

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors
June 15, 2021
Zoom Meeting

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

ROLL CALL

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

Absent:

Also Present: *Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/DDA Marketing & Communications Director, Marilyn Price/City Council, Dave Gutman/Resident, Barbara Morowski-Brown/City Council, Fred Sheill/Resident, AnnaMaryLee Vollick/Resident, Susan Haifleigh/Resident*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Long questioned the amended contract with JAG. Long said the Friday night concerts were moved to Main Street and the Saturday concerts will now be on Center Street. Ward said that change has been made but was not in the JAG contract language.

Boyd brought to the attention of the Board to the Fund Balance numbers in the budget update. The total \$127,000.00 has restrictions for known future expenditures that have already been earmarked so that is why we are only returning \$84,000.00 to the fund balance. Boyd also thanked Ward and Johnson for their hard work this past year allowing the fund balance to grow.

Ayers said the Fund Balance growth is primarily because we tabled so many projects because of the pandemic. At some point in the future, she'd like to see those projects put back on the priority list.

Presley asked to add an item to the agenda. He would like to add the East Cady Street realignment to the Sustainability Committee update.

Motion by Turnbull, seconded by McKindles to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda as amended. **Motion carried unanimously.**

BUDGET UPDATE

Ward said DDA staff, working with the City's Finance Department has developed some end of the year numbers. This information was developed during the 4th Quarter Budget Amendment process and the numbers will fluctuate a bit as the fiscal year still has 3 weeks to go.

Fund Balance at start of 2020-21	\$298,552
Returned to Fund Balance	<u>\$ 84,068</u>
Fund Balance at start of 2021-22	\$382,620
Restricted Fund Balance*	<u>\$121,187</u>
Unrestricted Fund Balance 2021-22	\$261,433

The Restricted Fund Balance of \$121,187.00 has funds earmarked for street improvements, fringe benefits and the dedicated parking funds included in the total. Therefore, the DDA was able to contribute \$84,068 back to Fund Balance in part due to the postponement of capital improvement projects during the pandemic in order for the DDA to concentrate on the Social District and support of the business community. In addition, the DDA saved on operational costs with City Hall closed and staff working remotely.

Recently there has been requests for funding of projects and the DDA will need to determine if they are willing to spend some of their unrestricted fund balance to pay for the improvements and if so, to what extent. See the projects that have been discussed below that are not currently funded in the DDA's 2021-22 Budget.

Overhead Tivoli Lighting	\$75,000
Overhead Banners	\$20,000 - \$35,000
Additional Social District Improv	\$20,000
Improved Surveillance Cameras	\$12,000 – \$45,000

Johnson mentioned contacting Planterra about beautification of the entrances. They gave an estimate of \$8,000 to add evergreen shrubbery to the four entrances. Boyd questioned whether we would own the shrubbery and Johnson confirmed that the DDA would own the planters and plant material. Boyd felt we could find a better price and should look at other vendors. Boyd felt we should involve the Design Committee in the beautification of the entrances. Casey suggested taking action on a budget figure so the Design Committee can move forward when they decide priorities.

Presley asked if there was a design created for the Tivoli Light installation. Ward said she met with Green Electric and was hoping to hear back from him soon. Ward has also requested an estimate from Begonia Brothers who currently provides service for all of the DDA's seasonal lighting. Riley questioned if the roads were to reopen would we still want Tivoli Lights overhead. Ayers also felt we should be cautious with our expenditures

since the roads may reopen sooner than later. Ward said even though our street closures only go through February 2022 the Social District is in place for another 2 years. Even before the pandemic Riley said we closed the streets regularly for events so the Tivoli Lights would be utilized. Presley agreed that Tivoli Lights are a great place maker for the downtown regardless of whether the streets are closed or open.

Ayers again cautioned how we spend DDA funds because we have not had many tax increases of late. Boyd said \$261,000 of unrestricted funds is a quarter of our annual budget which is about what the DDA should have in their Reserve Funds. Ward agreed that when the DDA Board voted to adopt our new budget the Board voted to put the reserves back into the Fund Balance to build back up again. Even though the wish list is long it was felt we needed to build our reserves up again in case of another unforeseen emergency.

