

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 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:

A. Attendance Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Matthew Baumgarten
Desiree Dutcher
Katie Forte
Andy Gilbert
Chris Gross
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Tim Barnes – *excused*
Donna Dirkse – *excused*
Justin Findling
Scott Francis – *excused*
Talia Wittenberg
Garrett Wyatt – *excused (graduated)*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Passalacqua moved to add to the Discussion agenda meeting start time, location, and position of Liaison Reports on the agenda, Poirier seconded. On motion by Laczkovich and second by Baumgarten, the amended agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of May 10, 2023

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Laczkovich, the minutes of the regular meeting of May 10, 2023 were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported Council met on June 5 and proclaimed June 19 as a Juneteenth celebration day. They also approved several municipal cooperative agreements such as animal control services with Royal Oak and lock-up services. The September County Oakland Irish Fest and weekly Berkley Farmers Market were also approved. He also reported that the Historical Commission would have a tent at the Pride Block Party.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Kapelanski reported on:

1. Parking Study Progress

The consultant has made their draft recommendations and will present them to the steering committee on June 26 and then to the DDA Board.

2. Cummings Parking Lot

Kapelanski will be asking for letters of support from businesses in the vicinity of the proposed Cummings/12 Mile parking lot. As part of a joint Oakland County effort, Berkley will be applying for a RAP (Revitalization and Placemaking) grant from the MEDC that would cover 50% of the parking lot cost.

3. Comprehensive Zoning Updates

The steering committee working on the updates met twice and is slowly moving forward on the year and half process, working to align zoning with the Master Plan. Opportunities for public engagement will begin with a video explaining the process that will be posted soon.

4. Zen Den Zoning Board of Appeals Approval

The Zen Den is seeking approval to open an office near the Coolidge auto repair in an area zoned for office/medical/allied professions and asked for interpretation of “Office District, Principal Use” from the Zoning Board and if that would allow their proposed business offering massage/esthetics to be included under allied professions. The ZBA granted their request.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner reported reviewing a sketch plan for a Coolidge apartment building that would have multi-family spaces on the ground floor and less than the currently required parking spaces.

D. Public Works – Ric Chalmers

Absent. Baumgarten reported that one of DPW’s long-time employees is retiring after 25 years and will be recognized the coming Friday. The alternating DPW Coolidge/12 Mile sidewalk and street cleaning is underway.

E. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Absent. In his place, Laczkovich reported the Chamber is starting “The Berkley Bullhorn” with news about Chamber businesses and what’s going on in town... They are looking for additional Cruise Fest sponsors. The next Chamber Chat is June 16 at Nada & Co.

VI. TREASURER’S REPORT:

A. Financial Report for May 2023

Gross reported she did not receive a May Financial Report but would email it to the Board when she does.

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. DDA Board of Directors Reappointments

McGuinness reported three Directors’ terms are expiring: Francis, Gross, and Zifkin. All have indicated their desire to continue on the Board, if it continues to work with their schedules.

Passalacqua moved to reappoint all three and recommend same to City Council for formal appointment, Laczkovich seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Long-time Board member Larry Gallagher of the Berkley School District will be retiring from the District, and Gross moved that the DDA formally express its thanks and good wishes to him, Passalacqua seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Robina Public Space Improvements RAP Grant Funding Pursuit, Letter of Support

McGuinness reported that Oakland County is applying as a unit for the grant with individual cities with approved shovel ready projects splitting the funds. The DDA would prioritize the Cummings parking lot project and Robina North upgrades and is seeking Letters of Support to include with the application and details of other sources of funds. There is a deadline of 2027 for completion of funded projects. Fifty percent (50%) of the grant funding would come from the state, 25% from the County, and 25% from the DDA/City.

Dutcher moved to approve submission of letter of support for Berkley RAP program grant application for Robina public space improvements and affirm future intent to contribute funds in concert with State, County, and City, Passalacqua seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. Coolidge Complete Streets Implementation

McGuinness reported that only one bid was received for restriping and improvements to the Coolidge crosswalks, and that bid was for \$258,000.00, @\$60,000 over the City engineers' estimate. Berkley had approved \$135,000.00 to contribute to the work, with the City contributing the remainder.

He asked the Board to choose between these options: Should the contract be awarded to the sole bidder at their submitted quotation and the Board reassess their contribution? Should it be re-bid? Should the DDA do less, or not at all? Can DPW reassess and see if some of the work can be done ala-carte, since the crosswalk work, rather than the restriping, was the portion that pushed the bid higher than expected? The received bid is itemized.

Baumgarten noted that the concrete contractor that works with the City can give them an estimate on the cost of splitting out the concrete work. McGuinness suggested having DPW assess their options and then coming back to the Board next month for decision on how to move forward, since this project is one of the DDA's highest priorities.

Passalacqua asked if the DDA's approach to bidders could be, this is our budget and our priorities, what can we get for it? There was question about whether the sole bidder would be willing to split the work. Gilbert suggested re-examining the budget to see if, in the worst case and the DDA ends up having to go with the sole bid as is, there are sufficient funds to cover the increased cost.

