

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting of May 19, 2020
Zoom Call

The regular meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:09 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Mayor Brian Turnbull, Margene Buckhave, John Casey, Aaron Cozart, Ryan McKindles, Shawn Riley, Mary Starring, Greg Presley, Carolann Ayers, DJ Boyd, Jim Long*

Absent:

Also Present: *Patrick Sullivan/City Manager, Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/Marketing & Communications Director, Jeremy Goodman/Resident, Dave Gutman/Resident, Marilyn Price/City Council*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda:

- a. March 2020 Financial Statement
- b. April 2020 Financial Statement
- c. March 2020 Invoice Report
- d. March 2020 Invoice Report
- e. March 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- f. April 21, 2020 Meeting Cancellation
- g. 2019 Taxes Captured
- h. 3rd Quarter Budget Amendments

Motion by McKindles, seconded by Turnbull to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MAINCENTRE PARKING DECK

Ward said the construction on the deck was delayed several days for an insurance endorsement. RAM Construction should be starting today if the weather cooperates. City Council approved the change order as seen in attachment 5A and it has been added to their initial contract. The deck repairs should take 6-8 weeks. The tenants of MainCentre apartments were notified of where to park during construction.

Sullivan addressed the ongoing lawsuit with Singh Management. A Special Assessment was approved by City Council. There will be a Zoom meeting with the attorneys on May 22nd. Sullivan stated there has been no further action on the Wayne County Circuit Court case to stop the Special Assessment so he believes Singh will go through with

their law suit which could take upwards of 7- 8 months. The goal is to continue to try and work out a deal that both the City and Singh can live with. The money for the repairs is initially coming out of the City's parking fund. Once the negotiations are finalized the City will determine how the repairs on surface parking lots and overall maintenance will be funded moving forward. McKindles questioned how the special assessment was allocated. Ward stated the allocation of costs is 60% Singh and 40% City. Long questioned why we don't ask for them to pay for all the improvements initially so we have more negotiating power moving forward. Sullivan said the City went with what the engineers recommended for cost splitting. Ward stated that if we go with the capital program that provides for ongoing maintenance on the decks, they should last 25 – 30 years.

Ward asked if the change order (attachment 5a) should also be approved by the DDA because eventually some of the costs could be coming out of DDA funds. Sullivan agreed it would be prudent to have a motion to accept the change order.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Buckhave to approve the change order in attachment 5a. **Motion carried unanimously.**

TIVOLI LIGHT PROJECT

Ward attached the estimate from Green Electrical Solutions to repair the festoon lighting in Town Square. Green Electrical Solutions works frequently with the City and the DPW. The first estimate is for full replacement of the lights (\$19,450.00) and the second was for making repairs to the sockets and replacing all the LED lights and globes (\$11,800.00). Green Electrical Solutions recommends doing repairs because the wiring is in good shape. Ward stated that we have \$18,000 in our current budget for these repairs. Presley asked how long the new repairs would last and Ward estimated another 12 years.

Motion by Long, seconded by Casey to approve the repair of the Town Square festoon lighting contract with Green Electrical Solutions. **Motion carried unanimously.**

UMBRELLA ORDER

Ward requested the Board approve the purchase of 4 new market umbrellas for Town Square outlined in attachment 7. The current umbrellas were purchased 13 years ago. The vendor, Greencorner, is currently having a 40% off sale and the DDA would like to take advantage of the sale to replace some of our more worn umbrellas in Town Square. We would also like to add some umbrellas to Old Church Square to provide more social distancing opportunities for outside dining. The total purchase cost is \$3117.60. This is not a budgeted item so the DDA would need to do a budget amendment utilizing the money we saved on the festoon lighting.

Buckhave commented that they have been talking to Center Street Grill about using the Old Church Square to expand their outdoor dining. The courtyard gets very hot in the summer and umbrellas would help shade the area.

