

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors**  
**September 26, 2023**

The September meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:09 am.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** *Aaron Cozart, Mike Jaafar, Jim Long, Ryann McKindles, Greg Presley, Shawn Riley, Margene Buckhave, David Cole, Mayor Turnbull*

**Absent:** *DJ Boyd, Steven Huprich.*

**Also Present:** *George Lahanas/City Manager, Brian, Lori Ward/DDA Director, Stacy Pearson/DDA Assistant Director, John Carter/City Council, Barbara Moroski-Browne/City Council, Dave Gutman, Bob Buckhave, Susan Hafleigh, Alan Maciag/Police Chief, Fred Sheil, Marylyn Price/City Council, Wendy Longpre/Director of Strategic Planning*

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

Long commented that the road slopes significantly in front of his building, located at 190 E. Main Street. During heavy rains the water flow is significant. Current gutters handle this water flow as there is a curb there. Long expressed concern with the proposed new “lowered concrete curb and gutter” and wanted to ensure that the City’s engineering firm that explores the curbless street will be aware of the existing conditions, so that sidewalks do not get flooded during heavy rains.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion by Turnbull, seconded by Buckhave,** to approve the agenda and consent agenda as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**REOPENING OF DOWNTOWN STREETS**

- a. **Bollard Update:** Lahanas provided an update on the bollard delay. He stated that the shipment went out September 29. There will be a pre-construction meeting with the construction company informed us that half of the bollards would be delivered at the beginning of October and the second half by mid-October. Streets will reopen with a goal of November 1, 2023 and the bollard install complete by that date as well. OHM will be onsite inspecting the area and will be overseeing the installation of the bollards. There is very little dust created by the install process and there will be no concrete cutting. The site will be secured and safe at all times. Additionally, there will be no conflict with placement if the curbless street design moves forward. Cole asked if there was a consideration for spring install to which Turnbull responded that there was not, and that the intent was to have them in before the Lighted Parade. Cole noted that there is potential weather wear and tear that could happen by having them installed before the winter. Turnbull said that DPW will be exercising them regularly to ensure proper use for spring. Training on how to use the bollards will occur with the City/DDA staff.

- b. **Merchant Meeting:** Ward reported that structure removals were in motion. A Meeting with the structure owners was held on September 7<sup>th</sup>. To discuss the removal of the structures from downtown and how they would accomplish the removal. A second merchants meeting was held on September 14<sup>th</sup>, which was open to all. They also discussed bollards and the November 1<sup>st</sup> reopening date. Because the timeframe of how long it will take to remove structures is unknown, it could take a bit longer to reopen streets. Removal will begin October 29<sup>th</sup> and run through Nov 1<sup>st</sup>. Merchants had expressed a need for removal to be done before the weekend of November 3<sup>rd</sup> to accommodate their opening of holiday shopping season.

Ward additionally reported that the company that installed the outdoor dining structures, Facet Company, will provide reassembly packages if needed and is working on a proposal to remove all 4 of the remaining structures. Another option is to have the structures sold on Biddergy, an online auction site. Both the DDA and City have used this site previously to dispose of surplus equipment. DPW will be available to remove the concrete blocks and will use them at the DPW yard unless otherwise specified for use. DPW will also be available to help. It is hopeful that there will be a quick removal of structures followed by DPW cleaning the roads before they are fully reopened. Turnbull suggested that Northville Lumber has also offered to assist in the relocation or removal of the structures.

- c. **Exploration of Curbless Street Design:** \$2,500 was approved by the DDA at their August meeting for curbless design with the City and DDA splitting the costs evenly. Grissim Metz Andriese has designed a plan to address outdoor dining in summer and parking in winter. These designs were shared at the merchant meeting and feedback was positive. The next step is to look at funding. Presley and Cozart requested to set up an EDC meeting within the next couple of weeks to look at the possibilities in depth. Lahanas also added that the FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) ordinance was discussed and that it was overall a great meeting.

Ward noted that there have been IT issues and if anyone has not gotten information from the DDA offices to please let staff know.

