

**MEETING MINUTES  
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 8:30 AM  
Berkley Public Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Conference Room**



**I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:29 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.

**II. ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Andrew Agbay  
Matthew Baumgarten  
Donna Dirkse  
Scott Francis  
Andy Gilbert  
Chris Gross  
Matteo Passalacqua  
Ashley Poirier  
Razur Rahman  
Brian Zifkin

*Absent:* Petro Drakopoulos – *excused*  
Ailya Siddiqi – *excused*  
Garrett Wyatt – *excused*

*Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison  
Chris Copacia, The City Institute  
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison  
Mike McGuinness, Interim DDA Executive Director  
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** On motion by Zifkin and second by Dirkse, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting of August 11, 2021**

On motion by Poirier and second by Francis, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

**V. LIAISON REPORTS**

**A. City Council – Steve Baker**

Baker reported he's received many positive compliments about DDA activities around the city recently, and he also complimented the DDA Board on the Berkley Plaza progress. He reported that at their last meeting, they tabled a vote on another tax abatement application from the LaSalette developers. Council had previously deferred to rule on the application presented. The application applies to the parking lot area behind the school building. The developers responded and plan to return to Council again Oct. 18. Baker also announced he would like to continue as DDA liaison if reelected Nov. 2.

**B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner**

Kempner reported the Commission is working on "tweaks" to the Master Plan revisions, and a public hearing is coming up on the plan.

**C. Community Development – Erin Schlutow**

Absent – no report.

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

Murad reported the Chamber made a small profit on the Street Art Fest and is awaiting results from the Art Bash, which had good weather and was well attended. Next on their agenda is the State of the City event, October 28, which will be virtual. Business of the Year is Vitrine, and Businessperson of the Year is Robyn Coden, owner of Sum Girls.

**VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

McGuinness included a copy of the financial spreadsheet provided by the Finance Director in the packet sent to the Board. Baumgarten reported that expenditures are on track with projections as is the Events budget.

**VII. ACTION ITEMS:**

**A. Board of Directors Appointment Recommendations**

Tim Barnes (Twelve Mile seat)

Owner of Gatekeeper Games (family oriented)

He's a former teacher with a degree in English from U of M.

Erin Brick (Coolidge seat)

Owner of Fresh Collective (one-year old business)

She's also a hair stylist and has been a volunteer on the Events/Promotions Committee.

Jenna Hance (Coolidge seat)

Owner of Pinspiration

She could not make the meeting.

About the three candidates, Francis reported that the Organization Committee was very impressed with their skills, enthusiasm, and commitment to Berkley. Board members who have worked with them also spoke in support.

Gilbert asked if a Board business owner ceases to be in business, would he/she be able to stay on the Board, and Baumgarten answered that they would, through the end of their term.

Zifkin moved to approve all three of the Board of Directors' Appointment Recommendations to fill the vacant Board vacancies, Gross seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Final approval will be made by City Council at their next meeting. DDA Board members attending hope that approval will be scheduled early in the meeting.

**B. Interim Executive Director Permanent Hiring**

Gilbert reported that in 14 years he's never been so impressed than at the progress made by McGuinness in the short time he's been Interim Director. The Executive Committee and Hiring Committee recommended hiring him for the permanent position and reviewed compensation for DDA Directors in neighboring cities, Ferndale paying @\$70,000 per year and Birmingham @100,000 per year. Royal Oak recently posted their opening at \$62,000-78,000 per year.

Passalacqua and Gilbert reported that the recommendation of the Executive and Hiring Committees is to offer McGuinness \$75,000.00 to start with a potential 3% raise after each 6 and 12 month review. Annual reviews begin at two years. The standard benefit package offered to City employees, which he will be, applies. His compensation package will be paid by the City, and reimbursed to the City by the DDA.

Baumgarten moved to hire Mike McGuinness as the permanent Executive Director on those terms, and Zifkin seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**C. Making Waves Façade Grant Application Approval**

The Design/Public Art Committee was recommending approval of a \$2,500.00 matching façade grant to Making Waves (12 Mile Road). The grant will be used to offset the cost of their new vinyl sign and exterior paint.

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Zifkin, Making Waves' application for a matching façade grant in the amount of \$2,500.00 was unanimously approved by the Board.

**D. The Lunch Café Façade Grant Application Approval**

The Design/Public Art Committee was recommending approval of a \$1,250.00 matching façade grant to The Lunch Café (12 Mile Road, adjacent to Making Waves). The grant will be used to offset the cost of upgrading their circular logo sign, coordinating with and complimenting the design of their neighbor, Making Waves.

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Baumgarten, The Lunch Café's application for a matching façade grant in the amount of \$1,250 was unanimously approved by the Board.

