

**MEETING MINUTES  
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 8:30 AM  
Berkley Public Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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:* Andrew Agbay  
Tim Barnes  
Erin Brick  
Donna Dirkse  
Andy Gilbert  
Chris Gross  
Jenna Hance  
Ashley Poirier  
Razur Rahman  
Ailya Siddiqi  
Garrett Wyatt  
Brian Zifkin

*Absent:* Matthew Baumgarten – *excused* (participating via Zoom)  
Scott Francis – *excused*  
Matteo Passalacqua – *excused*

*Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison  
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission  
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 Barnes, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting of April 13, 2022**

On motion by Dirkse and second by Barnes, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

**V. LIAISON REPORTS**

**A. City Council – Steve Baker**

Baker reported Council reviewed the City's annual budget line by line and commended the DDA on their fiscal approach in the face of rising inflation when belt-tightening is required. The city is required by law to have a balanced budget. The budget will be formally adopted at their next meeting. They also made several proclamations covering the upcoming weeks.

**B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner**

Kempner reported the Commission has been busy working on Design Guidelines and zoning updates, and a public hearing will be scheduled shortly. The first rendering for the apartments

behind LaSalette were presented. The BP gas station presented plans for their facelift. There will be a work session in conjunction with their regular June meeting.

**Community Development – Megan Masson-Minock**  
Deferred.

**C. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad**

Murad reported the June Art Bash has 127 artists registered and ten sponsors. They will hold the Street Art Fest on Coolidge the third Saturday in July, and the Irish Fest is scheduled for Sept. 9. The business passes they distribute to school staff in the fall are under consideration for sales to the general public. Brick suggested participating businesses display “kling” notices in their windows. The Chamber is also getting ready for Cruise Fest. MOGO will be doing a Berkley mural bike tour.

**VI. TREASURER’S REPORT:**

Gross reported available revenues were \$421,000, expenditures of \$426,000 (all budgeted), and \$108,000 left for expenditures this fiscal year. Net expenditures for April were \$41,000 (anticipated tax capture taken away per the County based on assessments). The ending fund balance is \$381,000.00.

Zifkin moved to receive and accept the Treasurer’s report, Barnes seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**VII. ACTION ITEMS:**

**A. Nova Chiropractic Mural Program Request**

McGuinness recommended the Board postpone action on the mural request because a rendering of the project hadn’t been received. Hance asked if there was a chance the new mural might be completed by the time of the Art Fest on Coolidge in July, and he said it was still possible.

Brick moved to postpone action on Nova Chiropractic’s mural program application, Hance seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. Board of Directors Composition, Terms up for Renewal in 2022**

McGuinness reported that terms of Agbay, Francis, Zifkin, Gross, and Poirier were expiring at the end of June. Agbay will not ask to be reappointed. Francis and Zifkin indicated their interest in returning. Gross and Poirier were currently undecided.

**B. Six Months Since Executive Director’s Permanent Hiring**

Baumgarten, Francis, and Gilbert convened for the Director’s six month review, and all agreed that he has met the six-month benchmarks originally established and has earned the 3% salary increase offered in his original contract. He received an unconditional endorsement to continue in the position and will be reviewed again at 12 months. Baker also offered Council’s endorsement.

**C. Successful Downtown Block Party at Flipside Records**

McGuinness reported the successful block party held for Flip Side’s official opening. The party had a musical focus, and Flip Side reported robust sales. Gilbert reported good crowds. McGuinness thanked Zifkin for suggesting having some events take place on Sundays. Gilbert praised the efforts of the marketing team.

**D. Next Ladies Night Out on June 2nd**

McGuinness reported the event will run from 5:00 to 9:00 PM.

**E. Next Downtown Block Party (Berkley Pride) on June 26th**

McGuinness reported some businesses will be open for the event that runs from noon to 4:00 PM at Robina and 12 Mile, and the road will be closed there with the City’s approval. Poirier reported great

response and thanked all who are helping out. Brick noted there is a sign-up going on for more volunteers.

**F. Plaza Project at Coolidge and Catalpa**

Gilbert reported he's seen people using the bistro seating installed and eating at the tables several times during the day. McGuinness reported the Plaza team met and selected the student art to be displayed. That art will be redistributed later for display around the downtown. The signature sculpture by the Berkley High grad is expected in the fall.

