

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 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:

Present: Tim Barnes
Matthew Baumgarten
Erin Brick
Donna Dirkse
Scott Francis
Andy Gilbert
Chris Gross
Jenna Hance
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Razur Rahman
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Andrew Agbay – *excused*
Ailya Siddiqi – *excused*
Garrett Wyatt – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Megan Masson-Minock, Planning Consultant
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Tom Tesnow, Publisher
James Jeffrey Tong, Historical Commission

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: On motion by Francis and second by Gross, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of December 8, 2021

On motion by Brick and second by Gross, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Informational Meeting of December 23, 2021

On motion by Brick and second by Baumgarten, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

C. Informational Meeting of December 29, 2021

On motion by Brick and second by Passalacqua, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported that Council had met in a closed session. Council plans to discuss cannabis businesses' licenses at their upcoming regular meeting. Court challenges by 22 applicants for a license resulted in issues that need to be resolved, and those will be the focus up the upcoming meeting, after which time the actual licenses can be awarded.

The Historical Committee met the previous evening resulting in an invitation to make a short presentation later in the DDA's Board meeting.

B. Planning Commission –

In Kempner's absence, Planning Consultant Megan Masson-Minock, who is temporarily filling in at the Community Development position, reported there was no December Planning Commission meeting. There is a Coolidge rezoning request to be decided as well as ongoing discussion on the Design Guidelines, followed by a dedicated Planning Commission work session. The Zoning Board of Appeals has residential applications for rezoning. Baumgarten noted the City is reviewing applications and setting up interviews to fill the open Community Development position.

C. Community Development – TBD

See V.B. above.

D. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported via Zoom that the Chamber has finalized their budget for 2022 and is making plans for the year. They will hold a virtual Chamber Chat on 1/21 and have moved their regular meeting time to the third Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:

McGuinness included a copy of the financial spreadsheet provided by the Finance Director in the packet sent to the Board. Treasurer Gross reported that revenue is higher than budgeted, with a fund balance of \$445,000.00 and expenditures so far of \$390,000.00. Revenues include a \$47,000.00 corporate donation. The balance will increase once reimbursement for Plaza expenditures is received.

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

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Increase Events Budget

At McGuinness' request, Brick moved to add this item to increase the events budget to the agenda, Gross seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

McGuinness reported that the events during the latter part of the year in October (Boo!kley) and December (MerriMonth) were successful but the costs depleted the amount originally budgeted for events. He asked for a \$7,000.00 increase in the events budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year to cover planned expenditures anticipated through the end of June 2022. A list of those 2022 planned events was included in the packet sent to the Board and includes at least three moving block parties.

The window painting artist will be removing the pictures towards the end of February and can give tips on how to do it to a business that chooses to remove them earlier themselves.

Zifkin moved to approve an increase in the Events budget for 2021/22 in the amount of \$7,000.00, Barnes seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Gilbert suggested that the Chamber and DDA resume regular meetings to coordinate activities, and Brick noted that is already happening with her committee (Marketing).

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Main Street America Annual Evaluation

McGuinness reported that Main Street personnel would be doing interviews with Board members and others in the community on January 25 as part of their annual evaluation of Main Street communities.

B. Downtown Benches Installation

McGuinness reported that the new benches have arrived at DPW and are being assembled. They will not be bolted in when installed. The old metal benches will be removed and may be auctioned off. The Gateway West area on 12 Mile will be a focus for new bench placement as it had been short-changed in the past.

C. Downtown Design Guidelines Status

Passalacqua stated that he would like to work directly with Masson-Minock on the guidelines, and she reported that the Planning Commission and Development staff are trying to determine which guidelines are “musts” and which are “would be nice.” Additionally, they’re discussing how to require businesses to comply with the “musts” and incentivize them to adopt the “would be nice” ones.

D. Coolidge Crosswalks Status

Baumgarten noted that the traffic study committee met in December, and the consensus was that the current lane configuration is for the most part working well. He also reported that the City’s budget will address crosswalk improvements, but a decision is needed on the type of signal (current signals, designed for a 4-lane road, or upgraded, such as mast arm). Gilbert asked Passalacqua to be the Board’s point person to work with the City and supply them the information to make their decision on how to move forward. Passalacqua’s experience shopping downtown with his children during the holiday season was that on Coolidge, even with the current lane configuration, he needed to wait until drivers from each direction acknowledged their presence in the roadway by stopping and waving them across in order to feel it was safe to cross the road.

Extensive study was done prior to installing the signals a few years ago, and Passalacqua can pull all that together as well as what costs would be involved to upgrade the signals themselves and add signage. Passalacqua stressed that at a minimum Council and the mayor be on board with options to move forward and asked for that assurance in time for the February Board meeting. Speaking only for himself, Baker noted basing the decision on what the community wants and values should help guide the City and DDA’s plans at this point. Barnes noted that MDOT has safety statistics for all Michigan roads and all road configurations. Passalacqua asked Baumgarten what he and the City would need from the DDA in order to get the City’s assurance that Council and the mayor are ready to move forward on Coolidge crosswalks and what they *want* to do. To make it easier for Council, Baker suggested presenting them with a certain (limited) number of options to choose from.

E. Downtown Idea Laboratories in 2022

McGuinness reported that different businesses can host the labs, and he’s using them as a way to engage businesses and the community at large.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Absent. Francis reported that on the crosswalk issue, the School District is always in favor of safety. In-school rather than online classes is the District’s goal for the remainder of the school year.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Business Development Committee – Jenna Hance

Hance reported she had no news, but McGuinness reported that the former location of Sugar Kisses at Dorothea may have a new owner, and a Mexican restaurant is expected in the former Patrick J’s building on 12 Mile.

B. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua

Passalacqua reported there are ongoing discussions of improvements to the Robina North location,

C. Marketing & Promotions Committee – Ashley Poirier

Poirier reported she had nothing additional to report about events. Brick noted the Wedding Shoppe will again display “frozen dresses” with children’s princess dresses part of the display.

D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

Francis reported the committee is discussing committee “balance” in terms of numbers of members/ volunteers.

E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Tim Barnes

Barnes noted he had nothing to report, but McGuinness said the 12 Mile design studio construction is progressing.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Main Street Oakland New Manager Training

McGuinness reported he had taken part in the training this month.

B. MDA Professional Downtown Management Program

McGuinness reported that he registered for the program.

C. Michigan Historic Preservation Network 2022 Conference

McGuinness reported he would be presenting at the conference coming up in May in Holly.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

Hance asked if there was more information about the retreat and facilitator being offered by Main Street, and McGuinness said he would set something up for February.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Gilbert asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

James Jeffrey Tong (member, Berkley Historical Committee) and Tom Tesnow (Publisher, Berkley 100th Anniversary Historical Booklet) passed around copies of publications done to celebrate the City of Berkley’s anniversaries and mentioned that ads pay for the magazine’s production, which is distributed to every address in the city. 100th anniversary plaques are installed at several sites that reach that milestone.

XIV. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Brick.