

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 19, 2017  
121 N. 4TH ST., WEST BRANCH, MI 48661**

The Downtown Development Authority meeting was opened by Chairperson Jayson Stroebel at 12:03pm.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present - Jayson Stroebel, Joanne Bennett, Tracy Williams, Rusty Showalter, Joe Clark, Autumn Hunter, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.

Absent - Samantha Fabbri, Dora Zapczynski.

Others Present - GPSCR Coordinator, Kelli Collins, Planning Commission Member, Bob David.

**Motion by Showalter to excuse Fabbri's absence. Second by Hunter.**

**Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joanne Bennett, Tracy Williams, Rusty Showalter, Joe Clark, Autumn Hunter, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.**

**No - None.**

**Absent - Samantha Fabbri, Dora Zapczynski.**

**Motion voted and carried.**

**ADDITIONS TO AGENDA-**

Stroebel advised an email was received from Manager Grace concerning \$7,500 contribution to the Downtown Retail Merchants for 2018. Manager Grace expressed concerns of the legality of this practice and she has contacted the City Attorney for her opinion. She also informed this expenditure is not currently budgeted for. Members discussed past practice of this contribution and what it has been used for. Members questioned and discussed the current line item on the Financial Sheet under Downtown Events for \$7,500. It was agreed to wait to hear the legal opinion of the City Attorney regarding this expenditure going forward.

**MINUTES -**

Minutes of the November 28, 2017 meeting were reviewed.

**Motion by Bennett to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Stroebel.**

**Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joanne Bennett, Tracy Williams, Rusty Showalter, Joe Clark, Autumn Hunter, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.**

**No - None.**

**Absent - Samantha Fabbri, Dora Zapczynski.**

**Motion voted and carried.**

**BILLS -**

Bills in the amount of \$275 from Edith M's were presented.

**Motion by Showalter to pay bills in the amount of \$275 for Edith M's. Second by Stroebel.**

**Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joanne Bennett, Tracy Williams, Rusty Showalter, Joe Clark, Autumn Hunter, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.**

**No - None.**

**Absent - Samantha Fabbri, Dora Zapczynski.**

**Motion voted and carried.**

**BIDS -**

None.

## **REPORTS AND/OR COMMENTS -**

### Chairman Report -

Stroebel advised he has attended the last 2 Council Meetings. Discussion was recently held on charging \$100 to patrons who wished to display banners. There was a room full of people present at the meeting opposed to this \$100 fee which was previously approved by resolution by Council. Banners and safety hazards were also discussed. City Council has agreed to contact Consumers Energy and inquire on their hanging banners and safety hazards.

Stroebel commended DPW removing snow...however...he informed they have been removing snow with less than 4". Stroebel relayed an email from Manager Grace on options for snow removal by DPW. Grace also informed that there is not potential for additional liability if snow is not removed due to Governmental immunity and snow and ice being considered "open and obvious hazards" within the law of the State of Michigan. Members discussed pros and cons of snow removal from sidewalks and what was best for customers, businesses and the City. All agreed they feel snow removal is vital and important for the downtown district and wish to continue with snow removal as is.

Mayor Lawrence presented a Tax Increment Finance and Development Plan Amendment for the DDA dated 2002. It was noted many of the proposed improvements have been completed. Rabidue stated when this plan was developed the DDA anticipated monies coming in from the Parking Lots when in fact the Parking Lots cost them money (snow removal, etc). Therefore, many of the proposed plans for the Parking Lots were not feasible or realistic.

Stroebel stated we need a resolution to update the RFP from ADA Ramp to Stairs w/handrail.

**Motion by Bennett to update the RFP to reflect changes from an ADA Ramp to Concrete Steps with a Handrail. Second by Showalter.**

**Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joanne Bennett, Tracy Williams, Rusty Showalter, Joe Clark, Autumn Hunter, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.**

**No - None.**

**Absent - Samantha Fabbri, Dora Zapczynski.**

**Motion voted and carried.**

Stroebel informed he has done some researching on the DDA Job Description. All members reviewed the Job Description. Stroebel also presented and discussed a copy of DDA By-Laws which are not approved or signed. Hunter explained these were discussed a few years ago but just as a generic summarized version of by-laws. Certain "office" positions stated in the by-laws were discussed. Showalter advised because of the way the DDA is made up in the City the Clerk/Treasurer of the City acts as treasurer for the DDA and the DDA Administrator replaces the position of secretary for the DDA. Clark expressed his concerns due to lack of city representation at these meetings (DDA and Merchants) we have lost a valuable link of communication. Members discussed the importance of updating these by-laws and making them relevant to our DDA. All agreed by-laws are important and should be looked at by all members to be addressed and customized at a future meeting.

