

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting of the DDA Board
November 17, 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 (Emmet County), DJ Boyd, Margene Buckhave, John Casey, Aaron Cozart, Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Greg Presley (Emmet County), Shawn Riley, Mary Starring*

Absent: *Carolann Ayers*

Also Present: *Patrick Sullivan/City Manager, Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/Marketing & Communications Director, Marilyn Price/City Council, Dave Gutman/Sustainability Committee, Barbara Morowski-Brown/City Council, Patrick Giesa/City Council and Sustainability Committee, Sandi Wiktorowski/Finance Director, Fred Sheill/Resident, Joe Kowalski/Plante & Moran, Anna Mary Lee Vollick/Sustainability Committee, Kathy Spillane/Sustainability Committee, Ashley Raden/Plante & Moran, Susan Haifleigh/Sustainability Committee*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda:

- a. October 2020 Financial Statement
- b. October 2020 Invoice Report
- c. October 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

PRESENTATION OF DDA AUDIT – PLANTE & MORAN

- a. **Audit Letter:** Kowalski from Plante & Moran thanked the City team for making the audit process go seamlessly especially during the pandemic. The audit was done remotely which was more difficult because all the documents needed to be sent electronically. The result was a clean audit and no adjustments were needed. The letter in the Board packet highlights the findings from the audit.

- b. **DDA Financial Report:** Raden from Plante & Moran highlighted the specifics of the Financial Report. In June 2020 the Fund Balance had approximately \$299,000 which is down from the previous year of approximately \$472,000. Raden highlighted the unassigned funds available to the DDA is \$226,000 and additional \$24,000 has been set aside for street improvements. The total revenue was approximately \$886,000 and expenses were \$1,000,000 with a net fund balance decrease of \$174,000. The DDA's most significant form of revenue is captured taxes. The increase in expenditures was primarily related to the downtown parking lot repairs and the other DDA expenses remained the same. Raden highlighted the Captured Taxes footnote 5 that showed the breakdown of captured taxes for the current year which remained relatively unchanged from the previous year. She also drew attention to footnote 6, the debt service commitments for the streetscape improvement project, it will expire in 2025. At that time the Northville District Library captured taxes might also end.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Starring to accept the DDA audit prepared by Plante & Moran. **Motion carries unanimously.**

SUSTAINABILITY PRESENTATION

Ward introduced the Sustainability Committee and thanked them for their hard work. In early 2020, the Sustainability Team was formed to initiate efforts that would help guide Northville toward becoming a more sustainable City. The team presented their PowerPoint presentation of the Sustainability Plan for the City of Northville. Their mission is to implement a comprehensive sustainability platform designed to protect and enhance the City's resources, prevent harm to the natural environment and the residents' health, while benefitting social and economic well-being of our City. The framework is built on three pillars; Environment (natural capital), Economic (financial and built capital), and Social (Human and social capital). They also presented their goals and objectives for FY 20/21. The Team will continue to make presentations to various interested City organizations while working on the goals outlined in the presentation.

Boyd asked how the DDA Committees could help facilitate these sustainability goals and objectives. Spillane answered that there are areas in Smart Growth for meaningful public spaces that could be addressed by the DDA. An example would be the Downs project site plan review. Given the DDA expertise it would be a benefit to the community to have a strong voice as the site plan for that area moves forward. Spillane also highlighted the future commercial development along Cady Street and creating user friendly parking while maintaining the walkability of that area. Gutman mentioned the 100 lights throughout the downtown that will be converted to more energy efficient lights. Casey expressed concern that future development is not handcuffed by the Sustainability Committee. Sullivan said that the Planning Commission is already in favor of sustainability initiatives because the incentives can be used in exchange for higher density or building height. Sullivan said in the near future the City will need to define what those specific sustainability measures will be for future

development. Casey mentioned the possible restrictions on building materials placed on a builder that may not comply with sustainability standards. Giesa replied that the goal of the Committee is to make recommendations and suggestions but not to create ordinances. That would be up to the City to implement based on what is presented and discussed. Long asked if there is a moratorium on the Downs Development. Sullivan said there is not a moratorium on development in that area. The master plan continues to be worked on with changes being made based on community input.

