

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, December 8, 2021, 8:30 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:33 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Andrew Agbay
Matthew Baumgarten
Erin Brick
Donna Dirkse
Andy Gilbert
Chris Gross
Jenna Hance
Razur Rahman

Absent: Tim Barnes
Ailya Siddiqi – *excused*
Scott Francis – *excused*
Matteo Passalacqua – *excused*
Ashley Poirier – *excused*
Garrett Wyatt – *excused*
Brian Zifkin – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of November 10, 2021

Brick asked to amend the November minutes to change “Brick” to “Hance” on pages 1 and 3, as it was transcribed in error. On motion by Hance and second by Baumgarten, the amended minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker congratulated the DDA on its contributions in support of the previous Saturday’s Holiday Lights parade and the day’s festivities, including official grand opening of the new DIA mural on the Theatre/Rite Aid building wall. He reported that Council met the previous Monday. The City’s annual audit report, which also covers DDA activities and expenditures, received unqualified audit results, the best possible rating. He also reported that the City has applied for a \$50,000 grant to improve Jaycee Park.

B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner reported the Commission reviewed the Design Guidelines ordinance and checklist and had concerns about the checklist scoring being too complicated and confusing, so that was sent back to be re-worked. Conflicts between the guidelines and the base ordinance also have to be resolved. She didn't know when the Commission would see the revised guidelines as new personnel are getting up to speed working on them.

C. Community Development – Erin Schlutow

Schlutow has left her position in Community Development, and the City is searching for her replacement.

D. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported the Chamber distributed its new City Guide to every residence in Berkley. Their annual holiday party was being held that night, December 8, at Berkley Common. They will move their meetings to the third Tuesday of the month and the start time up to 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. The larger than normal decrease in the fund balance reflects payments made to the contractor for the Berkley Plaza construction. Reimbursements to the DDA (which has the fiduciary role) from its other two project partners, the School District and the City, are not yet reflected in the fund balance.

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Election of Board Treasurer

Gross volunteered to take on the duties of this office as her efforts on the Marketing Committee have become less demanding since the addition of new Board members and volunteers to the committee.

Agbay moved to elect Gross as Board Treasurer, Baumgarten seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Holiday Light Installation

McGuinness included in the information packet for Board members a detailed breakdown of events and issues surrounding installation and maintenance of the decorations. He applauded the Board's decision to expand coverage and add more lights this year. He praised the DPW and Director Schueller for all their effort in monitoring the lights and communicating with DTE about outages and issues.

McGuinness announced that in 2022 the DDA will also be taking on and expanding lighting decorations of the gazebo from the Junior Women's Club.

Kempner would like to see more color, especially on Coolidge, and Brick noted she and McGuinness had discussed seeing what other options might be available from the installation contractor, LeClerc. They have plenty of lead time to explore this for the 2022 holiday season. She said the Marketing and Promotions committee might take the lead in exploring options.

Gilbert noted that the Executive Director's reports have answered many questions that come up between Board meetings, especially this month as they relate to the Holiday Lights endeavor.

B. MerriMonth 2021 Holiday Season

McGuinness noted MerriMonth started Small Business Saturday with brisk activity and good media coverage (radio, TV, and print). Merry Fairies Scavenger Hunt, coordinated by Erin Brick in collaboration with the Chamber, is ongoing through December 31. Merry & Bright Shopping Nights with various charitable partners began Dec. 2 and continues Thursday, Dec. 9. Artist Lisa Littell,

working with Berkley High students, is transitioning from spooktacular Boo!KLEY window painting to holiday designs, with more participation from Gateway West businesses. Gilbert noted the extra marketing efforts are paying off in terms of drawing customers downtown, as well as improving the profile of the DDA and proving its value to Berkley's downtown business owners.

C. Plaza Project Construction Progress

McGuinness reported Passalacqua and others on the team, including the DPW Director, had done a walk-through of the site and generated a punch list of items to be completed. The next phase entails deciding on a name for the site in addition to adding furniture and other installations. Grand opening will probably take place mid-Spring.

D. Board Goals, Planning Strategies

McGuinness announced that he was able to secure a \$1,500.00 Main Street grant for Board training, and he asked for input about what they would like the facilitator's focus to be. Baumgarten noted that scheduling the session(s) for earlier in the year (January, February) would help setting budget priorities. Gilbert asked if the session(s) might be used to further the Board's understanding of how the non-profit arm of the DDA can be utilized, and McGuinness noted that isn't initially the purpose of the training session(s) but he will look into that angle and discuss the 501c3 with the Organization Committee.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Absent – no report. There was brief discussion of the School District's excellent response to the issue of threats of violence in schools and how Berkley was one of the few districts whose students returned in full force the week of the Oxford incident.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Business Development Committee – Jenna Hance

Hance reported she's just getting into how this committee can work with businesses interested in setting up in Berkley, so she had no additional information to report this month. Baumgarten noted that the person who fills Schlutow's position will be an essential contact for her.

B. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua

Absent – no additional report.

C. Marketing & Promotions Committee – Ashley Poirier

Absent. McGuinness noted conversations with the Chamber about their plans for the upcoming year and how the DDA and Chamber can coordinate their efforts. Setting the DDA's goals for 2022 will be a focus for the Director and the various committees now. McGuinness has been thinking about holding moving "block parties" downtown, closing off small areas of the side streets (like Robina north and Dorothea) while keeping the main streets open (12 Mile and Coolidge). It can be an exciting way to celebrate openings of new businesses. Brick said Promotions is already brainstorming having a "Frozen Family February," maybe with a chili cook-off. Brick stressed that the events have to be held outdoors, which means they will need more funding. Kempner noted the planned pocket parks are additional locations to keep in mind.

D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

Absent – no report.

E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Tim Barnes

Absent – no report.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. New Business Additions to Downtown

McGuinness included in his report to the Board a listing of new Berkley businesses and update on vacancies and ongoing construction projects. Rahman announced that his property on 12 Mile is now vacant and he's looking for tenants.

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.

XIV. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 AM on motion by Brick and second by Agbay.