

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 8:30 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:29 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.
- II. ROLL CALL:**
- Present:* Andrew Agbay
Matthew Baumgarten
Erin Brick
Donna Dirkse
Andy Gilbert
Chris Gross
Jenna Hance
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Razur Rahman
Ailya Siddiqi
Garrett Wyatt
Brian Zifkin
- Absent:* Tim Barnes
Scott Francis – *excused*
- Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison (via Zoom)
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Megan Masson-Minock, Community Development Liaison
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** On motion by Brick and second by Dirkse, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- A. Regular Meeting of February 9, 2022**
On motion by Dirkse and second by Poirier, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.
- V. LIAISON REPORTS**
- A. City Council – Steve Baker**
Baker reported at their last meeting March 7, Council recognized International Women’s Day and March as Women’s History Month. They also approved the schedule for Berkley Days in May 12-15. Regarding marijuana business licenses, the previous ordinance allowed up to three businesses to be licensed in Berkley, but a tied score among three applicants for the third license resulted in Council needing to decide how to resolve the choice for the third license. They had an option to award only two to the top scoring applicants, use a lottery system to determine the award for the third license (previously agreed to), or increase the number of allowed licenses to five, awarding each of the three tied applicants a license. Option three was chosen on a Council vote, 4 in favor and 3 against.

He noted several residents spoke about the marijuana issue at the meeting, very thoughtfully and respectfully, against increasing the number of licenses to five. The ordinance will have to be amended and will have two readings. After adoption, the businesses will present their site plans to the Planning Commission for approval. There are three businesses planned for 11 Mile, one for Woodward, and one for 12 Mile (all outside DDA boundaries). Any business that drops out or goes out of business will not be replaced.

B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner reported reviewing plans for two office buildings on Greenfield and a sketch plan for a marijuana business, for which there were parking lot concerns to be addressed.

C. Community Development – Megan Masson-Minock

Masson-Minock reported reviewing site plans for the multi-unit residential development at 3737 Twelve Mile. Peninsulas on 12 Mile has plans for façade improvement, and two business licenses in the DDA district were issued. The Burger King development on 12 Mile submitted a site plan for review, seeking approval for residential units on the second floor. That plan is under administrative site plan review. There were concerns about the number of parking spaces available if there were second floor residents of that building. Two parking spots per unit are required by ordinance.

D. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported the Chamber will hold a Berkley U seminar at the Library on bank fraud and identity theft sponsored by Vibe Credit Union. They will have a grand opening celebration of Amici's new ownership on March 13. Plans for the Art Bash and the Street Art Fest are ongoing.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:

A spreadsheet detailing financial position through the end of February 2022 was included in the Board packet. Gross reported the fund balance increased by \$22,000 from Plaza project reimbursement monies received, and the DDA is currently @\$7,000 under budget. The ending fund balance is @\$450,000.

Brick moved to receive and accept the Treasurer's report, Agbay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Downtown Development Authority Annual Budget

McGuinness reiterated his budget approach presented to the Board in February, that the 2022/23 budget would be conservative and standard, keeping projected expenditures mostly in line with the current fiscal year minus completed projects (Wayfinding and most of the Plaza expenses) and projecting no or little growth in revenue. Streetscape and Public Art are the two categories where he projects an increase in expenditures. Baumgarten noted that they will have a clearer picture of revenues over the next month or so when information from the County is received.

Baumgarten moved to support forwarding the 2022/23 Annual Budget draft to the Finance Department to be included in the overall budget, Brick seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Frozen February Block Party Success

McGuinness thanked Brick for taking the lead on the event and the Marketing Committee for their efforts as well. The event drew many visitors to downtown, and new businesses appreciated the activity. Student musicians and actors were also engaged and drew a lot of foot traffic. Berkley High NHS students contributed volunteer service hours as well. Poirier suggested changing the name to the BRRRkley Block Party next year.

B. March Leprechauns Marketing & Promotions Efforts

- 1. Downtown Leprechauns Scavenger Hunt**
- 2. Leprechauns Story Stroll with Berkley Public Library**
- 3. Leprechauns' Day Out**

These three events are scheduled to take advantage of the St. Patrick's Day holiday vibe. Zifkin contributed to the Pot of Gold taken around to various retailers during the scavenger hunt as well as a \$100 gift certificate.

C. First Ladies Night Out of the Year (April 7, 5:00 to 9:00 PM)

McGuinness reported the first of four events (expanded from three) is taking place a little earlier this year, and he encouraged Board members to enlist business neighbors to join in. Instead of balloons the marketing committee is distributing "clings" with the event dates on them, for business to display.

