

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting of July 14, 2020
Zoom Call

The regular meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:00 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*

Also Present: *Patrick Sullivan/City Manager, Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/Marketing & Communications Director, Dave Gutman/Resident, Marilyn Price/City Council, Fred Sheill/Resident, Barbara Moroski-Brown/City Council, Paul Gabriel/Browndog, Chief Maciag/ Northville Police Department*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Fred Sheill commented that he is very impressed with what a good job everyone has done and thinks the street closures have been a positive for the community.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda:

- a. June 2020 Financial Statement
- b. June 2020 Invoice Report
- c. June 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Presley commented that the June 4th meeting minutes need to be corrected to say the 1988 Victorian Festival not 1980.

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

DOWNTOWN REOPENING

- a. Reopening Plan Update

Ward asked for feedback from the Board about the Friday and Saturday evening acoustic music. The DDA is providing background music, single or duo artists, for the activities happening in downtown on Friday and Saturday evenings. Ward said the DDA is only booking a couple weeks in advance and posts who will be playing weekly on Social Media and on the DDA website. The DDA also created signage to remind people not to bring lawn chairs and if they can't socially distance to wear a mask. Center Street Grill and 160 Main have also started to provide music on Thursday evenings

which adds to the atmosphere. Ward reached out to the MLC to see if there were additional permits needed for entertainment and there are none.

Ward said that at the next City Council meeting she will be presenting a music contract for approval with JAG Entertainment. JAG did the Wednesday Acoustic and Friday Night Band concerts last year and did a great job with the lineup. The cost is about the same as we paid last year, averaging around \$2000 per week for the 4 concerts.

Riley said he felt the concerts have been very well received and the weather has been great so far this summer. Riley said JAG entertainment is ready to reach out to bigger name bands if the executive order is lifted and allows more people to gather later in the summer. Johnson mentioned that during the week we have contracted with Custom Channels to play music in Town Square over the speakers.

Riley also said that the restaurants on Friday and Saturday evening have a wait list so this has really helped them recover their losses. Buckhave agrees that this has been great for the downtown and wishes more restaurants would open on Sunday to keep the weekend momentum going. Ward said the difficulty in getting the restaurants and retailers to be open more has been staffing. Most of the retailers and restaurants have had a difficult time hiring additional staff. Casey agreed that getting people to come back to work has been the most difficult problem. Ward said retailers are not putting merchandise out on the sidewalks because they lack the staff to monitor the outside area.

Ward said she has continued to work with businesses on securing curbside pick up locations. The DDA has worked with the Police to identify new locations since the streets have been shut down. The Police and Fire Chiefs have been wonderful to work with and very supportive. The Fire department drove a fire truck down the streets to check the distance needed to get through safely. The Fire department was very engaging and worked with the businesses to give them the most flexibility with their outdoor dining setup.

Ward highlighted the "NO Biking" signs the DDA had made to encourage people to walk their bikes when they are on the closed streets. This has become a big problem since the bikers are riding close to outdoor displays and diners.

Price commented that she and Don have been going downtown earlier in the day to avoid crowds and concur that the downtown reopening is very well received. Price said to continue monitoring the concerts, the music seemed a bit loud for conversations.

Long cautioned the DDA not to be too hard on bike riders. He feels they are mostly orderly and add to the lively atmosphere. Long said families are biking down and parking to eat at restaurants.

b. Purchase of Additional Garbage Cans

Ward said the red barrels we are using as trash receptacles are not practical because they don't have lids and become heavy after it rains. Johnson did some research and found 42-gallon trash receptacles with lids from Webstaurant that would be a better solution for our increased trash. We got some additional vendors from DPW and did price comparison and they were all more expensive. The DDA recommends purchasing an additional 10 trash receptacles from Webstaurant totaling \$2182.60 to replace the red barrels.

Ward said the DDA was able to hire a 4th Seasonal employee so now trash is being managed 7 days per week.