Motion by Casey, seconded by Cozart to approve the purchase of 4 new umbrellas from Greencorner. **Motion carried unanimously.**

FOUNTAIN REPAIR

Ward provided photos and a description of needed fountain repairs in attachment 8. Over the winter the tiles in the fountain became even more compromised with sheets of tile falling off the sides. The damage by the drains most likely happened when the fire pits were installed with a frontend loader. Michigan winters are very hard on outside tile. Ward contacted Grissim Metz, the original designer of the fountain, for recommendations on tile repair companies. Johnson has reached out to several tile and pool contractors to secure bids for replacing and repairing the fountain tile. There were multiple solutions discussed from replacing all the tile, doing a waterproofing technique with a pool liner, and repairing the fountain as is with some new tile. The cost for repairing the tile came to \$3,980.00 but waterproofing and replacing all the tile ranged from \$12,500.00 to \$20,000.00. The DDA is recommending we just repair the tile this year and use Empire Tile and Marble to do the repairs.

Long inquired whether we looked at a concrete stain as an option. Presley said that MI winters would be hard on concrete as well. Presley thought it would be good to have a tailored cover made for the winter to prevent further damage. Ward stated the cover would not be practical if we decide to purchase new lighter weight fire pits. The Design Committee made a recommendation to the Board to replace the firepits with lighter weight units last Fall but the Board wanted something taller for safety concerns. The Design Committees intention is still to purchase new firepits this year. Ward said the DDA recommends having the fountain repaired this year because it can get done quickly and will last a few more years. Then the DDA will have the time to look for a more permanent solution. Presley felt that even with the fire pits installed there still might be a way to have a durable (kids could stand on it) custom cover made to protect the fountain. Presley felt the cover will allow the tile repair to last longer. Casey suggested moving forward with the repair so the fountain is operational this summer and then taking the next year to look at more permanent solutions.

Motion by Casey, seconded by Buckhave to approve the repair of the Town Square fountain by Empire Tile and Marble Company. The Design Committee should pursue a more permanent solution along with fire pits and a cover. **Motion carried unanimously.**

DOWNTOWN REOPENING PLAN

Ward provided a list of business resources the DDA has been promoting on our website and Social Media to help out the downtown businesses. Ward said we have been providing a weekly updated list of shops and restaurants that are providing curbside pickup and delivery. The DDA has also been doing lots of Social Media posting and press releases highlighting businesses that have been doing special things for first responders. The City has reduced outdoor dining permits and garbage pickup fees by 50%. The DDA is looking at ways to allow businesses to spread out into the streets through a special event permit when the Governor allows MI to reopen. The DDA has created 10 curbside pickup signs that the City police have hung at strategic locations throughout the downtown. The summer concert schedule will be discussed at the June 1st City Council meeting.

Turnbull mentioned that Traverse City will be reopening on Friday and closing down Front Street to traffic. This will be a test case for other cities considering closing their downtown streets. Ward said she had a Zoom meeting with restaurant owners and requested their opinion on closing streets so they would have more room to social distance. Ward stated it might just be weekends to start till we see how this works. The streets are narrow and we need at least 18 feet for emergency vehicles. Ward has been working on a layout for the downtown area. Ward said the State of Michigan is considering a bill that would designate a Social District in downtowns where restaurants and bars could expand beyond their regular designated outdoor dining areas. The State hopes to expedite this process by giving some of the LLC inspections to the local municipalities.

Ward highlighted the survey in the Board packet (Attachment 9.E) that was sent to restaurants and businesses to get their opinion on closing East Main and North Center. The DDA received 31 responses and all 31 were in favor of closing the streets. The DDA also reached out by phone to touch base with key businesses that did not respond to the survey. If streets are closed there will still be the ability to do curbside pickup from behind the shops and restaurants. The DDA plans to work with each business to help them develop a plan that is best for them, it is not one size fits all. The Early Bird Café is a good example of needing some unique help with outdoor dining from the DDA. They would need a permit to do outdoor dining in their parking lot and that is against current regulations. Long encouraged the City to be flexible and work with businesses to remove some of the existing regulations in order for them to recoup lost revenue from COVID-19.

