

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 8:30 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.

II. ROLL CALL:

A. Attendance Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Tim Barnes
Matthew Baumgarten
Donna Dirkse
Desiree Dutcher
Justin Findling
Katie Forte
Scott Francis
Andy Gilbert
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Talia Wittenberg
Garrett Wyatt

Absent: Chris Gross – *excused*
Brian Zifkin – *excused*

Also present: Kathy Abrahamian and Associate, Alice's Perfect Fit
Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Ric Chalmers, DPW Liaison
Matthew Gross, MHG Jewelry
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Joel Ulferts, Resident

B. Congratulations to Newest Board Member Katie Forte, Approved by City Council

C. Congratulations to Berkley City Council Liaison Steve Baker on his Engagement

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Francis, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of March 8, 2023

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Francis, the minutes of the regular meeting of March 8, 2023 were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker thanked everyone for their volunteer time efforts and reported that at their April 3 meeting, Council designated April as Volunteer Month. They recognized former Council person Natalie Price, elected to the Michigan Legislature in November 2022, for her service on the Council. Art Bash was approved for Saturday, June 10. Katie Forte, recommended by the DDA Board for a vacant Coolidge Board seat, was formally approved by Council. He urged voters to visit the City's information page on the May 2 millage vote.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Kapelanski reported that businesses who want to use portable signs (sandwich boards) to advertise in front of their establishments will no longer need a permit to do so, but need to meet other requirements. There will be a public hearing on outdoor dining in April, with consideration of changing from special land use to principle permitted use. The zoning ordinance re-write, a 2-year process, will have four opportunities for public engagement. One of the goals is to have the ordinance comply with the Downtown Master Plan.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

No meeting and so no report.

D. Public Works – Ric Chalmers

No report.

E. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported the Chamber is gearing up for the Art Bash in June and Street Art Fest in July. They are reinstating their podcast and still promoting sales of their discount cards. The kit home tour is being pushed back to September 30. A presentation on kit homes will be held at the Public Library April 12 at 6:30 PM.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:

A. Financial Report for March 2023

In Gross's absence, McGuinness reported that no financial report was available for the month of March.

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Downtown Berkley Mural Program Application Updates

McGuinness had outlined proposed modifications to the Mural Program and Façade and Parking Lot Improvement Grant Applications and sent them to Board members prior to the meeting. There was extensive discussion of the proposed changes to the mural program, but no consensus was reached among members. It was agreed to postpone a vote on approval, giving Board members @30 days to contact McGuinness with their opinions on changes and their effects on the program.

B. Downtown Berkley Façade and Parking Lot Improvement Grant Application Updates

See above.

C. MHG Jewelry Studio Mural Program Application

Regarding MHG Jewelry Studio's Mural Program application, McGuinness noted the application had come before the Board in 2022 and had been rejected for the amount requested, \$2,500.00. Renderings of the proposed mural had been submitted at that time and were submitted again at the April 12 meeting. Some Board members noted that they had reconsidered their original votes during the elapsed time.

Barnes moved to approve MHG Jewelry Studio's mural application in the amount of \$2,500.00, Baumgarten seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

D. Alice’s Perfect Fit Alterations Mural Program Application

Owner Kathy Abrahamian and her associate were present at the meeting, and Abrahamian noted that the business had occupied that same location for 50 years, and she was celebrating 20 years as owner with her husband. A rendering of the proposed mural was included in the Board’s information packet. The mural requested a \$5,000.00 DDA contribution. Abrahamian noted her business would gladly comply with any revised mural guidelines. McGuinness noted that the area adjacent to this business is a location for many of the DDA’s planned activities.

Passalacqua moved to approve Alice’s Perfect Fit Alteration’s mural application in the amount of \$5,000.00, Dirkse seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

E. Chazzano Coffee Roasters Mural Program Application

McGuinness reported that this new business, located on 12 Mile Road, has a prominent and visible wall facing east, and will have the wording “Welcome to Berkley” included in the graphic. Local artist Howard Fridson will paint the mural, and the amount of the funding request is \$5,000.00. The DDA will not fund the part of the mural that includes the name of the business.

Passalacqua moved to approve Chazzano Coffee Roasters’ mural application in the amount of \$5,000.00, contingent on excluding any branding art/text, Barnes seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

F. Nawab Indian Cuisine Façade Grant Application

McGuinness noted that the façade improvements for which application for funding was made were completed prior to Board approval, and was therefore ineligible for DDA funding according to current guidelines. McGuinness recommended denial of the request.