**G. Streetscape Seating Enhancements**

McGuinness reported that the new benches will be redistributed around the downtown and all facing the same direction. The bistro seating at the plaza will also be tried at different locations. Brick suggested Catalyst make some social media announcements about them.

**H. Streetscape Landscaping and Aesthetic Enhancements**

McGuinness reported that the DPW will be putting American flags on lampposts all around town for the patriotic holidays coming up. There has been discussion about partnering with Ferndale and Oak Park to use the same landscaping contractor to get better rates.

**I. Bike Infrastructure Enhancements**

McGuinness reported that he is proceeding gradually with bike rack ordering, in order to effectively handle the transitioning of them into place in the streetscape. He is mindful of the DPW facilities renovation project underway, as the bike racks will be delivered there and require their assembly assistance. He met with DPW Director Shawn Young, and that Director Young was very amenable to proceeding.

**J. Coolidge Crosswalks Progress**

McGuinness reported talks are still ongoing with the road committee. Baumgarten noted there are also issues with short staffing. The road diet issue can and should be separated from crosswalk implementation. Board members expressed impatience with the lack of progress and asked how to get the issue on City Council's agenda. There were strong suggestions that Board members show up to the following Monday's meeting to speak about crosswalks, even before it's put on Council's agenda. The DDA can send them all the information compiled to date and ask to be put on the June 6 Council meeting agenda. There is \$25,000 in the DDA budget to spend on crosswalks in 2022/23.

**K. Downtown Design Guidelines Progress**

Masson-Minock reported they're in front of the Planning Commission, and there will be a workshop and public hearing this summer. The Commission is reviewing numerous site plans.

**IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Wyatt reported that the spring sports teams are in full swing and doing well, and students are finishing advanced placement tests. Siddiqi reported "water wars" are underway, and everybody should watch out during the tournament. McGuinness noted exterior signage and lighting improvements at the high school.

**X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**A. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua**

In Passalacqua's absence, McGuinness reported a lot of interest around the district in having murals done. They are working with the PEA Group about design elements to be used in public spaces.

**B. Business Development Committee – Jenna Hance**

In Hance's absence, McGuinness reported Berkley will be the first downtown to be the target of the Oakland County Business Development and Assistance programs.

**C. Marketing & Promotions Committee – Ashley Poirier**

Poirier had nothing additional to report, but Gross reported that Channel 7 morning news anchor Alicia Smith, a fairly new Berkley resident, has done profiles of some Berkley businesses, including Berkley Common, and wants to pitch more Berkley business stories, and McGuinness also spoke with her.

**D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis**

Absent – no report.

**E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Tim Barnes**

Barnes said he had nothing new to report.

**XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

**A. Downtown Berkley Business Arrivals, Departures, Changes**

McGuinness reported on two new business ribbon cuttings, Little Lou's Hot Chicken and Flipside Records. Ribbon cuttings for Re-Do Market on 12 Mile and Casa Amado on Coolidge are coming up. Masson-Minock reported a variance was submitted for 3010 Coolidge to be a beauty parlor/salon, a site plan was submitted for a brewery/distillery at the former Sugar Kisses on Coolidge, and a business license application was submitted for a coffee shop at the former Berkley Laundry on 12 Mile. A new Indian restaurant has opened next to Republica on Coolidge. The apartment units behind LaSalette will be coming back to the Planning Commission.

McGuinness reported Tru-Fit and Pure Cure on Coolidge have moved out.

**B. Downtown Berkley Recent Media Coverage Summary**

*Crain's* did a write up on Peninsula's new location and expansion, and McGuinness also did a longer, broader interview with a *Crain's* reporter selling downtown Berkley. Catalyst lined up front page coverage on the Flip Side block party, and Mother's Day coverage of Berkley Common's menu features. He wrote a letter of support for the Master Plan, which is under consideration for an award.

- 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:**

Zifkin asked about the lot near his 12 Mile business that the City purchased with plans to turn it into a parking lot. Baumgarten noted budget constraints are responsible for the construction delay, but the house on the property will be torn down.

Poirier brought up restructuring the Marketing and Promotions committee, perhaps splitting it into the two separate functions. Brick agreed, suggesting bringing another person on and establishing separate budgets, with the possibility of paying someone to join the staff or using Catalyst more.

**XIV. Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Agbay.