

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

The March meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:03 am.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: *Greg Presley*

Also Present: *Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/DDA Marketing & Communications Director, Jessica Howlin/DDA Marketing & Administrative Assistant, Dave Gutman/Resident, Fred Sheill/Resident, Marilyn Price/City Council, Barbara Morowski-Browne/City Council, Sarah Prescott/Northville Schools Board of Education, Jim Koster/Resident*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Jim Koster, resident of St. Lawrence Estates, read a letter to the DDA regarding the February 15, 2022 Planning Commission meeting and the Gibbs Market Study presentation. Koster said the presentation was unimpressive and did not consider other development projects happening downtown, including the Foundy Flask and the Delano Condo development on Cady St. Koster added that the data included in the study was not reflective of the downtown and needs more analysis and explanation. Koster asked what the DDA stance was regarding the study. Boyd said the discussion of the market study could be added as an agenda item for a future meeting. Long said the Gibbs presentation was not credible. Long added that the analysis did not offer a real picture of the downtown and businesses were not surveyed. Retail is difficult to attract in a storefront and the downtown already has many stores that Gibbs suggested be added to the Cady corridor. Long asked that every board member be sent a copy of the letter from Koster.

Sarah Prescott introduced herself as president of the Northville Board of Education. Prescott added that the school does not take a position on the developments, however, the schools have space for the developments and would benefit from the added tax revenue.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by McKindles, seconded by Cozart, to approve the agenda and consent agenda. Motion carries.

2022-23 DRAFT DDA BUDGET

Boyd said that the DDA is in a position to be additive to the fund balance instead of negative. There are adjustments to be made but there is roughly \$20,000 that is unassigned in the next budget. The changes to the budget are mostly on the revenue side due to tax capture for new construction. Boyd would like the DDA to set a benchmark for the fund balance to represent 25% of revenues. This percentage would be approximately \$245,000. The DDA would use this as a cushion to be able to utilize these funds in the event an unexpected expense comes up. Boyd pointed out that the budget document shows the unrestricted fund balance continues to grow over the next few years. McKindles said the 25% sounds like a reasonable limit to start with and asked if the DDA generally keeps this percentage. Ward said the fund varies due to different projects that come up, for example the Comerica Connections Walkway. Long asked why the wages/salaries are different from page to page and if the total is indicative of the DDA staff wages and salaries. Ward said the budget reflects a certain percent of each salary is allocated to individual categories, which are broken down by committee.

Long said he would like to see an overall summary page of the budget to better clarify details. Sullivan said there is not a summary and government budgets are always allocated by categories. Richards said that he would also appreciate an overall summary of the budget to cross reference when reading the breakdowns. Ward said the budget format has not been changed and the template is the same as it has been over the past twenty years. Sullivan said the finance department can put together a summary for the DDA Board to review. Boyd said a clarification will be beneficial and the board cannot move forward until there is understanding. Boyd would like to have the Board reconvene for a special meeting to discuss the budget before the City Council budget review on April 11th. **Motion by Long, seconded by Boyd, to table the discussion until a future meeting. Motion carries.**

DOWNTOWN STREET CLOSURE DISCUSSION

Ward said it was discussed at the last EDC meeting that the street closure surveys should be jump started to this spring. The DDA anticipates doing an updated version of the survey that was conducted last year, which was facilitated by Carlisle Wortman. The survey went out digitally to a variety of email lists, including DDA newsletter subscribers, boards and commissions and was posted on social media. The DDA received over 3,000 responses from people that self-identified if they were downtown residents, business owners or outside of the community. Sullivan noted that the survey last year was designed so participants were only able to complete the survey once.

Ward said the EDC also discussed if the survey should be an open or a scientific survey. For the staff to move forward, the DDA board needs to decide which type of survey and if they would like to utilize a market research group that strictly does surveys, or a planning group such as Carlisle Wortman. Riley said the survey last year took about 30 days to gather information. Riley added that an open survey would include mailers and Carlisle Wortman does not have the staffing capability to handle this. Riley said the survey should be geared specifically on who is impacted the most by

the street closures, including retailers and residents. Jaafar said he agrees and he would also like the board to make a recommendation to open Center St. immediately since there are no indoor dining restrictions this year and people have not been utilizing the space as much as last year.

