

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 28, 2017
121 N. 4TH ST., WEST BRANCH, MI 48661**

- I. Chairperson Jayson Stroebel called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm.
- II. Present - Jayson Stroebel, Autumn Hunter, Joe Clark, Samantha Fabbri, Sandy Rabidue, Joanne Bennett, Mayor Lawrence.
Absent - Rusty Showalter, Tracy Williams, Dora Zapczynski.
Others Present - GPSCR Coordinator, Kelli Collins, Planning Commission Member, Kara Faching.

**Motion by Rabidue to excuse Williams and Showalter absence due to work obligations.
Second by Fabbri.**

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

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Tracy Williams, Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

III. **Additions to Agenda -**

Stroebel questioned an email communication from Mandi Chasey apologizing to the board for her absence at today's meeting. Discussion was made if she is required to attend DDA meetings or if she had attended some meetings in the past as part of communication between MEDC Dan Leonard regarding the Facade Grant. Bennett expressed concern that the EDC had requested a contractual contribution from the DDA that had not been paid but approved by resolution. Members advised they did not recall this and some had reviewed minutes over the past year and did not find where this was discussed or approved. Stroebel advised she was welcome to attend a meeting and members could address this again.

IV. **Minutes -**

Minutes of the October 24, 2017 meeting were reviewed.

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

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

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Tracy Williams, Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

Collins made everyone aware that the motion to send the letter to Zapczynski at the last meeting was not voted or carried. The letter was sent but this item needs to be voted.

Motion by Stroebel to approve the letter sent to Zapczynski explaining attendance regulations and results of unexcused absences and if she wishes to not continue on the board to submit a letter of resignation. Second by Hunter.

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

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Tracy Williams, Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

V. Bills -

Additional bills were submitted for \$36.01 - The Silver Lining, \$680 - West Branch Greenhouse, \$121.50 - M&I Graphics & Promotions. Bennett stated the additional invoice for 20 Smiley Mugs was for the appreciation gifts for volunteers at the Fireman's Monument. She explained the initial list she received from Griffin was estimated at 30 mugs which allowed a margin of a few extras if they were needed. Griffin distributed the mugs and requested 20 more were needed. Members questioned if there were really 50 volunteers? Rabidue questioned several bills received from Medler Electric. Stroebel explained he has reviewed the charges and they were justifiable. Members expressed their approval and admiration of the Evergreen boughs in the corner planters.

Motion by Rabidue to pay all bills as presented in the amount of \$1,174.89. Second by Hunter.

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

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Tracy Williams, Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

VI. Bids - None.

VII. Reports and/or Comments -

Chairman Report -

Stroebel advised he made contact with his acquaintance from Alpena about the Roger Brooks Consultation. He explained his friend was not a part of the DDA then but would get back with him after their next meeting.

Stroebel discussed the RFP Collins drafted for the ADA Compliance Ramp to replace the steps in the N. Parking Lot. West Branch Concrete inspected the site to check the grade of the slope. If it was over 30 inches it would require a 5x5 foot platform. It was measured to be under 30 inches so this would not be required. Stroebel suggested we move forward and submit the RFP so we are prepared to begin construction in the spring. Clark questioned if we do the steps now and later the parking lot we possibly could have to redo the entire ramp again. Clark mentioned exploring a grant for a Handicap Ramp. Stroebel advised he met with Manager Grace and was informed there are not grants for Handicap Compliance at this time...focus has shifted to infrastructure. Manager Grace also stated the City should help contribute towards the project with the amount of contribution being the same they would have spent to close/remove the stairs or fixing them and DDA contribute the remaining funds. Members conversed about what to expect the cost of this project to be. Stroebel advised the City Manager informed if the DDA did both projects at the same time the City would likely "lend" funds to the DDA which would be spread out over multiple fiscal years for repayment. Clark suggested getting bids for both projects. It was discussed to get two bids...one for the steps between the parking lots and the other for behind the Herald office. Both bids would be for ADA compliance ramps. Collins stated the RFP drafted does not specify a location for the project - solely the scope of work. This RFP could be revised with a description for both projects. Clark suggested maybe modify the parking lot to direct handicap customers to the newly constructed ADA compliant ramp. He also stated the steps behind the Herald would need upgraded from wood to concrete steps. Clark

questioned if an opinion from DPW Superintendent Mike Killackey was received. Stroebel advised he has not heard any response from an email generated in October from the City Manager asking him to inspect the stairs in question. Clark requested Collins contact Killackey to meet with himself and Stroebel to discuss the best option to proceed. It was agreed to submit the RFP for the steps between the parking lots and after meeting with Killackey a decision would be made on those steps. Stroebel will get with Collins to insert dates on the RFP to be submitted.

Motion by Stroebel to submit the RFP for the steps between the N. parking lots to construct an ADA compliant ramp. Second by Clark.

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

No - None.

Absent - Rusty Showalter, Tracy Williams, Dora Zapczynski.

Motion voted and carried.

Stroebel informed he attended the City Council meeting and presented the Summary of the last DDA meeting which was prepared by Collins. Council expressed they were pleased with the efforts DDA is making in keeping them informed. Members commended and praised Collins on her work.

Member Reports -

Rabidue brought members up to date on the flower pots. She explained that due to unforeseen circumstances at the Greenhouse she will wait until next month to follow up on this. She would like to have orders ready by early winter because they grow much of their foliage.