There was general consensus to try to get at least one more bid to consider at the July meeting and if that's not possible, to evaluate the current bid again after available funds are closely evaluated.

D. Be Well LifeStyle Center Façade Grant Request (Initial Reading)

McGuinness noted that no vote was expected at the meeting and that this was an initial reading of the grant request so that the Art and Design Committee and Board could review the project before the next meeting.

The Be Well LifeStyle Center is moving into the space formerly occupied by Coco Fairfield's on 12 Mile near Wakefield and would like to make significant exterior changes to the building. Renderings were included with their application and sent to the Board along with their meeting packet.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Meeting Start Time, Agenda Order, and Location

Gilbert asked if any Board members had an objection to moving Board meetings to the Berkley Library, where they were held prior to COVID restrictions there. No one objected, the only issue was whether the Director, Matt Church, would be willing to come in early to open the building just for the DDA (Library hours have been cut in the interim). Someone needs to double check with Church.

Passalacqua suggested moving the meeting time up to 8:15 AM in order to have a little more time to conduct business, as meetings have been running later and some Board members need to leave. There were no objections from Board members present.

Regarding changing Liaison reports back to being given after other DDA business at the Board meetings, Passalacqua noted it makes it easier to cover at least "Action Items" before the meetings lose quorum. None of the liaisons present had any objections.

These changes could begin with the August 2023 meeting.

Passalacqua moved to change Board meetings' start time to 8:15 AM and place Liaison Reports after Discussion Items on the monthly agenda, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Gilbert asked McGuinness to email absent Board members (Barnes, Dirkse, and Francis) to see if they had any negative feedback/objections.

B. Successful \$2,300 Grant Funding for Mural, Seating, Cement at Chazzano Coffee Roasters

McGuinness applied to Oakland County for a placemaking grant to cover these items, including expanding their bike rack concrete pad allowing more seating and bistro tables. The DDA approved mural is currently being painted.

As a side note, McGuinness reported that Chet's Rental on Coolidge has closed.

C. Downtown Berkley Mural Program Application Updates

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

McGuinness reported that the application drafts, including the input he received from Board members, are being given a final review by an attorney.

E. ArtSpace Plaza (on Coolidge near Berkley High) Finishing Touches Update

McGuinness reported a tentative formal opening is scheduled for July 15, the date of the Street Art Fest.

F. Berkley Outdoor Social Scene (B.O.S.S.) Social District Approval Status

Kapelanski reported the MLCC approved Berkley's application for the Social District. Individual businesses that want to join are being recruited. She noted they've discussed opening for the Cruise Fest. Next, establishments that want to take part need MLCC approval. Boundaries have to be set and marked with signage.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Absent – no report. McGuinness reported that Garrett Wyatt has graduated and was one of Oakland County's top scholars. As he spent several years as a DDA Student Board Member, Dutcher moved to acknowledge his service, Poirier seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua

1. Downtown Murals Walking Map

Forte is taking the lead on this effort in concert with Dutcher and Deb Kobayashi to create this self-guided walking tour of the downtown murals.

2. MHG Jewelry Studio Mural Complete

McGuinness announced that the final mural cost \$700.00 under budget.

3. Chazzano and Alice's Murals Underway

B. Business Development Committee

No report.

C. Downtown Events Committee

1. Successful Berkley Art Bash (held June 10)

2. Downtown Berkley Farmers Market Series (Thursdays through October)

Robina south was closed for market day the previous week. The market has more vendors and is generating a lot of good will, interest, and vitality. Kempner noted that parking was an issue if vendors used nearby spaces after they unloaded their displays, so it would be good to encourage them to park further away once they've set up.

3. Berkley Pride Block Party (June 25)

Poirier reported this year's footprint is larger, the number of vendor tents more than double, and a teen "lounge" has been added. Sponsorship is good.

4. Berkley Street Art Fest (July 15)

McGuinness noted the DDA doubled their sponsorship from \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00.

D. Marketing Strategies Committee – Ashley Poirier

Poirier reported they're getting a ton of positive feedback on social media. Instagram and Facebook are the two platforms they use most. Murals and new businesses generate the most feedback.

E. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

Absent. Gilbert and McGuinness suggested new members be encouraged to choose the committee(s) they want to join.

F. West 12-Mile Committee – Brian Zifkin

Zifkin asked about West 12 Mile flowers, and McGuinness noted the vendor has been informed about the funds available. Frank's has installed more hanging baskets on south Coolidge and is working on options for the 12 Mile area closest to Greenfield. Zifkin also asked about garbage cans for West 12 Mile, and McGuinness said the vendor he talked to "ghosted" him. Bench placement can be reconfigured. Zifkin finally asked about the status of the contract and feedback from MOGO regarding usage. McGuinness noted the MOGO Director approached him about moving the Coolidge station closer to Catalpa. Zifkin has been talking to the operator of a kosher food truck trying to entice him to set up in his parking lot.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

None.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

None.

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.

XIV. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Dutcher.