**E. Reware Vintage Façade Grant Application Approval**

A copy of Reware Vintage's façade application was sent to the Board prior to the meeting, and the Design/Public Art Committee was recommending it for approval. The application requests a grant in the amount of \$732.50.

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Dirkse, Reware Vintage's application for a matching façade grant in the amount of \$732.50 was unanimously approved by the Board.

**F. Holiday Lights Installation Plan Approval**

At the September unofficial Board meeting, McGuinness had presented LeClerq's proposal to install the 2021 Holiday Lights in the DDA district, including graphics of the proposed installation. The prior Director and Board members had expressed a desire for a more robust display on Coolidge, reflected in LeClerq's proposal to install holiday lights in the district at a cost of \$30,000.00, with another @\$8,000.00 allocated for utility (DTE) costs.

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Poirier, LeClerq's Holiday Lights Installation plan in the amount of \$30,000.00 with another @\$8,000.00 in utility costs was unanimously approved by the Board.

**G. Robust Downtown Marketing Plan Approval**

A draft of the Robust Downtown Marketing Plan was presented to the Board at the September meeting. Gilbert highly endorsed spending more on the DDA's marketing efforts, and he praised McGuinness' and the committee's work re-branding the Berkley downtown and making the businesses aware of the DDA and what it does.

The plan will cover now through the end of the fiscal year (June 2022). Some highlighted points in the plan are experimental, and response will be a test of their effectiveness. Examples of current media coverage were included in the packet sent to the Board prior to the meeting. McGuinness expects to put parts of the plan out for bid when the current contract with Catalyst Media lapses. This plan increases the marketing budget from the original \$29,000.00 budgeted to \$44,000.00.

On motion by Zifkin and second by Poirier, the Robust Downtown Marketing plan in the amount of \$44,000.00 was unanimously approved by the Board.

**H. Bike Racks Installation Plan Approval**

McGuinness presented graphics showing different types of bike racks that could be installed, ranging from a simple U-shaped design to more elaborate and artistic designs, such as one in the shape of

an actual bicycle. A map of the proposed locations for the racks was also included. He noted most of the racks around the city would probably be the simple design with occasional use of a more artistic and more expensive rack. Color is another option to be considered. The DDA can fund racks placed on side streets that are adjacent to business parcels in the district. The Board was asked to review the designs and placements prior to a vote on the plan at the November meeting. McGuinness quoted a price of \$4,800.00 for 20 U-shaped racks and \$2,500.00 for 3 bike-shaped racks. An estimate for the entire district is @\$20,000.00-\$30,000.00.

Installation would be an additional cost but can probably be done by the DPW, reducing the DDA's cost.

## **VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Plaza Project at Coolidge and Catalpa**

McGuinness offered kudos to Passalacqua for his efforts representing the DDA on the project. Current construction costs of @\$170,000 are consistent with the approved budget of \$180,000.00. The banners currently hanging from the fence north of the Plaza construction were exciting to Board members and an opportunity for a business to sponsor.

Passalacqua reported hearing from the School District's Larry Gallagher about a former Berkley High student who is a nationally known sculptor and who has proposed creating a signature piece of artwork to display at the Plaza. It's projected that there will be no more than @\$5,000.00 for furniture and artwork. McGuinness reported the artist had initially indicated he was inspired to create a piece dealing with the Black Lives Matter movement and Trayvon Martin specifically. Several other Board members expressed their opinion that any artwork be apolitical, not a protest work. Gilbert asked that they spend some time thinking seriously about that approach before making a final decision.

### **B. BOO!KLEY Nights Initiatives**

Several events have already taken place: Restaurant Weekend and the Night Market, which offered trolley rides for attendees with McGuinness on board. Coming up is Ladies Night Out Oct. 14 (22 business signed up) and Trick or Treat Stroll and Monster Mash at the end of October. Business windows around the district have been painted with Halloween themes. Boo!kley Nights are being promoted on Facebook and Instagram.

### **C. Media Relations Recent Downtown Coverage**

Covered previously.

### **D. Stamped Concrete Resealing Project**

The work is in process.

## **IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Absent – no report.

## **X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

### **A. Business Development Committee – Open**

No report.

### **B. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua**

Façade grant applications were covered earlier. No additional report.

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

No additional report.

### **D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis**

No additional report.

**E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Brian Zifkin**

Zifkin reported reaching out to architect Novitsky. Zifkin is temporarily stepping back from leading the committee, with Barnes taking over in the interim.

**XI. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

**A. Downtown Berkley Monthly Idea Laboratory**

Next Up: October 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 Noon – Have You Any Wool?

**XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS: None.**

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Gilbert asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days. Chris Copacia, a Berkley resident who attended a previous DDA meeting and spoke about transportation options, announced an upcoming walking tour of the city, the Coolidge corridor and some residential areas.

**XIV. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 AM on motion by Baumgarten and second by Francis.