Fabbri updated members that after the last meeting she attempted to order the benches as approved - however - they were sold out so she was unable to place the order. Discussion was held and agreed to watch for any sales and hope to order some by Spring. Stroebel also stated he spoke to City Manager about a "blanket" ordinance for the benches being allowed on the sidewalks in front of the businesses. Stroebel passed on an email from Showalter stating he could not find anything in the City Charter that would prevent business owners to install benches throughout the downtown district. He did state there is a zoning code that was brought to his attention which could potentially prohibit benches without proper permitting. He suggested the Planning Commission look into a zoning ordinance that would "blanket" the downtown district as long as it is in compliance with City Charter. Members expressed their concerns over making our ordinance less regulated and to allow businesses to move forward with improving the downtown district and utilizing the information obtained from the Roger Brooks presentations. Everyone agreed the re-write of the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan will be beneficial to the downtown district and hope to resolve these issues. DDA members would like to see this issue added to the next Planning Commission Agenda. Collins informed the DDA that starting in January 2018 Planning will be meeting twice monthly with the 2nd meeting addressing and re-writing the Ordinance and Master Plan. Collins articulated the need for input from all boards and encouraged anyone to attend. Collins expressed the importance of goals and changes the boards would like to see need to be addressed at these meetings. Faching informed the board that many Planning members attended a 7 week Citizen Planner Curriculum and Denise from Nemcog was the speaker at 2 of the sessions. She has been retained by the City to re-write the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Faching also made clear the Planning Commission is very receptive and approving of benches and such in the downtown

district.

Planning Commission -

Fachting presented and read the Summary from the last Planning Commission meeting. DDA members asked questions. Stroebel made aware that a statement made by David of the Planning Commission was not entirely factual. Stroebel informed the DDA that David stated "much of the reason Planning members have not attended DDA meetings is directly due to the times of the DDA meetings. Most Planning members work and are unable to attend meetings at 12:00 pm on weekdays". Stroebel stated approximately 1-2 Planning members have a job which is not "most". Stroebel stated this will be amended at the next Planning meeting. Everyone agreed these summaries are extremely helpful in keeping both boards updated and all feel it is a positive step in going forward. Fachting informed the DDA that Collins was appointed by Planning as the new Planning Director and has been approved by Council. Mayor Lawrence stated that this position will be up to Denise Kline from Nemcog to decide if it is necessary when she begins doing the Master Plan and rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance. Fachting stated Council did approve the updated Planning Ordinance. Mayor Lawrence stated they did approve the ordinance but did not address the previously voted on motion to not remove anyone from boards. Lawrence stated Council voted not to reappoint or remove anyone from DDA or Planning boards for 6 months to a year. Fachting stated there is confusion as she and another member have terms expiring at the end of the month. Fachting explained they have reapplied for their positions. Collins stated she believed it was worded that if their term is coming up they would be allowed to reapply. Bennett asked if they understand the new structure of the Planning Commission. She stated all Planning members have to reapply. Stroebel made clear that the "6 month" extension was to allow DDA and Planning a time frame to work on any problems and the new Planning Ordinance recently adopted by Council requires all Planning members to reapply for their position based on new criteria. The deadline to reapply for the Planning Commission is November 29, 2017.

VIII. New Business-

DPW Superintendent was not available. Collins read an email which Manager Grace stated Killackey requested to be added to the agenda to decide whether the DDA would like the City DPW to plow/shovel alleys in the DDA district (which the DDA would pay for). They have not been cleared of snow by DPW in recent past. Killackey would like a clear mandate from DDA what they prefer because City Hall gets a number of complaints from people saying they wish the alleys were plowed. Another point the City Manager made was if DDA wants to pay to clear only alleys belonging to the City or alleys that have private claims of ownership. Rabidue expressed her concern of what DDA is doing...sidewalks, parking lots. Discussion by members stated they agreed to have DPW remove the snow so it was all removed at the same time. Rabidue debated if it was cost effective to have DPW remove the snow or contract with a private business. Stroebel would like to see a map of the areas currently being done and paid by the DDA and the areas he is questioning to be done and paid by the DDA. Clark stated between the Herald and his business is City Property but they consider it their property to maintain. The agreement with the DDA was for sidewalks...not alleys. Since these businesses want the alley done first they pay for it even though it is City Property. Clark stated the reason for the agreement was to clear Main Street so the City does not have to send more than one truck to pick up the snow. Mayor Lawrence asked if they prefer the City not clear the snow and have the

business owners do their own removal. Clark and other members stated no...this would cost the city more in the long run because snow would be out on the streets at all times of the day. It was decided the DDA would like to see an agreement of what they are paying for and the time frames it is being done. Clark voiced concerns that the people who were around when these agreements were made are no longer here and feels the information is not clear or current. Clark stated the current agreement was the front facing main street - that was what DDA was responsible for. Many questioned why is the DDA paying for parking lots? It was agreed they may need to get bids from contractors to see if it is cheaper than what the City is charging. Stroebel questioned if DDA does not pay to have parking lots done do they just not get done? Mayor Lawrence stated the City would probably do the parking lots...but they would plow city streets first. Collins will contact Killackey to have him schedule a time to meet with Clark and Stroebel and address any issues with snow removal along with clarification of what gets paid by DDA.

Fabbri announced they are not doing the December Success Group as they do not have enough time to organize it properly. This event was for a "pre" parade event and they will plan for it next year.

IX. Old Business -

Stroebel stated he spoke to Zapczynski about attending DDA meetings. She stated to him she would attend this meeting...however she is not present. Discussion was held and agreed if she misses 3 consecutive meetings she would be removed. She has missed 2 so far.

Bennett made aware she has contacted 4 business owners downtown with vacant buildings and they are very excited about the signs and displays in their empty windows. She has received no negativity on this proposed idea. Bennett suggested the City move forward with getting something on the website for listings of vacant properties downtown as part of complying with an RRC community. Rabidue will begin working on a design for the signage and verbiage.

X. Public Comment -

Fachting thanked the board for allowing her to attend.

XI. Adjournment -

Stroebel adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli Collins
GPSCR Coordinator