

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 22, 2018
121 N. 4TH ST., WEST BRANCH, MI 48661**

The Downtown Development Authority meeting was opened by Chairman Fabbri at 12:00 noon.

ROLL CALL:

Present - Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, and Mayor Lawrence.

Absent - Tracy Williams

Others - Chief Walters, WBPD, Kelli Collins, GPSCR Coordinator, John Dantzer, Clerk.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Letter of resignation dated May 21, 2018 from Tracy Williams was presented.

MOTION BY CLARK TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION LETTER FROM TRACY WILLIAMS. SECOND RABIDUE.

YES- Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.

NO - None.

ABSENT- Tracy Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

Members discussed the open seats on the DDA Board. Dantzer advised he has an application form for DDA Board Members. It was suggested to post this on the city web site. Currently the board has 5 filled seats plus the Mayor. There are openings for 3 members. Members agreed setting a deadline date of June 20, 2018 to submit applications for consideration on the board. This will enable DDA members to review the applications before the next meeting which is June 26, 2018.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the Special Meeting April 30, 2018 were reviewed.

MOTION BY CLARK TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECOND BY RABIDUE.

YES- Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.

NO - None.

ABSENT- Tracy Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS:

No bills were presented for payment.

Fabbri questioned the process of how bills are paid and approved. Members discussed this past practice and agreed it needs to change. Members expressed concern of expenses incurred by the DDA which they were never aware of until after the invoice had been submitted and paid. All agreed clarification of the procedure for bills being authorized and approved is essential. One example Fabbri questioned was payment of a FOIA invoice for West Branch Township paid by the DDA for \$600. Fabbri states the DDA did not approve or authorize this invoice and did not approve it. Members stated it was deducted from their account and they gained knowledge through the monthly copy of DDA financial reports they receive. Dantzer stated the FOIA request was asking for specific information on the Wayfinding Signs.

MOTION BY HUNTER TO REQUEST PRIOR APPROVAL OF "OUT OF ORDINARY" OPERATING EXPENSES FOR THE DDA BEFORE THEY ARE INCURRED. SECOND CLARK.

YES- Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.

NO - None.

ABSENT- Tracy Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

BIDS:

None.

REPORTS AND/OR COMMENTS:

Chairman Report:

Fabbri stated concerns regarding negative social media posts and the importance of boards and members working together for the better of the City and Community.

Member Report:

Rabidue stated we need additional signs for vacant downtown buildings. Discussion was made on type of signs...possibly a more generic sign which could leave contact information off and be added to the bottom and changed as needed.

MOTION BY FABBRI TO RECOMMEND RABIDUE ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON THIS ISSUE. SECOND BY BENNETT.

YES- Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.

NO - None.

ABSENT- Tracy Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY BENNETT TO ORDER 4 GENERIC SIGNS WHICH WOULD HAVE DETACHABLE BOTTOMS FOR CONTACT INFORMATION. SECOND HUNTER.

YES- Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.

NO - None.

ABSTAIN - Sandy Rabidue

ABSENT- Tracy Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

Rabidue advised she will be attending the Planning Commission Meeting tonight to address the board on approval and consideration of a stand-alone ordinance allowing benches, flower pots, etc. to be placed in the Downtown District in front of businesses. Fabbri stated she has spoken to MDOT and our area representative informed he does not feel benches are an MDOT issue but a municipality matter. Chief Walters suggested out of courtesy for MDOT, if the City approves/adopts a stand-alone ordinance for this we may want to let MDOT know and made aware. Dantzer provided sample similar ordinances from other municipalities which currently allow this. Collins suggested getting Denise Cline's opinion tonight at the Planning Meeting as she will be attending and may also provide ordinances from other entities she has worked with regarding benches, flower pots, outdoor seating, etc.

Chief Walters presented and distributed updated Business Contact Forms Dispatch would like completed by businesses as soon as possible. Dispatch recently upgraded to an enhanced system and are required to update these contact forms.

Mayor Lawrence brought to the attention of the board that members are in violation of the Open Meetings Act by attending Public Meetings without proper notice if a quorum is present. She stated attending City Council meetings as an example. Fabbri thanked her for bringing that to the board's attention and reminded her she has encouraged attendance of board members at other meetings in the past. Members agreed they have been more actively attending other meetings as asked and discussed a possible standing notice or other suggestion for correcting this issue. Fabbri stated we need to resolve this as we do not want to discourage any DDA board member from attending Council Meetings or any other meetings. Dantzer stated he will contact the speaker from the Parliamentary Procedure Training recently and see what suggestion she has.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Fabbri announced Zapzynski has been removed from the DDA board due to lack of attendance.

Fabbri advised the Rodeo invoice scheduled for Downtown has been submitted for payment under the Retail Merchants Contract.

Clark made known Finished Concrete will be contacting them soon to schedule the reconstruction of steps in the Parking Lots.

Fabbri suggested members address the By-Law Drafts. Concerns were brought up of any future attorney invoices for reviewing/drafting DDA By-laws. Fabbri presented a letter drafted to the City Attorney asking she cease any work in regards to DDA By-laws. DDA members agreed they are confident they are capable of drafting By-laws. Fabbri has obtained a copy of the new Act which applies to DDA's. All agreed the DDA does not have a budget for attorney fees. Fabbri presented a copy of the letter to the City Attorney to Chief Walters and Dantzer.

MOTION BY FABBRI TO GIVE A LETTER TO CITY ATTORNEY DANTZER, CHIEF WALTERS, AND CLERK DANTZER, TO DISCONTINUE ANY WORK ON DDA BY-LAWS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. SECOND HUNTER.

YES- Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Joe Clark, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.

NO - None.

ABSENT- Tracy Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

Snow Policy Draft was presented in the DDA packet. Rabidue inquired how to determine when the original snow removal policy began in the DDA District. Members discussed the policy and how it has changed and evolved over the years into something it was not originally intended to be. Due to these changes, the DDA budget has suffered financially, and cannot sustain the current way it is being done. Clark explained his recollection of how the parking lots became a part of the DDA and how it has gotten out of hand and become unaffordable for the DDA. Members agreed to work on the By-laws and then review and work on the Snow Removal Policy.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Fabbri adjourned the meeting at 1:38 pm.