

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
HELD JOINTLY WITH CITY COUNCIL AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THE WEST
BRANCH POLICE DEPARTMENT, 130 PAGE ST. ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Samantha Fabbri.

Present: Joanne Bennett, Alan Bruder, Joe Clark, Samantha Fabbri, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: Autum Hunter, Sandy Rabidue, Erin Resteiner, and Ken Walters.

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All stood for the pledge of allegiance

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Chairperson Fabbri provided the annual report to City Council noting 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.
 - The board approved the addition of plugs in each planter box.
 - The board is looking into a downtown speaker system and will meet with a contractor during the February meeting.
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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The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 pm.