D. Coolidge Crosswalks Progress

McGuinness would be meeting that day with Baumgarten and a new staff member, an assistant to the City Manager, who is experienced in similar issues in Clawson and Royal Oak. The DDA recommendations approved by the Board in February will then be shared with the Coolidge Task Force for their input and expert review, brought back to the DDA Board, and then presented to City Council. Baumgarten noted approaches to the Coolidge road diet section from 11 Mile and 12 Mile will be made consistent, favoring the 11 Mile approach to merging traffic. Near term and long term actions will be decided upon after all the reviews have taken place. Baumgarten noted the short term approach and goal is to have a functional and safe crosswalk. Baker said he was in favor of that, and then everyone involved will be able to gauge what more, if anything, is actually needed.

E. Downtown Design Guidelines Progress

McGuinness included notes from the Planning Commission work session regarding Design Guidelines survey results and analysis in the Board packet. Survey questions asked respondents about placement of issues, whether they be standards ("musts" included in the ordinance), guidelines (encouraged but not included in the ordinance itself), or not appropriate for ordinance amendment. Masson-Minock noted the current zoning ordinance already has requirements similar to the proposed Design Guidelines, and some districts (such as the Coolidge District) have different requirements (setbacks, for instance). A good question to ask applicants at site plan review is how are you meeting the DDA design standards. She anticipates bringing revisions back to the Board at their next meeting.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Wyatt reported that high school sports are doing well. The student Board members are planning for their senior year. Charity week is coming up, mostly for juniors and seniors, and spring break is coming up.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua

Passalacqua reported nothing much is going on for their committee.

B. Business Development Committee – Jenna Hance

Amici's ribbon cutting is Sunday at 3:00 PM. Little Lou's Hot Chicken will move into the former Papa's Pizza location.

Marketing & Promotions Committee – Ashley Poirier

Poirier said had nothing additional to report. Brick stressed they need more volunteers for upcoming events.

Organization Committee – Scott Francis

McGuinness said the committee is looking at upcoming Board openings.

C. West 12-Mile Improvements – Tim Barnes

Zifkin asked if the DDA could purchase property, and Baumgarten said it was possible but a lease is a better option so as not to reduce DDA TIF revenue. Zifkin would like to contact the owner of the vacant property near his building to see what he/she would consider. McGuinness reported that Alco Glass expressed interest in the Façade grants, and some others in that area have indicated interest in having a mural done.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Updates on Downtown Businesses and Construction Coming, Going, Expanding

In response to a question from Rahman about the large property on the south side of 12 Mile that's been vacant and for lease for quite some time, McGuinness and Baumgarten reported that the building is in a poor state of repair, Baumgarten noting numerous code enforcement interactions over the years.

McGuinness said he's also heard O'Mara's will eventually finish remodeling and plans to reopen.

B. Participated in Michigan Downtown Association Professional Spring Workshop

McGuinness attended the workshop on behalf of Berkley.

C. Main Street Oakland County Summit (March 17, 9:00-11:30 AM)

An invitation was extended to Board members to attend the event in person or virtually, RSVP's requested. It will be held at the Executive Office Building in Waterford. McGuinness will be attending on behalf of Berkley and invited others to join him.

Also included in the Board packet were an application for the Spirit of Main Street Micro Business Startup Grant Program \$2,500.00 matching grants and information about applying for Citizens Bank Small Business Community Champion Awards, \$10,00.00 each, awarded to minority-owned businesses, woman-owned businesses, and other business groups, 10 prizes in each category. The State of Michigan has \$409 million in American Rescue Plan Act grant funds to distribute through the Growing My Business program, application deadline March 31.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS: The opportunity for public comment was offered, and there were no in-person requests to address the body. Gilbert asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

XIII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

Passalacqua noted that he reported to McGuinness new benches have been installed, but on 12 Mile they face the wrong way (towards the storefronts, not the street). There's a plan in place to fix the orientation.

Brick suggested finding a way to get the DDA district snowplowed and that it might be cost-effective for businesses to pay for the service as a group (such as an HOA). Gilbert asked McGuinness to add this to the discussion items for future agendas. Masson-Minock noted a Business Improvement District would be the equivalent of an HOA where participating businesses pay extra in taxes for certain services. The City and DDA could partner to buy the necessary equipment or hire a service. Baumgarten noted it might entice more firms to bid on maintenance if summer (flowers) and winter (snowplowing) were combined in the contract.

McGuinness also reported that a vehicle had crashed into Nova Chiropractic on Coolidge and damaged its mural.

XIV. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Baumgarten.