneurial businesses, which may be off the radar of a professional broker. Ward agreed with Long, but explained that the Marketing Mix Committee looks at how to impact the future mix of businesses in the Downtown. She said that building owners frequently perpetuate the leases of businesses that are not the best for the Downtown mix because they are concerned about having a vacant space, however if building owners could be assured that there were other more desirable tenants interested in Downtown available space, it might positively affect the Downtown business mix. Reilly stated that part of the issue is a lack of involvement in Downtown events by current merchants that adhere strictly to their own business plan, without engaging in the community, and he suggested that a solution would be to recruit businesses that are interested in being a part of events that occur Downtown.

Sullivan stated that including and accomplishing all of the bullet points as written might not be feasible, and the Board should think about including a single attainable strategy. He said that the Board should take the time to develop a plan. Reilly asked how long the process might take. Roth responded that completion of the Retail Market Study and the Strategic Plan previously took 1 year. Long asks who the first point of contact would be for someone that is interested in opening a business in Northville. Ward responded that the Chamber of Commerce is generally the first point of contact for this, as they are a more widely known organization than the DDA.

Sullivan suggested a review of the points to differentiate items that can be completed before putting a Strategic Plan in place, and removal of those that are based on the Plan and need to wait until the Plan is created.

Regarding the Marketing Mix Action Items, the Board requested that the current goals and objectives change to reflect the upcoming Strategic Plan update, eliminating those goals and objectives that were dependent on the updated plan. The document will instead include a mission statement at the beginning of the document that states: "The work of all committees will support the implementation of the vision created during the Strategic Plan process".

Presley asked where branding fits into the Goals and Objectives, as the Marketing Mix committee has expressed an interest in rebranding the Downtown. The Board members agreed that re-branding should not occur until after the updated Strategic Plan. Roth suggested that one of the bullet points should read "Implement vision created through strategic plan process." Presley stated that he would rather see it interspersed throughout the document, as the Strategic Plan will affect all of the work accomplished by the DDA. Roth suggested that it would also work to create an overarching goal that indicated this, as it effects all of the committees.

Roth asked whether or not the Board would like to be more specific within individual bullet points. Casey responded that he would like to see the Action Items remain more general, which would give the board flexibility in successfully accomplishing the items on the list. Ward asked Sullivan what he believes that City Council would prefer. Sullivan responded that most departments list specific projects under the general goal. He stated that if the Board was interested in pursuing the bike plaza project, for example, an action item that should be added is to perform a feasibility study and cost estimate. Ward suggested adding two bullet points: one that includes all facilities and one that includes just the new plaza. Casey asked if a discussion of a parking app could be added under the parking committee. Roth suggested a discussion on parking technology, including new technology to take accurate parking counts, and then including the parking data obtained into an app. Ward reported that the Parking Committee discussed the difficulty to obtain an accurate count utilizing the current method, as it only captures a snapshot of the data. This goal is included in the Action Item "Consider other options of collecting data to provide accurate and comprehensive information."

Roth asked if the term "Social Utility" is synonymous with "Social Media". Ward responded that it is the same.

Long expressed concern for the presence of large, aggressive development companies in Northville. He will check in with his contacts regarding recent activity at Northville Downs. Roth responded that the updated Master Plan for the City addresses his concern, and specifies uses for particular areas, and this issue should be approached with caution.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION (ATTACHMENT 6.A AND 6.B)

Presley requested that the Financial Information, which includes the Captured Tax History (Attachment 6.A) and the Line Item Detail Sheet (Attachment 6.B) be presented at the next meeting.

REQUEST FOR FRIDAY NIGHT CONCERT FUNDING (ATTACHMENT 7)

Ward presented a letter from the Chamber of Commerce requesting that coordination of the Friday Night Concert series, which is currently coordinated by the Northville Parks and Recreation Department, is taken over by their organization. The Chamber is requesting that the DDA remain a partner in this event, and also increase their level of financial support to \$10,000. The DDA currently contributes about \$8,000 toward the event, with the remaining funding from sponsors.

Motion by Ayers, seconded by Riley to support the Northville Chamber of Commerce in assuming the role of coordinator of the Friday Night Concert series, with the stipulation that all concerts remain in Town Square (with the exception of one concert located at Ford Field). **Motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Ayers, seconded by Riley that the Northville DDA will continue funding the Friday Night Concert Series at the amount that is currently budgeted for 2016 (\$7500). **Motion carried unanimously.**

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

None

FUTURE MEETINGS/ IMPORTANT DATES

- a. Marketing Mix Committee – January 7, 2016
- b. Executive Committee Meeting – January 13, 2016
- c. Next DDA Board Meeting – January 19, 2016
 - i. Review draft RFP for Strategic Planning
 - ii. Election of Officers
- d. Food and Beverage Owners Meeting – January 21, 2016

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

None

The next DDA Board meeting is January 19, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Miller
Northville DDA
Planning Coordinator