

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting of the DDA Board
August 18, 2020
Zoom Meeting

The regular meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent:

Also Present: *Patrick Sullivan/City Manager, Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/Marketing & Communications Director, Marilyn Price/City Council, Dave Gutman/Resident, Fred Sheill/Resident, Jeremy Goodman/Resident, Brian Maiorana/160 Main*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Brian Maiorana from 160 Main said he was starting to think about the Fall/Winter months and wants to maintain the same momentum this summer has provided. Maiorana is exploring a winter terrace for additional outside seating and wants to know the next steps in the approval process in order to have the terrace in time for the colder months. Ward said the Executive Committee discussed how to move forward into the colder months to help restaurants and retailers maintain their gains from the summer. The MLCC extended outdoor seating permit expires the end of October. Ward said their will be a Zoom meeting with all the restaurant owners to discuss next steps on August 19th. Ward said there have been lots of good ideas being discussed amongst business owners. Ward said because this is so time sensitive, we may need to bring some of these ideas to the DDA Board before the next scheduled meeting. Maiorana agreed that in order to get things ordered and constructed for Fall, businesses would need to be given the go ahead soon.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda:

- a. July 2020 DDA Financial Statement
- b. July 2020 Invoice Report
- c. July 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Long questioned the Downtown Reopening section on the second page of the July 14th minutes. Long does not recall any discussion about putting "Walk your Bikes" signs up in the downtown at the Board meeting. Long said we have always been a town that

encouraged pedestrians to ride their bikes into downtown. Northville's goal was to become a bicycle friendly town. Long feels that only a small minority of biker's cause problems. Long feels the signs project an unfriendly attitude to people riding into town. Sullivan said the discussion should stay focused on whether this was actually said at the July 14th Board Meeting by Ward and save the discussion of its merit for later in the meeting. Ward replied that she did say what was stated in the July 14th minutes.

Motion by Casey, seconded by Turnbull to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda. Jim Long abstains. **Motion carries.**

SOCIAL DISTRICT UPDATE

Ward said downtown Northville received their Social District approval from the State. None of the restaurants have received their permits to date but should be receiving them shortly. Seven restaurants have applied; Center Street Grill, Simply Wine, Lucy & the Wolf, Browndog Creamery, Table 5, 160 Main, and Pooles Tavern. The Twist logo has been sent to all the restaurants so they can begin ordering their cups. Each restaurant needs their own cup with both their logo and the Social District logo. There will be double-sided signs throughout town designating the Social District boundaries, some will be free standing and some will be on the light poles. As soon as the restaurants get their approvals from the MLCC the DDA will be ready to move forward with the program.

Ward said the staffing the Social District continues to be a priority. Living and Learning is now helping with cleaning and disinfecting tables/chairs, sweeping and weeding in downtown. This is part of their job skills training program and there will be no charge to the DDA. We have also hired another staff person to help part time to do weeding. The City has now lowered the age requirement to 16.

Boyd expressed concern that the signage says "alcoholic beverages allowed in the Social District" may send the message that people can bring their own alcohol into town. Ward said there will definitely be a learning curve as we move forward with the new Social District and we will need to educate the restaurants and the public. Ward said that you cannot take your "to go" drink from one restaurant to another restaurant, you can only drink it in the commons area. Ward also mentioned that alcohol can not be brought into retail stores which has been a policy in Downtown Northville before the new legislation. Sullivan said that the new state legislation has also said no alcohol allowed inside shops.

DISCUSSION ON PARKING CREDITS AND OVERNIGHT PARKING PERMITS

Casey opened a discussion about overnight parking permits. Casey said he understands that Raffi has already bought the building on the corner of Center and Dunlap with the understanding that he would be able to purchase parking credits and some of those would be for overnight use. Moving forward, Casey said he is concerned if more residential units are built in the downtown this could cause a huge parking problem like they have in Royal Oak. This would put a strain on businesses because customers would not have places to park. Casey said he would like to put a moratorium