Riley asked if staff knew what the plans were for the other structures. Ward reported that Le George is retiring theirs, and there is the possibility of donating to non-profits. The plan for pods and stands is that the two in Town Square will remain in place, and all others will be removed by DPW and housed at the DPW yard.

## **FORD FIELD PRESENTATION**

- a. **Master Plan:** Longpre presented the Master Plan for Ford Field, which included a slide show and visuals. The original Master Plan for Ford Field was created in 1995, so it was time for an update of the Plan. The Ford Field Task Force was formed in 2020 and their charge was to create a Plan to reestablish Ford Field as a central gathering space. In 2021 the Task Force presented their report to City Council and in 2023 City Council entered into a contract with Wade Trim to prepare the updated Master Plan. A community survey was conducted, public meetings were held and a concept plan was created. Q&A followed Longpre's presentation. Long commented that it was important to retain the history of the space. Riley suggested that the City look at a solid roof structure to cover

the proposed bandshell to keep the musicians dry. Long inquired whether there was a way to incorporate the old concrete seating and concrete stairs into the new design and perhaps include a recognition of old championship football teams. Cozart noted that the play structure is close to the baseball field dugout. Some parents will love it, but some coaches may hate it. The design includes additional parking that increased from 62 – 92 spaces.

Cole raised concerns over bike lane access points to get to East Ford Field and Turnbull stated that in years passed there was a bridge there. He stated that in future iterations of the plan a new bridge should be installed by the Chamber of Commerce parking lot but that it is currently not included in this phase of planning.

Longpre concluded her presentation by stating that grants were in place and moving forward and that “Ford Field” would retain its currently name. The project will be funded in part through a Clean Water grant to address some of the needs at Serenity Point and the Michigan Enhancement Grant for \$910,000 for the barrier free gateway. An application has been submitted to MEDC to replace Fort Griswold. The total costs for all of the Ford Field projects totals \$17,000,000. McKindles asked if there was a priority list for the project since they cannot all be done at once. Longpre noted that there is no priority list at this time because of funding opportunities. Lahanas added that the city can apply for funding yearly. Lahanas noted that the City will continue to explore all funding opportunities and noted that there is still Covid money being awarded for projects.

- b. **Barrier Free Gateway Plan Presentation:** Longpre led the presentation and discussion on the Gateway to Ford Field project. In 2007 the DDA had developed concept plans for replacing the stairs and improve the landscaping from Hutton Street into the park. Between 2021-23 the Ford Field Task Force worked with Northville Public Schools to solicit design input and develop design concepts. The Task Force applied for and received a Congressional Direct Spending fund for the barrier free gateway and bank stabilization project. In addition, the Clean Water to repair drainage structures at the Rouge River. Three options were provided in Plan – A, B, and C for entranceway concepts:

Option A – A new cross walk and island extension would be introduced along Hutton. This is recommended on all three options. An overlook plaza with an obelisk feature which would mimic the design of the clock tower downtown. Gateway would provide a gathering place and overlook rather than entering directly into the park. To access the park, you would use the existing sidewalk and enter the park further down Hutton. The chain link fence would be removed and the bank stabilized. The northern section of Ford Field would be reconstructed to include the ramp. This design concept meets ADA requirements with respect to grade change. There is a lot of utilities located along the edge of the project area which will need to be addressed. This concept is the lowest cost of the three concepts.

McKindles asked what the purpose of the chain length fence. Longpre responded that it was for safety purposes Cole raised concerns over south end edge of the hill vegetation being overgrown and blocking visibility. Longpre noted that clearing of vegetation would occur in phases based on desire to keep hilled area stabilized.

Option B – This Plan has a new cross walk, a plaza with an obelisk, a ramp going into the park from the overlook, an 8.3% slope and has landings every 30 foot. Periodically benches could be placed on the ramp to provide seating. Retaining walls would be required and would be 6 – 14' in height. Lawn or low maintenance ground cover would be installed to stabilize the slope. This concept I estimated at \$1.5 - \$2 million. The benefit of this plan is that it gets you immediately into the park and gets a ramp in the shortest distance, however the steepest grade.

