

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors**  
**December 21, 2021**  
**Zoom Meeting**

The December meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:03 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** *Mayor Brian Turnbull, Margene Buckhave, Aaron Cozart, Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Greg Presley, Greg Richards (Canton, Wayne Co.), Shawn Riley, Mary Starring*

**Absent:** *DJ Boyd*

**Also Present:** *Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/DDA Marketing & Communications Director, Jessica Howlin/DDA Marketing Assistant, Patrick Sullivan/City Manager, Dave Gutman/Resident, John Robey/Resident, Fred Sheill/Resident, Marilyn Price/City Council, Barbara Morowski-Browne/City Council, AnnaMaryLee Vollick, Resident*

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion by Turnbull, seconded by McKindles,** to approve the agenda and consent agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**INFORMATIONAL MEETING PA 57**

Ward reviewed the DDA Annual Report. Information highlighted included the current TIF plan, created in 1978 and last amended in 2015, will expire in 2040 if the DDA takes no further action. The DDA amassed a total revenue of \$1,046,897 for the fiscal year. The revenue sources include \$734,000 in TIF revenue, \$61,000 from the 2-mil property tax levy, \$3,000 in interest and \$214,560 in donations and the CARES Act Grant for Covid expenses. The report breaks down amounts the DDA received from each taxing jurisdiction. Expenditures totaled \$985,000 last year. Outstanding streetscape improvement balances are \$684,000 that will retire in 2025. Presley asked if any of the \$362,000 in Design balances are debts. Ward clarified that the debt service of \$174,335 is the only current outstanding debt, and is listed under a separate line item.

## **DDA GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2022-23**

Ward said the goals and objectives are organized by each standing committee. The goals and objectives will be presented to City Council at a special meeting on January 10, 2022. Presley inquired about the large list of goals on the Economic Development Committee. Ward clarified that the EDC has had a more active role in 2021 with the recent increase in developments occurring throughout Downtown Northville. Buckhave inquired whether any goals listed for the EDC could be moved to the Marketing Committee. Ward said the Marketing Committee has focused more on events and generating involvement in the community. **Motion by McKindles, seconded by Starring** to approve 2022-23 goals and objectives. **Motion carried unanimously.**

## **MURAL INSTALLATION**

Ward said that during the November DDA Board Meeting, Greg Presley had suggested additional research be done to identify artwork to use on the mural that could reflect the history of the Downs. Presley updated the Board that after gathering the research, which included reporters from the Ville, one of the owners of the Downs did not want the publicity of a search for photos and artwork. The group was not able to generate additional ideas for historical artwork to use on the mural installation. Ward said that given this information, the Design Committee voted at their December meeting to proceed with the previous recommendation of "Race Day in Northville" and move forward with the mural project.

City Manager Pat Sullivan inquired on the approval status of the Historic District Commission. Ward said the final design is in process and the DDA will take the final design to the Historic District Committee at the January or February meeting. Members of the board inquired about process of mural installation and lifespan of the mural. Ward said the mural lifespan is about 5-7 years. The mural is installed via heat process and would be removed with the same procedure. Over time, the mural will begin to fade. **Motion by Richards, seconded by Starring** to approve the mural design contingent on the Historic District Commission approving the design. **Motion carried unanimously.**

## **CONVERSION OF DOWNTOWN STREETLIGHTS**

Ward said the Energy Reduction Coalition ("ERC") program would allow the DDA to replace the remaining decorative street lights that were not updated during the streetscape project. There are approximately 100 lights that need to be converted, located mostly on E. Main and Cady Street. The initial lights purchased through Phillips are no longer available for purchase. The ERC also discovered that the remaining lights to be converted are not metered and are billed as fixed poles by DTE. DTE does not have a billing code for induction and going from 100W down to 85W would not produce enough financial savings to justify ERC's investment. ERC is able to install a test fixture outfitted with an LED light so that the DDA could compare the two light sources. The lighting fixture has also improved and is designed in a similar fashion to the induction lights with a single bulb. ERC has agreed to install the test fixture for a fee of \$1,000. If

the DDA decides to move forward with the conversion, the \$1,000 fee would be waived and ERC would present a proposal for the conversion. If the DDA decided to meter the system and convert to an induction light, the DDA would be charged the \$1,000.

**Motion by Starring, seconded by McKindles**, to authorize the \$1,000 expenditure of the installation of an LED test fixture that would allow the DDA to compare the color and appearance of the LED fixture to the existing induction lights. **Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING SERVICES**

**Motion by McKindles, seconded by Turnbull**, to recuse Greg Presley from this discussion due to his financial interest as a consultant on the Downs development project. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Ward said the Friedman Real Estate Group compiled a retail market study for Hunter Pasteur. The study stated that the DDA could support 17,000 square feet of commercial space. More than 5,000 square feet of this measurement is the lobby and leasing office of the Hunter Pasteur apartment building. In comparison, the DDA had a market study done in 2017 by LandUse USA, which stated that the DDA could support between 35,000 – 50,000 square feet of retail space plus a boutique hotel.