Motion by Buckhave, seconded by Casey to approve the purchase of 10 Polytec Waste Containers in the amount of \$2182.60 from Webstaurant. **Motion carried unanimously.**

c. Impact of Downtown Reopening on DDA Budget

Ward updated the Board on the additional expenses the DDA has incurred since the reopening of downtown Northville. The biggest increase came from hiring a 4th Seasonal Employee. The DDA purchased tables and chairs for Old Church Square totaling \$2600 and new garbage cans for \$2200. The new signage for the reopening has cost close to \$5000 and the music is about \$2000 per week. Ward said there has also been some COVID safety related costs, distributing safety PPE to staff and purchasing Plexiglass shields. Another sizable expense was purchasing new water barrels for the street closures. We have saved money by not contributing to the sponsorship of various community events. To date our additional total out of pocket expenses have been about \$25,000.

Long suggested bringing back Tunes on Tuesday and using Ford Field to allow more distancing. Ward said that is a Parks and Rec program but that she would definitely relay the suggestion.

SOCIAL DISTRICT LAW

a. Summary of HB-5781

On July 1, 2020 Governor Whitmer signed into law the HB 5781 – the Social District legislation. The new law would allow the City of Northville to establish a “Social District” that would allow licensed permit holders the ability to obtain a permit to sell alcohol to customers for consumption in the commons area of a social district.

The new law would allow a Municipality to establish a Social District and a Commons Area inside the Social District where alcohol may be consumed.

The Commons Area would need to be clearly identified through signage and at least two qualified licenses must be contiguous to the Commons Area.

Qualified licensees may apply to the MLCC for a Social District permit to sell alcohol on the license holder's licensed premises for consumption in an established commons area. The alcohol must be served in a container that has the logo of the commons area and the logo of the permit holder clearly marked on the container. The container cannot be made of glass. The person purchasing the alcohol can only consume the alcohol in the commons area. The commons area cannot include the licensed premises of any qualified licensee.

Ward said this legislation was introduced 3 years ago so it is not new. Ward believes it is another tool that can be used to bring people into the Downtown. There are not many communities that have adopted the new legislation yet in MI but the DDA has looked at towns in Ohio doing similar programs.

Ward included a synopsis from Adkinson, Need, Allen & Rentrop explaining what a Social District is and how to navigate through the approval process.

Casey questioned whether retailers would like open alcohol being allowed in their stores. Starring responded that she is working for Chris VanDam and she believes Chris would welcome open alcohol in her store. Starring said she would have as well when she owned the gallery. Ward said it is a moot point because the current legislation does not allow the alcohol to be brought into stores. Turnbull expressed concern that this does not turn into a party in the streets. Turnbull said we will need to closely monitor the streets to make sure we are following the Governor's orders. Long questioned if retailers could sell their products outside on the sidewalk if someone had a drink. Ward said she will need to ask that question to the MLC and get back to the Board.

Cozart asked how the DDA is determining who is enforcing the boundaries and who sets the hours of operation? Ward said when we apply for the Social District with the State, we will have a plan of operation. The DDA would determine the hours of operation taking into consideration feedback from restaurants and the consideration of residents living downtown.

Ward said another item that needs to be determined is the level of security needed to enforce the Social District boundaries. Ward said this could easily become unaffordable depending on the hours of operation and level of security needed. Ayers is also concerned about the cost of security. Casey agreed, if there is too much security required this would take away from the profitability for the restaurants and not be worthwhile. Ward said our submitted application would have whatever security the DDA requires based on input from City leadership. It could be as simple as signage. Chief Maciag said they only have two one-man police cars on the road at any given time so the response time would be less than ideal if there was a problem. The Chief

has recommended six security people during the hours of operation but will fully support whatever the DDA recommends. Ward reached out to the City insurance company to see if we would need additional insurance and the Agent said it would not be necessary. The Agent also felt signage would be enough to contain the Social District from a liability standpoint. Sullivan said the only experience we have is what we have done in the past for downtown events. Riley said at this point we don't know the level of crowds the Social District will attract but it certainly won't be the same as an event. Ayers is concerned that if this new District generates too many people that social distancing would not be possible and a mask would need to be worn. Boyd feels that people are responsible and should be able to follow the rules.