Option C – This option includes a new crosswalk and island extensions on Hutton. is the most expensive, due in part to its long length. The length requires more railing and retaining walls. This option stabilizes a longer section of bank All of these factors contribute to higher costs. The option has an entry plaza with a gateway feature that you walk through to access the park. The ramp has a 5% slope and only requires one set of hand rails. This option is a gentler grade and is easier to traverse. Spectator seating is included and there is potential for additional seating on the ramps. There is a continuation of the design theme from the downtown. None of the three options currently have stairs included in the design, but they could be added. This option is estimated at \$2.5 - \$3 million.

Cole commented that the connective to Option C is less desirable than the other options as it is located further north into the residential area and is less visible. In addition, the connection is less visible. Presley stated that in an earlier plan had a more extensive overlook that was 20 – 30 deep. The DDA felt that the plaza was a positive feature.

An unofficial vote was cast and all but one voter chose Plan A. Ward noted that the vote was in favor of Plan A, with the addition of stairs and with an emphasis on saving and promoting Northville's history

## **NON-MOTORIZED PLAN PRESENTATION**

Longpre reported that the plan was prepared by Greenway Collaborative based on an update from the 2013 Plan. The goal for the project that were provided to the consultants was to look at the safety of all modes of travel in the community. They looked at all issues, opportunities and goals, and an open house was held to get community input and a web survey was conducted. Longpre noted that feedback from that meeting had been incorporated into the plan. The final plan will be going to City Council barring any substantial issues. The Mobility Team reviewed the Plan and provided feedback to the Greenway Collaborative. The Plan includes foot paths, bikeways, shared paths, seasonally opened pathways, crosswalk treatments, traffic calming circles, Riverwalk vision, and alternative routes.

Presley noted that there was not parking on S. Center Street, but there are bike lanes. Presley stated that he believes that parking is needed to support the residential neighborhood and it helps calm traffic. He disagrees with this aspect of the Plan. Cozart asked if there was a review process and if there was flexibility to make changes as the plan is implemented to which Longpre responded that they strive for accuracy but this is a guide for implementation and things can be changed. Longpre stated that the document is a plan not an ordinance. Longpre concluded by stating she would provide a link to the Plan.

## **INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

- a. Design Committee: no updates
- b. Marketing Committee: no updates
- c. Organizational Committee: DDA Bylaws – Ward is recommending that the DDA review and update the DDA Bylaws. Specifically, changes need to be made to reflect State Enabling legislation and updates to our standing committees. In addition, the current DDA bylaws do not clearly address what constitutes a quorum for conducting business. The bylaws update will fall under the Organizational Committee led by DJ Boyd. Ward met recently with Cole who also offered to participate in the review and update of the bylaws. Ward will seek input and review from the new City Attorney Tony Chubb. A draft with proposed changes will come to the DDA Board in November.
- d. Economic Development committee: Ward provided an update that the Northville District Library has opted out of future TIF capture, all other taxing jurisdictions have stayed in. For the October 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting there will be two ordinance amendments and a resolution going before City Council for action. Ward stated that the Library's TIF revenue yields about \$27,000 annually.
- e. Parking Committee: no update

## **BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

Board and Staff Communications: Cole asked what the restaurants thought of the new FOG ordinance. Currently there are grease dumpsters behind the restaurants in the parking lots where restaurants bring grease in buckets and pour it into these structures and then periodically, they are removed. It is a mess for DDA and DPW staff. Additionally, it has become a state issue so an ordinance has been given that each restaurant. Ward responded that the plan is moving forward and that all involved were ok with the plan and that there is still time to meet with the vendors to set up new grease management systems. Restaurants will be responsible for obtaining their own grease removal systems, but a vendor has been suggested.

Ward also gave announcement on Skeletons Are Alive Launch Party October 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-9 pm and that the skeletons would remain up throughout October.

Additional discussion was had on Victorian Festival to which Cozart announced that a post event report was being gathered to assist in rebuilding the event. Riley said that a group was needed to look at the entire event. Turnbull said that by the bicentennial it will be worked out, bigger and better.

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

**Meeting adjourned at 10:22 am.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy Pearson, Assistant DDA Director  
Northville DDA