

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors
February 15, 2022

The February meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Mayor Brian Turnbull, DJ Boyd, Aaron Cozart, Mike Jaafar, Ryan McKindles, Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Greg Richards, Shawn Riley, Mary Starring*

Absent: *Greg Presley*

Also Present: *Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jessica Howlin/DDA Marketing & Administrative Assistant, Dave Gutman/Resident, Fred Sheill/Resident, Marilyn Price/City Council, Barbara Morowski-Browne/City Council*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by McKindles, seconded by Turnbull, to approve the agenda and consent agenda. **Motion carried.**

2022-23 DRAFT DDA BUDGET

Ward said the budget is for the time period of July 2022-2023. This year the DDA's TIF revenue has been projected to increase by approximately \$20,000. The DDA will see this number increase in the coming months due to recently completed projects that the Assessor is completing his annual work on. The DDA saw increased revenue last year on outdoor dining permits. The permits were issued for 12 months instead of the normal 8 months and the DDA saw a revenue of approximately \$21,000 from these permits. Ward said she expects the revenue from permits to be lower because some restaurants did not elect to continue and the permits were issued for 8 months instead of 12.

Ward said there are a couple of years remaining on the bond payments for the street improvement project and there has been discussion on whether to retire the old debt and bundle new projects for a new debt. Boyd said that the easiest spot to read this on the draft budget is the annual increase in fund balance once the debt service is retired in fiscal year 2025-26. Boyd added that the DDA should consider which is more advantageous, having increased cash flow annually and translating that cash flow into new debt. The bond debt will need to have a dedicated project, it can't be held as a 'rainy day' fund. Boyd said that with the Downs project it might be beneficial to consider

the Cady Street connector as a DDA project. Boyd said the DDA should consider discussing the Downs as the developer is seeking support for organizing the property – including parks, daylighting river and public purpose space. Part of the plan is to get upfront assistance which is akin to the DDA not collecting tax revenue for a period of time. Under normal circumstances the development would provide an increased tax base for the DDA, but with the Brownfield TIF, the DDA would forgo the tax revenue for a period of time in exchange for concessions in the project. Turnbull added that the TIF is like a payback program and the developer has not applied for the brownfield funding yet. The Brownfield Review Committee includes the Chair of DDA/Shawn Riley, Planning Commission/Donna Tinberg, City Council/Mayor Brian Turnbull, Sustainability/Dave Gutman, Riverwalk/Nancy Darga and Brownfield/Pat McGow.

McKindles asked the status of the Tivoli lighting project. Ward said the DDA is waiting on a quote from Begonia Brothers and the original pricing was approximately \$125,000 just for lights on Main Street. Ward added that the Design Committee discussed outlining buildings with lighting instead of stringing lights between buildings across the street to eliminate the tension on the building facades. Milford installed Tivoli lighting in an alley and installed poles, which is also costly.

Ward said that the DDA will start with a \$360,000 fund balance and end the year with \$400,000 fund balance. Boyd said the DDA needs to consider the fund balance as an emergency savings and determine the maximum needed to cover an emergency, then reduce the fund balance to utilize some of the excess for other projects. Starring said she would like to see a bigger fund balance. McKindles said that Southfield DDA doesn't really have a fund balance, however, they have a different set up and lower revenue sources.

Ward said one final revenue item to point out is \$95,000 in street improvements. Part of the overall fund balance includes a street improvement millage that the city approved a few years ago. One item that needs to be improved is the area around the clock on Main Street. Ward discussed this improvement with DPW and the DDA will partner with the DPW to handle this project.

Richards asked about the wages and salaries line item. He noticed that wages have not increased over the past several years and the DDA should budget to increase wages for employee retention. Richards added that \$15 per hour is not realistic in the current economy. Richards recommended \$18 as a starting wage and increase from there.

Ward said that in addition to already budgeted expenditures, line items were added for the Gibbs Market Study and the mural. A line item should also be added for painting the planters downtown and a new DDA sign for the City Hall building. Ward added that new expenses for next year will include street light conversion and repair damaged and missing lights. The DDA would also like to replace the fire pits, the current ones are unreliable and need to be retired. Ward said that new options would be programmable fire pits and with a glass insert to contain the flame.

Ward said that new items may be considered on the budget once there is a final determination on street closures.

DOWNTOWN STREET CLOSURE DISCUSSION

Ward said the DDA previously discussed providing surveys and hosting town halls in addition to utilizing a data consultant to find impacts on closing the streets with the intent to see how the closures look in all four seasons. Last year everything was closed and outdoor dining was used frequently. There are no longer restrictions on indoor dining and combined with the cold weather, the outdoor dining has not been utilized. The DDA has received many calls concerning when the streets are reopening since many spots currently look like a storage area. Turnbull said that the new Chamber of Commerce director would like to partner with the DDA to have more events to drive traffic downtown. Turnbull added that Dave Marold, professor at EMU and on the Northville Zoning Board of Appeals, has offered to work with the DDA to consult with the street closures, and that the DDA should get the surveys out as soon as possible. Long said that surveys should be prioritized to downtown businesses. Cozart said the EDC discussed concerns about the weather causing skewed results if the surveys are done now. Restaurants have had issues with opening outside due to staffing and heating, not strictly because of the weather. Restaurants have expressed frustration with no help from the fire department on what is up to code for heating the structures.