Ward said at the last EDC meeting the Committee discussed how to determine the amount of commercial square footage that could be supported by the North Downs mixed-use project. DDA staff was requested to contact Bob Gibbs, a landscape planner and urban designer in Michigan who has worked in Northville and knows the Northville community well to begin a discussion. DDA staff met with Gibbs on December 10<sup>th</sup> and discussed how to determine optimal commercial square footage for the Downs project and how to set up a database containing square footage of space, broken down by land use in the downtown. It was also discussed how to determine the impact of long-term street closures on the health of the downtown.

Gibbs put together a proposal for the DDA. His service and fee schedule included several options, ranging in price from \$5,000 up to \$20,000. Gibbs would utilize a software program called CoStar to compile a quarterly report for the DDA to summarize building use. Gibbs staff pays roughly \$20,000 per year for this service and then issues quarterly reports to clients for \$1,200. Gibbs pulled a complimentary CoStar report on Downtown Northville which shows 380,000 square feet of retail space. Downtown Northville also has 220,000 square feet of office space and 111 apartment units.

Turnbull said there will be an increased need for this data as more developments begin in the downtown, and the DDA definitely needs to obtain and track this data. Ward said vacancy rates in downtown have always been low, but there is a need to determine not only usage but the type of the retail mix. Sullivan added that several vacancies have been converted into a different use. When they are being constructed, they should not be counted toward vacancy rates. Ward suggested the DDA find 1-2 volunteers to compile and sort data into a spreadsheet for the EDC. Cozart said that it would be helpful for the DDA to have an unbiased report on this data.

Long commented that developers typically make decisions based on what they think will work and what the market will likely support. Long does not think the cost of using a consultant for data is warranted. McKindles said while he agrees with Long that many developers do use intuition on market trends, having data on commercial space will assist the DDA on making decisions with the new developments coming up. Starring asked if there are other programs that are more cost effective to compile the data needed. Ward said she will reach out to LandUse USA after the meeting to determine if there are other program options. Sullivan suggested a local real estate company may have access to CoStar that the DDA could partner with to reduce the fees in compiling the data.

Richards inquired whether there is a report that guides what to do with data once it is compiled; such as how to know when the market is saturated with a particular service or industry. Buckhave said that the DDA needs to have a good handle on downtown inventory however she does not want to spend a lot of money on obtaining the information. Buckhave added that many building owners have the information needed and the DDA should start by soliciting businesses directly for building usage and lease rates. Sullivan said that the city has information on total square footage in buildings however it is not separated by usage type. Ward said that contracting Gibbs for data will assist in deciding what type of commercial use can be supported along the Cady Street corridor. Gibbs Planning Group would also help with inventory of commercial spaces that is not project specific and support the DDA to find the impact of road closures when the EDC begins surveying and gathering feedback in the spring.

Starring suggested the DDA utilize a high school or college student to collect and organize data. McKindles added that the DDA could use Gibbs to collect the data, and utilize other sources for verification and organization of the data. Riley suggested that the board consider that the investment in this tool will assist the DDA office not just for current projects but many future developments. Richards added that the DDA designate a task to continually update the list after the initial data is obtained. Ward said the data can be updated in correlation with the DDA walking map updates.

**Motion by McKindles, seconded by Richards, to recommend to City Council to approve the hiring of Gibbs Consulting to review existing Retail Market Analysis on the Cady Street business corridor and develop a third-party independent analysis for an amount not to exceed \$10,000. Riley, Turnbull, McKindles, Richards, Starring, Buckhave, and Cozart voted in support. Long voted in opposition. Presley recused. Motion carried.**

#### **COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

- a. *Design Committee:*  
None

*b. Marketing Committee:*

Riley highlighted a successful Holiday to Remember. Johnson added that the event continued to grow over the three weekends in December. The DDA will regroup and evaluate if the event will continue to be several dates or just one weekend in the future.

*c. Parking Committee:*

None

*d. Organizational Committee:*

Ward said January is the election of new officers. There are currently openings for Vice Chair and Treasurer, recently vacated by John Casey and Carolann Ayers.

*e. Economic Development Committee:*

None

*f. Sustainability Committee:*

Gutman said that the sustainability team is available in any way needed to help with data collection on building land use in the downtown. In January, the Sustainability Committee will present the mobility network study to the DDA, which outlines traffic patterns and walkability throughout downtown.

## **BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

Presley asked if meetings will be in person next month. Turnbull clarified that right now, all meetings will be moving back to in person in accordance with State of Michigan regulations. Ward extended thanks to staff for the past year. Turnbull thanked the board for their time and talent during this past year. Starring said the recycled snowmen have been delivered into downtown and are on display at each of the entrances.

**Motion by Turnbull, seconded by Richards** to adjourn the DDA Board meeting.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:53 am**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Howlin, Marketing Assistant  
Northville DDA