

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 27, 2018
130 PAGE ST., WEST BRANCH, MI 48661**

The Downtown Development Authority meeting was opened by Chairperson Jayson Stroebel at 12:04 pm.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Dora Zapczynski.

Others Present - GPSCR Coordinator, Kelli Collins, Planning Commission, Bill Ehinger, City Manager, Heather Grace, EDC Director, Mandi Chasey.

Motion by Stroebel to excuse Showalter's absence. Second by Bennett.

Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joe Clark, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Autumn Hunter, Mayor Lawrence, Tracy Williams, Sandy Rabidue.

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Dora Zapczynski.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA -

Clark presented the 2018 West Branch Merchants Budget Planning and Request for Additional DDA Funds. The expected expenditures anticipated and additional budget items were itemized and detailed. Clark explained much of these expenses are self funded. Clark discussed the tax revenue from the district and intended purposes for those funds. Grace explained this would need to be approved and sent to the City Attorney to develop a form before monies can be expended. The amount to be allocated based on taxes and the expanded district was debated and questioned. Clark stated the past amount of \$7500 could be higher or lower based on the year in question. Grace suggested the DDA form a sub-committee to work on the budget and possibly amend the current budget to address this issue this year and budget an amount for next fiscal year.

Motion by Rabidue to accept the 2018/2019 WBARMA Budget Planning and Request for Additional DDA Funds to present to the City Attorney to ensure compliance with guidelines allowing this money to be allocated to the WBARMA. Second by Stroebel.

Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joe Clark, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Autumn Hunter, Mayor Lawrence, Tracy Williams, Sandy Rabidue.

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Dora Zapczynski.

BILLS - None.

BIDS - None.

REPORTS AND/OR COMMENTS -

Chairman Report -

Stroebel advised he was unable to attend any meetings last month due to illness.

Member Report -
None.

Planning Commission -
Nothing.

NEW BUSINESS -

Stroebel advised we have no new business to address at this time as the DDA is wrapping up old business.

OLD BUSINESS -

Signs -

Rabidue stated the signs for vacant downtown businesses should be ready by the end of the week. Stroebel stated to contact him when they are ready and he will assist in getting them in the businesses.

Beautification Project -

DDA is awaiting the proposed Rain Garden to move forward and will work with them to see what is needed for this alley to compliment and bring together these two projects.

DDA Proposed By-Laws -

Stroebel addressed the proposed By-Laws. Stroebel advised he has discussed these By-Laws with other members and had modifications to the section on Absences 3.4. Stroebel recommended adding the language "but not limited to" under this section addressing adequate reasons. Stroebel stated there were also additions to the defined reasons which should be added. Grace stated for clarity sake Charter requires something "defined" in Rules and Procedures. Grace stated we can add but it has to be defined. Bennett asked what Charter requires this and what are the defined reasons for the City. Grace stated the City doesn't have one yet. Grace also advised Planning Commission will be addressing their By Laws tonight. Grace informed these By-Laws were developed by the City Attorney. Members questioned what Rules of Procedure means. Grace stated Rules and Procedures for the DDA is the By-Laws. Grace stated the DDA can make amendments to these By-Laws before approving them. Bennett stated she had several questions and concerns about these By-Laws and asked if the City Attorney can attend a meeting. Many members were disappointed that certain reasons such as funerals were not included. Grace stated she does not feel this copy of the By-Laws was the most recent final draft. Grace stated there is a different version on her computer. Stroebel stated we should not review these today as this is not the most current copy. Fabbri raised unease at the reasons for unexcused absences such as vacation and employment. Members articulated the fact that the DDA is a "volunteer" group. Stroebel stated we would not vote on these today as these were not the correct copy. Stroebel also stated he wanted to add reasons that are not listed and therefore we would have to table this until a later date after the most current version is reviewed by members. It was agreed to schedule a meeting at a later date to review and discuss the By-Laws with the City Attorney present. Grace will get with the City Attorney to see when she is available.

Benches/Flower Pots -

Stroebel presented a picture in a magazine of benches and flowers in the downtown areas. Stroebel asked Grace if this picture was sufficient to submit to MDOT for approval of the benches. Grace stated only if presented with measurements. Grace suggested to submit measurements with the most narrow and constricted areas. If that is approved the other larger areas should be fine. Stroebel asked for assistance to help take measurements. Rabidue offered to help. Mayor Lawrence stated she spoke to

the City of Grayling about their opinion of benches. Grayling did not recommend benches or flower pots. Grayling recommends wall mounted flower boxes and few benches. Many DDA members disagreed and feel the Roger Brooks webinars substantiate the contrary. Discussion was held on the variation and difference of opinions with different cities. Many expressed their feelings of enjoying people being in town and sitting on the benches. Most agreed it should be the option of the businesses if they wish to have flowers and benches with the end goal for the city to look inviting and nice.

The Rising Tide Project was briefly discussed. Grace stated their first meeting is scheduled for next Thursday. DDA members agreed they would like to attend some of these meetings. This program offers ideas and assistance at no charge to the city.

Rabidue questioned the existing flower bunkers downtown. Members conversed on the self watering flower pots and past plantings. Everyone agreed the need to ensure all potted flowers are adequately watered on a regular basis. Reaching out to Master Gardeners, DPW, etc. was suggested to help with the watering. Rabidue will get with the greenhouse to get the flowers and plants ordered.

PUBLIC COMMENT -

Grace shared literature on a group called Sawmill Business Center. This organization is non-profit to accelerate the development and success of start-ups and existing businesses in northern Michigan. Chasey stated the EDC is going to be hosting a series on this.

MINUTES-

Minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting were reviewed.

Motion by Clark to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Bennett.

Yes - Jayson Stroebel, Joe Clark, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Autumn Hunter, Mayor Lawrence, Tracy Williams, Sandy Rabidue.

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Dora Zapczynski.

ADJOURNMENT-

Stroebel adjourned the meeting at 12:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli Collins
GPSCR Coordinator