Ward said restaurants are wondering if it makes sense to put up their outdoor dining platforms if the streets will be closed. They would get more seating if they just use the sidewalk and street in front of their restaurants. They are also concerned if the streets are only closed on the weekends where would they put tables and chairs during the weekdays especially if their platforms aren't up. Turnbull noted that is why Traverse City is shutting down Front Street for the entire summer. Casey expressed concern and agreed with Sullivan that closing down the streets for the entire week may have a negative effect on some of our service and retail businesses. Casey suggested starting out with just weekend closures and if it is successful expanding at a later date. Turnbull feels the Governor will be making an announcement soon to reopen businesses in our area by June 15th. The new plan for Northville streets would need to go to City Council on June 1st so there will be enough time to communicate reopening plans to businesses.

Riley said the concert schedule is on hold but the sponsors need to be communicated with about future plans. Riley said Ward and he had a couple conversations with JAG Entertainment about the concert line up and creative ideas for social distancing at concerts in the future. Riley suggested bands on a stage in a parking lot and cars could listen to the concert on their radio. Another suggestion was bands on a flatbed truck traveling to different neighborhoods doing mini concerts. Live streaming is also a possibility or strolling musicians in the street. Riley likes the idea of setting up a small band in front of the clocktower to entertain diners and people walking by. Johnson

expressed concern that people might bring lawn chairs and congregate in front of the bands. Riley agreed that there would need to be some controls to keep people socially distanced. Riley said there might be an opportunity to have bigger band concerts in August depending on what the State will allow.

Ward asked for feedback on how to utilize Old Church Square. Ward said we could have tables and umbrellas in that area for people to eat their carryout food or allow restaurants to expand their outdoor dining in that space. Ward drew attention for the need to maintain those tables and chairs from a safety perspective. The Seasonal employees could wipe off the tables and chairs first thing in the morning but ongoing maintenance could be difficult given time constraints. Buckhave said if Center Street Grill were to have tables in Old Church Square, they would be responsible for all the cleanup and maintenance of the area. Ayers feels that some of the responsibility falls on the people using the tables, they should have wipes and disinfectant available to wipe the tables themselves. Buckhave mentioned that Rochester was on the news and the merchants received a gift bag filled with safety products. They had embroidered masks made that said "Love local Rochester" with the City logo, it was creative advertising. Ward encouraged Board members to keep the good ideas coming.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATE

a. Design Committee:

Ward said she met with the two co-chairs of the Design Committee just to get projects started again. The highest priority is to get the entrance signs and new branding completed. Ward will send an updated list of projects later today.

b. Marketing Committee:

Shawn said the Marketing Committee has not met. Most events for the summer have started to cancel. Turnbull said the Chamber would most likely be canceling most of their events but are waiting to make a final decision till the Governor announces her reopening plans. The Farmers Market has started again on Thursdays from 8 am – 3 pm. The downtown Flower Sale will move to the Farmers Market lot. Turnbull has had conversations with Scott Buie from Northville Food & Wine, they have not cancelled yet but may consider moving to Ford Field since many weddings at Mill Race Village have been cancelled.

c. Parking Committee:

Casey said the Committee has not met.

d. Organizational Committee:

Ayers said the committee did not meet. Ward said she will send the Board an explanation of the third quarter budget amendments.

e. Economic Development Committee:

Cozart said the EDC is meeting on Thursday to discuss the new development on the corner of Center and Dunlap streets.

Motion by Turnbull, seconded by Casey to close the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

FUTURE MEETINGS/ IMPORTANT DATES

- a. Economic Development Committee – May 21, 2020
- b. Sustainability Committee – May 21, 2020
- c. Flower Sale – May 22, 23, 2020
- d. Memorial Day Parade – Cancelled
- e. City Council Meeting – June 1, 2020
- f. Marketing Committee Meeting – June 4, 2020
- g. Design Committee Meeting – June 8, 2020
- h. Executive Committee Meeting – June 10, 2020

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

The next DDA Board meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 am

Respectfully submitted, Jeri Johnson, Marketing and Communications Director
Northville DDA