

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
HELD IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY HALL, 121 N FOURTH ST.  
ON TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Samantha Fabbri at 12:00 pm.

Present: Anthony Bair (Roscommon COVID), Joanne Bennett, Joe Clark, Samantha Fabbri, Autum Hunter, Sandy Rabidue (arrived at 12:09), Erin Resteiner (West Branch COVID), Ken Walters, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: None

Others present: City Manager John Dantzer and Ogemaw MEDC Director Mary Bickell

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As an addition to the agenda, Tim Knutsen from Beckett and Raeder gave an update and presentation on the downtown streetscape designs. The main discussion revolved around the location of the trees and lights on the sidewalks, bump outs, concrete designs, and flower planting areas including the idea of hanging pots. Mr. Knutsen noted that he would have a more formal design and selection of furnishings to bring to the next meeting.

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**MOTION BY FABBRI, SECOND BY BENNETT, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETINGS HELD MAY 25, 2021.**

**Yes – Bair, Bennett, Clark, Fabbri, Hunter, Rabidue, Resteiner, Walters, and Zimmerman**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried.**

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**MOTION BY FABBRI, SECOND BY ZIMMERMAN, TO APPROVE BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,396.76.**

**Yes – Bair, Bennett, Clark, Fabbri, Hunter, Rabidue, Resteiner, Walters, and Zimmerman**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried.**

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Mary Bickell, of the Ogemaw MEDC, introduced herself to the Board and presented a flyer on the programs they were involved in this year. Ms. Bickell noted their focus was on

programs revolving around broadband, childcare, and business development. Ms. Bickell further noted that she would be happy to work with the DDA on any grant opportunities that may come up and the EDC is currently working on a revolving loan program for businesses.

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Member Clark noted that some of the flowers that were left over from the Fireman’s memorial planting were used at the rain garden behind the Creative Arts building. Mr. Clark also asked about the possibility of eliminating the parking spots in front of the rain garden during the spring and summer so people could see and enjoy the garden. Manager Dantzer noted he would speak to Council about it to get their feelings.

Member Bennett commended Member Rabidue for her work on this year’s flowers.

Member Rabidue updated the Board on this year’s flowers and noted the City DPW was doing a good job watering them. Member Rabidue also noted she was asked about the bench and flowers in front of the Riverwalk map that is below the Fireman’s Memorial and the person thought they would be better served by moving them up to the Fireman’s Memorial area. Chairperson Fabbri noted those were purchased with a grant obtained from the Realtors Association specifically for the new Riverwalk map area and they would most likely not want them moved. It was the consensus of the Board to leave the bench and flowers at the map area.

Chairperson Fabbri noted the issue brought up by Manager Dantzer including the City-wide garage sale weekend, Pocket Park fountain issues, downtown flower watering, blade signs, informational meetings, and in person meetings.

The DDA discussed making the weekend of the City-wide garage sales a bigger event including downtown sidewalk sales. It was the consensus of the Board that they were in support of having a bigger event that weekend.

The Board discussed issues with the Pocket Park fountain including the issue of the pump failing. It was the consensus to authorize to purchase the parts necessary to install a timer on the pump to try and increase the life of the pump with it being shut off from midnight till 7:00 am.

The Board discussed the watering of the downtown flowers and thought the City DPW was doing a good job. It was noted the City bought a new water tank and installed it on one of their gators but that it needed a new pump. It was the consensus of the Board to pay for a new pump.

The Board discussed having blade signs installed downtown. The discussion revolved around if the DDA would provide the bracket and the sign and if they wanted all signs to be the same or allow businesses to have their own design. It was the consensus of the Board

to look further into the blade sign idea and have Manager Dantzer reach out to Beckett and Raeder to get some ideas and see about incorporating the idea into their streetscape plans.

The Board discussed the two annual informational meetings that are required and the consensus was to hold them annually in July and December.

The Board discussed updates made by the DHSS in regards to the lifting of many COVID requirements. It was the consensus of the Board to have all meetings moving forward held in person with the option that it could be broadcasted virtually based on requests received from the public.

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The meeting was adjourned at 1:09 pm.