The most current DDA District Map was reviewed by all members.

### Member Reports -

Clark informed he has met with Mike Killackey on the parking lot improvements. Mr. Killackey was receptive to his recommendations of a more economical approach to addressing and correcting the current problems. Replacing with ADA Ramp vs. replacing stairs with handrails was discussed. It was agreed that additional signage and replacing the stairs with concrete steps and a handrail was the most cost-effective and efficient solution. It was suggested to update and revise the RFP to reflect these changes and post to the website for bids. Stroebel stated he would re-word the RFP and have Collins update it and forward to the City to publish.

Hunter inquired who is responsible for the lights in the parking lots of 3rd street. She advised she contacted City Hall about 2 weeks ago informing they were not working. Stroebel will follow-up with the City to make sure this is taken care of.

Rabidue questioned the lights on the trees downtown this year not very bright. Members stated they purchased several more LED lights in the past years to replace the old lights. It was discussed and agreed that many of the LED lights are not being used. Members agreed they need to set up a time where several of the members can get together at the DPW garage and sort through the lights and garland. This organization of the lights will enable DPW to easily distinguish which lights are to be used next year.

Rabidue presented a sample sign she would like to make for the vacant windows in the downtown district. The size she suggested was 2x3. Members agreed they would like the design and color of the current City signs. Members clarified what each sign layout should be to stay consistent throughout the downtown. Rabidue stated she can do both landscape and portrait signs with grommets to hang the signs from.

Rabidue stated she will begin checking on the flowers and pots in January.

#### Planning Commission-

Bennett stated Reigle Exteriors is requesting a Special Use Permit for a Transfer/Recycling building. Clark explained how this could benefit the contractors in our community who have no place to haul building materials. This facility could save the contractor both time and money. Bennett stated it was well received by the Planning Commission. Benches were discussed at the Planning Meeting. They are very receptive to the benches in downtown. Wellhead protection areas were discussed. Denise Cline from Nemcog forwarded a huge file with information to prepare for the updates to begin in January. Bill Ehinger applied for the open seat on the Planning Commission and was approved. Rabidue questioned if placing flower pots outside businesses is within current zoning. Showalter stated he felt flower pots are fine....the problem with the benches was due to contradiction between City ordinance and City zoning. This will need to be addressed by the Planning Commission to ensure the zoning and City ordinance do not contradict each other. Collins informed the City Manager has stated these benches will not be allowed next year unless they obtain a Sidewalk Cafe Permit.

#### **NEW BUSINESS -**

Stroebel relayed from the City Manager the proper procedure for being on the Agenda for Council Meetings.

DDA applications received so far is from Joe Clark. Tracy Williams would like to submit an application but wanted to make the DDA aware her employment is undergoing several months of training in the next 6 months and therefore she may have to miss a few meetings. She wanted to make everyone

aware before she submitted her application in the event this could be a hardship for the DDA. Members suggested she submit her application and they will continue to excuse absences for meetings she cannot attend. Williams will submit her application.

**OLD BUSINESS -**

Stroebe relayed an email regarding benches in the DDA District from the City Manager stating it is not proper for such benches to be placed on the sidewalks along Houghton Avenue by business owners unless first obtaining a "sidewalk cafe" permit and that businesses not already having done this will not be able to do so again after this fall as she plans to have the City Zoning Department take a more active role in enforcement of this provision moving forward. Members expressed disappointment that they feel we are not all working together to promote downtown and we need to fix that to continue utilizing the Roger Brooks webinars.

Stroebe communicated the appreciation gifts for the Fireman's Monument volunteers reached just under \$700. Discussion was held that next year this needs to be reconsidered. Members agreed a nice Thank You letter should be sufficient.

**PUBLIC COMMENT-**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT -**

Stroebe adjourned the meeting at 1:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli Collins  
GPSCR Coordinator