Motion by Long, seconded by Buckhave to approve the Sustainability Committee plan. **Motion carries unanimously.**

DISCUSSION OF DOWNTOWN ROAD CLOSURES

Riley updated the Board about the Governor's announcement to shut down indoor dining inside restaurants until December 8th. Pods and Stands have been ordered and will start being delivered soon for the Heat in the Street initiative. Riley believes shutting down the restaurants again will have a very negative impact on their bottom-line making Heat in the Street even more important. The DDA has reached out to several businesses looking for sponsorship to build more structures and will continue to do so till the \$300,000 goal is achieved.

Ward said at a DDA Special Meeting on September 8, 2020, the DDA Board approved the extension of the Special Event Application "Reopening Downtown" until March 1, 2021. This allows the streets to remain closed to vehicular traffic and for the retail and restaurants to be able to put up structures for the winter. The City Council approved the extension of the Special Event application at their meeting on the evening of September 8, 2020. With that being said, the City Council has always reserved the right to revisit the street closures on a regular basis to make sure it was in the best interest of the City. Ward said as the COVID stats continue change the DDA has had to revisit their Special Event Application.

The DDA, through discussion with Center Street businesses, discovered that Center Street Grille is the only business on N. Center Street that is planning to be outdoors during the fall and winter months. Tuscan Café is moving over to E. Main Street in the space recently vacated by My Little Paris; Simply Wine does not have an outdoor presence; and Rebecca's does not have plans for an outdoor structure. DDA staff reached out to the owners of Center Street Grille to discuss winter options before any structures were purchased. Several ideas have been explored including reopening Center Street to vehicular traffic. This would require Center Street Grille to move their outdoor dining onto the sidewalk or relocate to Old Church Square. This would be difficult given the long distance from the kitchen to a tent in Old Church Square. It would be very difficult to keep food warm. Center Street Grille and the Buckhaves (owners of Old Church Square) discussed the possibility of using Old Church Square, however Center Street Grille determined that it was not feasible. As an alternative, Center Street Grille suggested that the parking lane on Center Street near their business be

utilized in the winter with the water barricades used to separate them from the road. They are exploring a greenhouse style structure for outside dining. Another solution that has been suggested is opening up northbound traffic only allowing the southbound vehicular lane and parking spaces to remain closed. This would allow Center Street Grille to install an outdoor structure in the road and for the DDA's new Heat in the Street project to be installed on N. Center Street as well. The Stands and Pods could be installed adjacent to the west curb line of the street by Tre Bella V and Simply Wine.

Ward said the DDA staff reached out to the downtown businesses on Friday to let them know of this DDA meeting where the reopening of N. Center Street would be discussed and provided a zoom invitation for the meeting. We are encouraging business owners to weigh in during this portion of the agenda.

After discussions with all vested parties, the DDA decided to revisit the full Center Street road closure with the DDA Board to see if makes sense moving forward. There are many options to consider, Center Street could reopen partially with only one lane of traffic or only the parking spaces in front of Center Street Grille could be used for outdoor dining allowing two-way traffic to flow. A decision needs to be made as soon as possible so that Center Street Grille can move forward with their outdoor dining plans. Ward said there were some retailers along Center Street that would like to see Center Street reopened for the winter. The DDA would like to find a solution that will be good for all the businesses on Center Street.