Casey said there are many what-ifs and unknowns but to not take a chance because of all the questions would be a shame. Casey agreed with Turnbull that if things get out of hand, we can always pull the plug. Casey said this would not be a huge money maker for Poole's so the true motivation should be adding to the atmosphere in Downtown Northville.

Ward said the the 4 main blocks of our Downtown would serve as the Social District and Main between Hutton and Center and Center between Main and Dunlap could be the Commons Area. They would be connected at the intersection of Main/Center to allow movement between the two areas. These two areas proposed for the Commons Area are currently closed to accommodate expanded outdoor dining. Qualified license holders in this area that may be interested include: Center Street Grill, Simply Wine, Table 5, Lucy & the Wolf, Browndog Creamery, LeGeorge, 160 Main, Poole's Tavern. All of these license holders are located in the area next to the proposed Commons Area. The DDA and City Council would need to discuss if we enlarge the common areas to include other establishments.

Ward said some restaurants have requested having a second outside bar inside their existing outdoor footprint. Ward said this would require a separate license. Ward said this second bar would just be to better serve customers inside their outdoor dining areas. These bars would not be used to sell drinks to walk up customers from outside the designated outdoor dining area.

Ward said getting approval from City Council at their first meeting in August would require the DDA to meet again on July 28th. This would allow the DDA more time to get all the management and maintenance plans in place. Morowski-Brown agreed that this is an excellent discussion and from her reading about other communities that are doing similar Districts security varies widely. The DDA will need to think about the level of security they are comfortable with and make a recommendation. Price also agreed security is a big concern. Price is concerned about over taxing our police force. With that being said Price feels we can manage the problem collectively. Ward again addressed the cost concern of having several paid security personnel through the end of October. Ward agreed with Casey that if too much security is

required the District would be cost prohibitive. Ward also mentioned the application would be good through 12/30/ 2025.

Motion by Starring, seconded by Buckhave to approve the application process to create a Social District in Downtown Northville with signage only and no security personnel. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- b. MLCC Application
Covered in above discussion.
- c. Northville Plan Outline
Covered in above discussion.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATE

- a. Design Committee:
Boyd said the Design Committee is waiting for final input from Buzz about new branding and signage.
- b. Marketing Committee:
Riley said the Marketing Committee did not meet.
- c. Parking Committee:
Casey said Ward worked with the Police to get some short-term parking spaces for curb side pickup. One site was added near the clock shop on Dunlap. Casey said the group also talked about what impact the new development on North Center and Dunlap would have on the Downtown parking. The new residential units will need permits for overnight parking. The Planning Commission also asked the Parking Committee to weigh in on how to layout the parking lot behind the Marquis to maximize space and taking into account visibility and safety concerns. Casey said the Parking Committee decided they did not have the expertise to weigh in on how to make the parking lot more efficient and felt it was something the City engineers should design. Buckhave expressed concern about the overnight residential parking that will be needed for the new development. The residents are not required to move their cars and can take up a space for the entire day. Buckhave did not feel the lot can handle the increased parking for residential and also a restaurant. She also stated the lot behind Old Church Square is full and can't handle any additional parking. Casey said that other communities' police the parking and make residents move their cars by 9am.
- d. Organizational Committee:
Ayers said the Organizational Committee already reported earlier in the meeting.

- e. Economic Development Committee:
Cozart said the EDC has a meeting scheduled soon to discuss the new development at Center and Dunlap so they will have more to report next time. Presley mentioned that Watermark has withdrawn their application for the apartment complex on the Cady portion of the Downs Property.

Motion by Ayers, seconded by Casey to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

The next DDA Board meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 am

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