Casey asked that the Board approve \$8,000 for entrance beautification and turn it over to the Design Committee for final approval. That way the expenditure doesn't need to come back to the Board again for approval. Riley questioned what to do about the Tivoli Light project. Boyd said that level of expense (\$75,000) should be discussed based on what percentage the Board feels should remain in the Fund Balance. Boyd feels 15% of the DDA total budget should be a hard stop on depleting the Fund Balance moving forward. Buckhave questioned whether the Tivoli Lights would be very impactful if we reopen the streets. Presley believes the Tivoli Lights would be just as impactful if the streets were to reopen. Long felt we should move forward with the motion on the floor and table the Tivoli Light project for future discussions when we have more information. Riley felt we could call a special meeting if the DDA wants to move forward quickly with the Tivoli Light project after estimates are available.

Motion by Casey, seconded by Long to set aside \$8,000 for entrance beautification. Motion carried unanimously.

PROJECT UPDATES

Ward said the Stands in Town Square have been moved out of the center and relocated to the west side of the plaza. This has allowed more room in Town Square for activities like Tunes on Tuesday. Ward mentioned moving the other Stands may be more difficult based on proximity to electrical outlets. Ward mentioned that she also asked Green Electric for a quote to put a timer on the lights in the Stands and Pods to cut down on the DDA electricity costs.

Ward said she received a letter from a resident about the outdoor dining areas not being handicapped accessible. The outdoor structure areas are enclosed by planters and fencing which makes it difficult to access the dining area. Ward forwarded the letter to Brent Strong, the City's Building Official, and he agreed the dining areas need to be modified to become ADA compliant. Ward sent a letter to all the restaurants to give them notification that they need to modify their dining areas to become ADA compliant.

Ward said there was a scheduled facilitation on Wednesday, June 10th with Singh, the DDA and an outside facilitator to try to reach an agreement on the City/DDA's request for Singh to participate in the capital improvement projects needed to keep the deck in good operating condition. The City is looking to raise the existing monthly charge from \$10 per month to \$36 per month over the next 20 years to pay for the cost of the improvements. If we are unable to come to a resolution working with the facilitator, the City/DDA will need to discuss their legal options. If there is not a resolution the DDA Board may need to get involved at some point in the future.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

a. *Design Committee:*

Boyd said the Design Committee did not meet but suggested having monthly meetings again moving forward.

b. *Marketing Committee:*

Riley said the Marketing Committee did not meet. Ward mentioned Arts and Acts is this weekend. Turnbull mentioned there will be 5th of July Independence Parade sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

c. *Parking Committee:*

None

d. *Organizational Committee:*

Ayers said the new budget starts July 1st.

e. *Economic Development Committee:*

Cozart said the committee will be meeting on June 29th to review the Exchange project.

f. *Sustainability Committee:*

Gutman said the sustainability committee continues to meet bi-monthly along with several other subcommittees. They are looking at enhancing walkability in the Northville community and supporting the 3 task forces.

Presley updated the Board on the potential realignment of Cady Street. In 2012 the city had a citizen committee to look at realigning Cady Street. Now that the Downs property may be developed it is once again critical to look at realigning Cady Street to protect the residents of Beal Town from increased traffic. This realignment would also help with walkability when the Rouge River is daylighted. Cady Street would no longer go due North but instead go on a 45-degree angle along the Foundry Flask property and through the car wash property. This would create an entrance off of East Main Street that would serve a lot of purposes. This is outside the DDA boundaries but it would provide more walkability and traffic control for the downtown. This will be talked about at the Planning Commission meeting tonight. Presley said all the property owners that the realignment effects are in favor of the Cady Street changes.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Long said in July of 2018 the City of Northville entered into a 3-year agreement with Hunter Pasteur for only \$100 to purchase the Downs Property. The renewal comes up in July and the City has zero recourse but to allow them to renew their option to purchase. Long believes the property has increased in value over the past three years. The DDA is the keeper of the parking lots and should have been included in the discussions. Long believes this agreement should be reviewed before it is renewed in July. Turnbull said there are current ongoing conversations about the value of the property and extension of the existing contract. Turnbull agrees that the DDA should be included in future discussions. Long also stated that the current agreement with Hunter Pasteur allows them to renew every 6 months.

Boyd updated the DDA Board on the June 7th task force presentation made to City Council. The high priorities were the city entrance off of Hutton Street down to the park (creating a more graceful entrance), adding bathrooms and reconstructing the Fort Griswold playscape. A second-tier suggestion was including the Ford Field East (across Griswold) property into the life of the City by making it more walkable and accessible. Boyd said there were also discussions about combining the three separate task forces into one to create a more comprehensive task force moving in the one direction. Boyd said there are possible grants available for the Ford Field improvements.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 am

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