Richards said that Browndog does not open unless it is at least 40 degrees or warmer on weekend because propane is so costly and they are losing money to run the heaters. Long said he is an advocate for having Center Street open all the time and would like it considered if Main could be closed on a seasonal basis. Boyd and Jaafar agreed with Long about closures needing to be a seasonal option. McKindles said he doesn't see a need to keep Center Street closed, especially during the winter. McKindles added it may make sense to have Main Street closed year-round. Richards said that the businesses need support from the city if the closures are seasonal due to the challenges of installing the outdoor dining structures. Turnbull suggested hiring a 3rd party to install and tear down the structures at the beginning and end of the season. Turnbull also said that if structures are permanent, the Historic District Commission will have to be involved in the design process. Jaafar said that the DDA should also get feedback from peripheral businesses around the street closures. Ward said the EDC also discussed the possibility of extending the social district to a wider area to include The Garage, Tiramisu, and others, as well as reviewing hours of operation as research moves forward.

Boyd said that the design element of the street closures, which is highly dictated by code enforcement, is another important aspect to consider. Boyd said there will have to be a specific list of guidelines for what is acceptable. Turnbull said the DDA will have to ensure there is a barricade to stop traffic as well as signage with reflective material. Boyd said the temporary closures seem to have stricter guidelines for signage and some type of legislation should be considered added to make the entrances look nicer. Jaafar said strong road blocks are very important due to societal issues that have gone on in recent years.

Riley inquired on whether there has been feedback from retailers other than the restaurants. Ward said that the Northville Business Association Merchant group is

highly in favor of keeping the streets closed and will be having a discussion on the subject at their next meeting on March 8. Jaafar said that the DDA needs to be creative to help the outlier businesses to get the word out about how to navigate to these spots with the street closures. Richards said that when the street closure discussion is presented to the community, the DDA should also present available barricade solutions for the long-term. Riley said the DDA should plan to distribute both surveys and a town hall. Cozart would also like to include Dave Marold as a resource to get the data collection process started. Boyd suggested to eliminate bias there should be a survey done both in winter months and again in the summer months. Ward said the surveys conducted last year were sent via Mailchimp and generated over 3,000 responses.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

a. *Design Committee:*

Boyd said the test lighting is in front of the First Presbyterian Church, and shows induction, LED and high-pressure sodium lighting. The color separation in person is not as significant as the photo in the packet and the only viable option is to use LED lighting because it is more cost effective. Ward said ERC will be changing the lumen to see if they can provide a softer/warmer LED option. Ward added that ERC will do the updates and factor in any applicable savings. Boyd said the EV charging stations are installed with more on the way. There will be a total of 10 installed. There are two at 120 W. Main, four at the lower-level Cady Street deck, and there will be four installed in the Northville Square parking lot. The DDA also received a check from the charging stations for \$47.63. Turnbull added that the EV charging company will monitor usage and make recommendations if the program needs to be expanded. Boyd said entranceway signs have been bid and prices have gone up for inflation. The committee has asked DPW if they are able to assist this project. The signs that need to be updated are located at the four main entrances to town as well as 17 city limit signs. Additional items the DDA will be moving forward with in coming months include Tivoli lights, fire pits and the mural project.

b. *Marketing Committee:*

Riley said the chili cookoff, "Chili'in the Vill" will take place on February 26. Several restaurants are participating as well as the City and Township fire departments. There will be a Bridgerton themed ladies' shopping night on March 24.

c. *Parking Committee:*

No meeting was held.

d. *Organizational Committee:*

None.

e. *Economic Development Committee:*

Cozart said that the EDC met to discuss street closures. The EDC is also looking at expanding the social district. Bob Gibbs is presenting the retail market study at the Planning Commission at tonight's meeting.

f. Sustainability Committee:

Speaking on behalf of Gutman, Ward said that Northville has been certified as a Tree City again this year. City sustainability metrics have been sent to City Council for review. Spillane and Gutman are on the Wayne County Sustainability Advisory Committee and representing the City of Northville. Gutman said thank you for the EV charging stations.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Richards said that on February 16, Browndog will be featured on “Food Paradise” on the Cooking Channel at 10:00 pm. It will re-air occasionally on Travel Channel, Food Network and Discovery. Browndog also has a creamery division and they are expanding their distribution to Meijer and markets outside of Michigan, including Indianapolis. Browndog is reopening their Farmington location in late spring and the restaurant will also be part of Detroit Shipping Company opening a location in Lansing.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 am

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Howlin, Marketing & Administrative Assistant
Northville DDA