

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 28, 2017
130 PAGE ST., WEST BRANCH, MI**

- I. Chairman Showalter called the meeting to order at 12:04pm.
- II. Present- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.
Absent- Dora Zapczynski.
Others Present-City Manager Heather Grace, GPSCR Coordinator Kelli Collins.
- III. **Additions to Agenda** - None.
- IV. **Minutes-**
Minutes from the January 24, 2017 meeting were reviewed.
Motion by Clark to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Bennett.
Yes- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.
No - None.
Absent - Dora Zapczynski.
Motion voted and carried.
- V. **Bills -**
Showalter presented bills in the amount of \$957.01 (which includes bill from Ritters \$23.14). Clark questioned bills from Vic Bond and Medler Electric. Showalter clarified Medler Electric was for bulbs only and Vic Bond were for the ballast.
Motion by Bennett to pay all bills as presented. Second by Stroebel.
Yes- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.
No - None.
Absent - Dora Zapczynski.
Motion voted and carried.
- VI. **Bids** - None.
- VII. **Reports and/or comments -**
Showalter advised and updated on the Facade progress. SHPO review did not go very well. Grace advised other communities have experienced the same issues with SHPO. The State may re-examine SHPO's role in the Facade Program in the future. Many board members expressed their disappointment and frustration in the program. Showalter stated MEDC, SHPO, the architect; he and participants of the Facade program met and re-visited each building. SHPO and the architect discussed and reviewed what it would take to create renderings to bring about approval from SHPO. SHPO review is based on historical districts and because we are "historically district eligible" they have to use the same guidelines. Some of the building renderings will require minor changes while others will require significant changes. Not all participants of the Facade program are of the same opinion as SHPO and may choose to opt out

of the program. City Manager Grace stated SHPO is looking at this program as a pure historical restoration grant which is not how it was presented to our community.

Motion by Showalter to allow any Facade participant to withdraw from the program with a full refund of \$2000 deposit at their will. Second by Bennett.

Yes- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.

No - None.

Absent - Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

Motion by Showalter to withdraw his motion to allow Facade participants to withdraw due to a board member choosing to abstain. Second by Bennett.

Yes- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.

No - None.

Absent - Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

Motion by Showalter to allow Rabidue to abstain from voting to allow Facade participants to withdraw from the program with a refund. Second by Clark.

Yes- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Sandy Rabidue, Mayor Lawrence.

No - None.

Absent - Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

Motion by Showalter to allow any Facade participant to withdraw from the program with a full refund of their \$2000 deposit at their will. Second by Bennett.

Yes- Rusty Showalter, Joseph Clark, Autumn Hunter, Joanne Bennett, Samantha Fabbri, Jason Stroebel, Mayor Lawrence.

No - None.

Abstain- Sandy Rabidue.

Absent - Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

Pocket Park Fencing - Showalter advised he is still researching fencing options for the Pocket Park. He currently has a list of companies with different options and pricing. He will follow up as information is gathered.

Christmas Decorations - Showalter informed he has found 3 reputable companies in Michigan who do this type of work. Some of the companies offer renting of decorations and installation...others require you purchase decorations and they install and store them. It was discussed to get references. Showalter advised when he receives a formal bid he will ask for references. Manager Grace suggested creating an RFP for the decorations as an open ended proposal...whereas the bidder can recommend what our community should have and what it will cost. As long you formulate your RFP to set forth the guidelines in a fair way, you are meeting the requirements under the Charter and it is a fair bidding process. This would allow us to explore our options and get opinions from the vendors of what is best for our community.

City Manager - Grace reported she had a request we formulate a Sub Committee for Budget Review. She would like 2 members of DDA to meet with her sometime next week for review of the DDA Budget. Showalter and Bennett volunteered as members of the Sub Committee.

A second request for a Sub Committee to review the official DDA Plan which was formulated when they drew the district boundaries. Rabidue and Clark volunteered as members for this Sub Committee.

Showalter updated on Senator Horn and TIF reform and better reporting. Definition of Economic Development seems to be an issue of confusion and disagreement and what those funds are allowed to be spent on. Showalter reported there are currently disputes with DDA districts inappropriately using funds. Grace advised that as a result of this dispute we are required to review our DDA Plan. Grace recommended this would be a good time for the DDA to discuss any goals they wish to implement and see accomplished in the future before the Sub Committee meets for the Budget Review. Several suggestions were fixing the parking lots, and more benches and light poles downtown. Cigarette receptacles and garbage receptacles are also needed. Fabbri expressed concern of how to get more retail businesses to come downtown. Grace explained we are going to be reviewing our zoning in the next couple of months. We will be looking at allowing Office space or if it would be more beneficial to only allow Retail businesses for downtown. Showalter offered to reach out to MML for suggestions and ideas on bringing businesses downtown. Creating a uniform poster for vacant building windows displaying a promoting message for new businesses was suggested.

VII. **Old Business-**

Flags-

Showalter presented last year's flag which he laundered. It still showed signs of fading but looked better than it did. Several handouts were distributed to the members showing pricing of flags compared to last year pricing. Discussion was also held on the poles bending and not holding up. Nylon flags seem to tatter and fray while the Poly Max seem to fade. Showalter will get with DPW Superintendant on which clips to purchase and how many flags need replaced. It was agreed to replace the flags only that are in need of replacement along with any poles that need replaced. Stationary poles versus swiveling poles was discussed and the board agreed we need more information on what is most suitable and durable.

Flowers-

Flowers have been ordered. Showalter will get with Bridget to contact the Girl Scouts about planting them. They have agreed to plant every year and make it part of the requirement for earning a patch. Smiley Helper T-shirts was suggested....it was agreed the DDA would purchase them a T-shirt also.

VIII. **New Business-**

Showalter advised the MML Convention this year will be in September and held in Holland Michigan. He encouraged any DDA members to attend as there is an abundance of information they could benefit from. The DDA would pay lodging, food and transportation.

Clark expressed concern and disappointment over the parking spaces recently being eliminated in town on 2nd, 3rd and State Streets. He felt this should have been presented to the DDA before being presented to Council for approval. He feels there are alternative plans that could be done to fix this issue. He feels the Planning Commission does not have a vested interest in the downtown area. He conveyed businesses cannot afford to lose parking spaces downtown. Discussion was held on the size requirement for parking spaces. Manager Grace advised there are a total of 14 parking spaces being eliminated in total. Fabbri also articulated how important parking is in the downtown area for business owners. Grace informed that Gaylord deals with this problem by only allowing 3 hour parking for all public parking spaces. Pros and cons of putting a time limit on parking was discussed. Showalter advised just because Council voted for this does not mean it cannot be changed...however, if we do not come in compliance promptly we will lose Act 51 funds. Grace explained that due to potential audits on this issue Planning Commission was forced to act quickly. Showalter stated he felt this was a necessary action now to eliminate losing Act 51 funding. He expressed we can continue to move forward with other resolutions to try to resolve this problem.

IX. **Adjournment -**

Chairman Showalter adjourned the meeting at 1:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli Collins
GPSCR Coordinator