Passalacqua moved to deny the façade grant application of Nawab Indian Cuisine, Baumgarten seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Passalacqua moved to apply the criteria in place when the mural applications approved at this meeting were submitted, Baumgarten seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. All three mural applicants have agreed that they would comply with proposed revisions to the application process.

Vote on approval of mural and façade grant program application revisions were tabled until the next Board meeting. Passalacqua recommended that all current and future applicants for mural and/or façade grants be informed that there could be delays in their applications coming before the Board.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Berkley Outdoor Social Scene (B.O.S.S.) Social District Approved by City Council

McGuinness announced that City Council had approved establishment of a Berkley Outdoor Social Scene (B.O.S.S.), social district on 12 Mile in downtown Berkley. Kapelanski noted that the social district next needs approval from the State of Michigan (Liquor Control Commission). At least two businesses must be part of the social district. The district must close by 10:00 PM. Businesses selling alcohol must submit separate applications at a cost of \$250.00. Special beverage cups are required, as are boundary signage and additional trash receptacles. McGuinness will touch base with other nearby communities experienced with social districts.

B. Parking Study Progress, Community Engagement

Kapelanski reported that the steering committee met in March. Overnight parking bans and lower business parking space requirements were part of that discussion, as was additional parking at 12 Mile and Cummings. Preliminary findings indicate that the number of parking spaces downtown is sufficient, but the location of the spaces may not be optimal. Parking must remain free as per the City Charter. The City and DDA are splitting the cost of the study 50/50, \$15,000.00 each.

C. Coolidge Complete Streets Enactment, Crosswalks Enhancements

McGuinness noted that 2/3 of the crosswalk enhancement proposed cost has already been included and approved in the DDA budget. An RFP from contractors will be issued soon. Baumgarten offered that City contribution for improvements to Robina North will be minimal, as their budget is right. The DDA has budgeted for short-term, smaller enhancements to Robina North. Gilbert stressed activating the Coolidge crosswalk lights as soon as possible for safety reasons, and Baumgarten noted all proposed improvements should be done this summer.

D. Main Street Oakland County Summit April 20, 2023 (9-11 AM) at Waterford Oaks

McGuinness announced the event and invited Board members to attend.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Wyatt announced spring sports are underway as well as SAT testing. A new inclusive Bocci ball team is under consideration.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua

No report.

B. Business Development Committee

1. Collaboration with Oakland County Business Forward Initiative

There is an opportunity to partner in engagement sessions with the County initiative.

C. Downtown Events Committee

1. March Promotional Events Undertaken

The Leprechaun Block party was held, but the weather was very cold and Irish.

2. Ladies Night Out May 4, 2023

The catch phrase for the first Ladies Night Out is “May the Fourth Be With You”

3. Berkley Days Support, Scavenger Hunt

Kempner announced holding an event similar to October’s road rally, finishing at the Berkley Days’ beer tent. The DDA will be a booth sponsor at Berkley Days.

4. Berkley Pride Planning Underway

McGuinness announced planning is underway and that the event space is expanding to Robina and Griffith on the south side of 12 Mile.

D. Marketing Strategies Committee – Ashley Poirier

No report.

E. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

No report.

F. West 12-Mile Committee – Brian Zifkin

No report.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Main Street America Annual Conference Participation

No report.

B. Michigan Downtown Association Spring Workshop Presentation

No report.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

Francis reported that the Berkley Schools program for adults with special needs is looking for a building to buy, and would like to be downtown; Be Well Lifestyle is locating in Coco Fairfield's old space; someone is interested in the Smith Counseling building on Franklin; Jewel's Pet Cuisine is moving across from the Neighbors Shoppe; the Pinspiration building will have a new tenant, Dog and Bark Coffee; Linen 'N Things had vehicle damage after opening; and Monger's is waiting for State approval for their redevelopment. Kapelanski announced that Ivy Lofts plans to open June 1; the BP gas station at Coolidge is applying for a DDA façade grant and will be expanding their south-facing mural using BHS student-artists and alumni funding.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS: The opportunity for public comment was offered. Gilbert asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

Ulferts asked if the B.O.S.S. (social district) cups would be sold, and Kapelanski noted the City would provide them free to the participating businesses. He didn't think people would use a 12 Mile/Cummings parking lot if there wasn't a crosswalk on 12 Mile.

XIV. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 AM on motion by Passalacqua and second by Barnes.