

SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY HELD AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY HALL AT 121 N. FOURTH ST. ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023.

Chairperson Fabbri called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

Present: Samantha Fabbri, Sandy Rabidue, Erin Resteiner, Ken Walters, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: Joanne Bennett, Alan Bruder, Joe Clark, and Autum Hunter.

Others present: DDA Secretary/City Manager John Dantzer

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MOTION BY FABBRI, SECOND BY RESTEINER, TO EXCUSE MEMBERS BENNETT, BRUDER, CLARK, AND HUNTER FROM THE MEETING.

Yes – Fabbri, Rabidue, Resteiner, Walters, and Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – Bennett, Bruder, Clark, and Hunter

Motion carried

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Chairperson Fabbri noted the reason for the special meeting was to hold the second of the two 2023 required informational meetings as required by the DDA Act.

The projects worked on during 2023 and the main areas of focus for the 2024 calendar year would be as follows:

1. Development of the Gathering Place.
 - The DDA was not able to proceed with the project in 2023 as grant funds were not available. The board submitted grants for both the DNR Michigan Spark Grant and the MEDC Public Spaces Grant program in the spring of 2023 but were unsuccessful in receiving any award. We will continue to monitor for additional funding sources.
2. Work with City Council on the Houghton Ave redesign project.
 - The Board worked on the streetscape project with the bid being awarded in 2023 and the project taking place from April through November of 2024. The board finalized funding for the project and have a bond in place to pay for the costs.
3. Continue the downtown flower and snow removal projects.
 - The Board again sponsored the flowers in 2023 and will look at doing a fall project in 2024 as the MDOT road reconstruction project will not allow for the planting of flowers next spring. They will again sponsor the snow removal from the downtown during the winter.
4. Work on seasonal themed banners.

- No banners were decided upon during 2023 but we will continue to discuss optional themed banners that would be instituted after the road reconstruction and streetscape is completed in 2024.

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Sean Gilbert asked about the Gathering Place and Chairperson Fabbri updated the public on the plans for the park.

Emil Rousseau of the Visitor's Bureau noted they would be interested in partnering with the DDA on the project.

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Chairperson Fabbri adjourned the meeting at 12:08 pm.