Ward said that the surveys conducted last year cost approximately \$800. The quote from Beckett Raider for this year is approximately \$5,600. The DDA Board needs to be very specific about which type of survey to conduct as the pricing varies greatly. Turnbull said he has been in contact with Dave Marold to get advice on how to take last year's survey and update it to move forward this year. Richards said the DDA should invest properly in the surveys. Sullivan added that when the City surveyed residents on the road bond issue, they found that the open survey allows anyone to vote, whereas a scientific survey only takes a percentage. Some people might be upset to not be included in the percentage.

Prescott asked why a survey needs to be done outside of the downtown area if the business owners overwhelmingly want the streets open. Turnbull said at the last Northville Business Merchants (NCBA) meeting, the entire group was in favor of keeping the streets closed. Johnson added that the NCBA group polled was a small sampling of downtown businesses.

Buckhave said the survey should start downtown then continue on to outlying groups; Starring and Boyd agreed. Sullivan suggested doing the survey in the same manner as last year, and poll the entire community at one time. Jaafar would like to see action taken on the subject, as this was also discussed last month.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Turnbull, to allocate a budget up to \$3,000 to conduct a survey and use the previous survey as a foundation for the new survey. The survey will open on or before April 8, and remain open for three weeks subsequent to the open date of the survey. **Motion carries.**

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Ward said the document outlining DDA Standing Committees highlights the committee chair and members as well as what each group does. Ward recommended that any members not currently on a committee take a look at the descriptions and select one or more to get involved in. Riley added that committee involvement is great because the committees help shape what the DDA does. Buckhave questioned why some committees do not have a board member as a chair. Ward said per DDA bylaws this is okay and can happen when no board members are interested in chairing a committee.

Riley reminded the board that board members are representative of the City in addition to the DDA and to be mindful of representation at meetings. Riley added that as a conflict-of-interest reminder, any board member with a personal interest or comment needs to remove oneself and identify if speaking on behalf of a business or personally; not from the DDA as a group. Riley also noted that the Economic Development

Committee discusses and makes recommendations based strictly on items within the DDA boundaries.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

a. *Design Committee:*

Boyd said the LED lighting shift has begun and feedback has been positive. The middle pole in front of First Presbyterian Church has already been converted for anyone interested in seeing an example of the new lighting. The DDA received its first EV charging station payment, in the amount of \$47, from the stations behind 120 Main, for two months of service. Boyd said the mural project at Lucy & The Wolf is no longer an active project. The building owners were not happy with the design and rescinded their offer to use the building. The owners would like the Design Committee to create a new design. The original mural may still be installed on another building. Boyd added that he hopes the DDA Board will move quicker to make decisions on some of the Committee's projects going forward, as this project was on the discussion table for 6 years.

b. *Marketing Committee:*

Riley said the chili cookoff was a huge success. There is also a ladies' shopping night coming up next week. The DDA is currently putting together an updated walking map. Johnson said she met with James Gietzen from JAG Entertainment. JAG is not able to accommodate a larger first Friday event this summer but may have opportunities to book a few larger acts throughout the season. At this point, the DDA will just continue with the acoustic acts on Friday and Saturday nights. Ward added that the DDA should consider whether or not to continue the longer concert season. The schedule was Memorial Day through Labor Day before the pandemic, but the past couple years it has been extended through Halloween. Ward said that Town Square doesn't have a lot of room to accommodate a larger event due to the stands and outdoor dining. Riley suggested the DDA could schedule a larger first Friday band and skip the first Saturday each month, or have the bands perform in front of the Marquis instead of Town Square. Richards said the DDA should switch to only Saturday night concerts after Labor Day.

c. *Parking Committee:*

No report

d. *Organizational Committee:*

Boyd said the Board needs to have a special meeting to approve the budget before April.

Economic Development Committee:

Cozart said the EDC has not met since the last board meeting, but will be meeting next Thursday, March 24, at 8:30 am. The EDC is planning to dissect the entire Downs project and bring a recommendation to the DDA board after the meeting.

e. *Sustainability Committee:*

Gutman said the team is now meeting in the DDA conference room. Mike Domine has joined the committee and is a great addition. The committee now has members from DPW, DDA, Planning Commission, City Council as well as an arborist. After several meetings, the team came up with a metrics set to present to City Council showing Northville becoming more sustainable. Long was at the meeting as a public comment speaker. He inspired three members of the committee to attend and speak at the Planning Commission meeting tonight regarding the Downs and how to make the project better for the community.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

None

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 am.

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