on selling parking credits until the DDA can get a better handle on how the City's parking is handled. Ward said the discussion that took place suggested the City, Planning Commission, and Parking Committee work together to come up with a plan that addresses these concerns. Casey is concerned that the City is selling public parking to private enterprises. Ayers said the idea of selling parking credits was not that businesses were buying parking spaces but businesses were putting money into a fund to increase City parking at some point in the future. Ayers stated currently we are not using that money to increase parking in the community and agree with Casey that this might become a problem. Presley feels that the EDC and Parking Committees should work together to find a solution and avoid putting a moratorium on parking credits. Cozart agrees that the EDC should work with the Parking Committee to find a solution but also feels a moratorium would be helpful to have the necessary time to do some problem solving. Johnson questioned whether the new development at Center and Dunlap would be affected by the moratorium. Casey said no because that deal has already been made. Ward questioned what groups should be involved in tackling the parking credit issues. Sullivan feels it should be a group effort between the Planning Commission, EDC, and Parking Committee to provide a multi-disciplinary approach. Sullivan said that part of the master plan was to have more residential units in the downtown. He also cautioned to make sure the decision is based on parking data from periodic counting of the parked cars. Sullivan agrees that overnight parking can be a problem but also feels there are other types of businesses that create even a bigger drain on customer parking. Sullivan believes we should put a moratorium on the parking credits to buy some time. Ward said the police still do an evening count once a week but the daily counts were done by the DPW and those have not been happening for quite some time. Given that the DDA only has one seasonal staff person it would not be possible to do the daily counts. Turnbull said without the data the committee will not be able to make an informed decision. Boyd suggested if we are putting a moratorium on parking credits, we need a firm end date so the process moves quickly and does not stall indefinitely. Presley questioned whether we had a budget to hire some consulting help? Ward said we would need to look closely at the budget to decide we have funds available or if we would need to use our fund balance. The DDA could possibly partner financially with the City. Ward agrees that a consulting firm would be helpful since the parking committee already felt these decisions were above their level of expertise.

Long suggested not putting a moratorium on parking credits. Instead just put the moratorium on overnight permits. If a new business moves into town, they would then be able to purchase the necessary parking credits to open. Starring agreed if a new business were to take over an existing business but needed to purchase more credits they would be stalled. Riley said he doesn't see how this addresses the real parking problem which is too few spaces. Sullivan said that there have been more parking spaces added with the funds from the parking credits over the years. Sullivan agrees there will need to be a study to see just what parking problems exist and if the City needs additional spaces. Long believes the parking credit system has helped grow the downtown community in a positive way. Boyd and Casey agreed with Long that the moratorium should be narrowly defined to just be on overnight parking permits. Sullivan cautioned that many types of office businesses cause more parking issues than overnight parking causes.

Ward restated that the Board is looking for a joint committee to be formed from the EDC, Parking Committee and the Planning Commission. Sullivan suggested that each existing committee suggest a couple volunteers to sit on the new committee and then take it to City Council. The new committee can then figure out if they need the expertise of a contract company. Long brought up if an existing business has a change of use it might require more parking spaces and if we put a moratorium on parking credits, we will prevent a new tenant from leasing. Ward said that's why it is important that the DDA limit the moratorium to only a few months. Ward suggested holding off on a moratorium and let the committee decide if they need one in place. Casey feels the moratorium is important to motivate a change in the parking credits and permit issues. Boyd agreed the moratorium would provide the urgency that is needed to come up with a solution.

Motion by Long, seconded by Casey to place a moratorium on overnight parking permits for 90 days. **Motion carried unanimously.**

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATE

a. Design Committee:

Ward said the DDA is getting all the vector files from Bizzell and the construction drawings for the new branding and signage.

b. Marketing Committee:

Riley said the Marketing Committee had a good meeting. Riley highlighted the Mill Race wedding package program for \$1,000. Ward said that the DDA has been promoting the program on Social Media and have done a press release.

i. Skeletons are Alive

Ward had a meeting with Begonia Brothers and the DDA would like to move forward with the permission of the Board to put up the skeletons in downtown Northville again this year. The Launch Party will not take place because of COVID limitations.

Motion by Long, seconded by Turnbull to display skeletons in downtown Northville. **Motion carried unanimously.**

c. Parking Committee:

Casey referred to the previous discussion as his report.

d. Organizational Committee:

Ayers said the Organizational Committee did not meet.

e. Economic Development Committee:

Cozart said the majority of the EDC meeting was discussing the new development at Center and Dunlap. The committee is in favor of the new project. Cozart said that there was some discussion about parking and they will definitely participate in the newly formed parking committee. Ward said the parking credits for the new development were approved by City Council so they are now able to start the building project.

FUTURE MEETINGS/ IMPORTANT DATES

- a. Marketing Committee Meeting – September 3, 2020
- b. Executive Committee Meeting – September 9, 2020
- c. Design Committee Meeting – September 14, 2020
- d. DDA Board Meeting – September 15, 2020

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

Riley returned to the conversation about bike traffic that Long began at the beginning of the meeting. Ward said the single biggest complaint the DDA has had with the street closures is the bike traffic. That is why the DDA decided to have signs created to enforce the City ordinance. Ayers said that she also is appalled at how many bikers speed down the streets, sidewalks and even through Town Square. Riley has also noticed electric scooters becoming a problem. Johnson said the signs are not meant to discourage bikers to come to town but more to encourage them to walk their bikes in pedestrian areas. Casey and Boyd expressed concern about the number of signs throughout the downtown being overkill. Buckhave feels the DDA should keep the existing biking signs that have already been created. Long also agreed the DDA should keep the signs.

The next DDA Board meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2020.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 am

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