Riley opened it up to participants for comments. Theresa from Dancing Eye Gallery would like Center Street to remain closed. The street closure has helped her business tremendously and she plans to have an outdoor structure to sell merchandise. Bobby Johnson from Colors of the Wood is very much in favor of the Center Street remaining closed. His customers have had only positive comments about the street closures. Johnson feels one-way traffic on Center would be confusing and could create safety issues. Phil Zakaria from Center Street Grille agreed that the Center Street closure has been a great thing for the entire downtown. Zakaria also feels one-way traffic could be dangerous and confusing. Zakaria and his partners have been discussing unique ideas to fill Center Street with family friendly activities. Center Street Grille plans to order several greenhouses to be used for outside dining. It is a huge financial commitment so they need to know if the street will remain closed. Zakaria also stressed that Center Street Grille wants to be a team player and will respect the decision made by the Board. Paul Gabriel from Browndog is in favor of Center Street remaining closed. Gabriel feels that with all the stands and Pods being created we will need more room on the streets. Jennifer Luikart from Mill Race Village is in favor of Center Street remaining closed. Luikart thought non-profits could help fill Center Street with booths. Luikart questioned whether there have been any traffic concerns since the streets have been closed. Sullivan responded the traffic on Wing Street up about 20% but traffic on other streets has been down. Landon Garrett from Center Street Grille wanted to thank everyone for all their hard work to help the restaurants stay viable. Center Street Grille is

committed to filling the street with outside dining, activities and entertainment. Susan Haifleigh lives on Wing Street is in favor of Center Street remaining closed. Haifleigh does not mind increased traffic on her street, she thinks helping the downtown businesses stay financially healthy is more important.

Riley asked the Board their opinion on keeping Center Street closed. Presley is in favor of Center Street staying closed. Turnbull wants Center Street fully closed. Boyd is in favor of Center Street remaining fully closed. Casey felt based on everyone's comments keeping Center Street closed is the right thing to do. McKindles thinks based on the momentum from the summer and the publicity we have received we should stay the course and keep Center Street closed. Buckhave is in favor of Center Street closed and filling the street with crafters. Buckhave is also grateful for the new stop sign that was put in at Dunlap and Wing and believes it should be permanent. Starring agrees Center Street should stay closed and it is too dangerous to partially open the road. Cozart is in favor of keeping the street closed especially since the businesses are making such huge financial investments in outdoor structures. Long is in favor of keeping Center Street closed based on the comments from the businesses. Riley believes Center Street should remain closed and more Stands and Pods need to be purchased to fill the streets. He encouraged everyone to contribute to the Heat in the Street initiative.

Motion by Casey, seconded by Cozart to approve keeping Center Street fully closed. Motion carries.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION & UPDATES

a. Design Committee:

Boyd had no updates.

b. Marketing Committee:

Riley said the committee met and spoke about winter activities. Buckhave talked about the Gnome Around Northville event. There will be all sorts of gnomes on display and they plan to have a window painting contest. The gnomes will be part of a scavenger hunt and the Town Square Christmas tree will be turned into a giant gnome.

c. Parking Committee:

Casey said the parking committee has been talking about all the different parking issues current and future. The Committee is discussing having a parking study commissioned. The revenue picture is bleak to fund any upcoming projects. Paid parking may be an option since currently there is no revenue stream.

d. Organizational Committee:

Boyd said there is a budget amendment needed for the Pod and Stand expenditures. An amendment to the DDA's budget is required in order to pay bills associated with the project since the DDA's original 2020-21 project did not

anticipate this project. Two entries have been made to the DDA's 2020-21 first quarter budget amendments: \$270,430 in revenue to account GL# 370-000-586.08 and an amendment of \$300,430 in expenditures to GL#370-861-977.00. The difference reflects the DDA's \$30,000 contribution to the project.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Casey to approve an additional first quarter budget amendment to include the revenue and expenditures associated with Heat in the Street program. **Motion carries unanimously.**

- e. *Economic Development Committee:*
Cozart said the committee did not meet.

FUTURE MEETINGS/ IMPORTANT DATES

- a. Economic Development Committee- TBD
- b. Marketing Committee Meeting – December 3, 2020
- c. Executive Committee Meeting – December 9, 2020
- d. Design Committee Meeting – December 14, 2020
- e. DDA Board Meeting – December 15, 2020
- f. Parking Committee Meeting - TBD

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 am

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