

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 8:15 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:15 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.

II. ROLL CALL:

A. Attendance Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Matthew Baumgarten
Donna Dirkse
Desiree Dutcher
Justin Findling
Katie Forte
Scott Francis
Andy Gilbert
Chris Gross
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Talia Wittenberg
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Tim Barnes – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Ric Chalmers, Berkley DPW

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

On motion by Dirkse and second by Gross, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of December 13, 2023, the Informational Meeting of December 13, 2023, and the Informational Meeting of December 28, 2023

Forte submitted a change under Discussion item C., in that she actually said “a committee could work on” proposed landscaping strategies and improvements. On motion by Forte and second by Laczkovich, the corrected minutes of the regular meeting of December 13, 2023, the Informational Meeting of December 13, 2023, and the Informational Meeting of December 28, 2023 were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. TREASURER’S REPORT:

A. Financial Reports for December, 2023 and January, 2024

Gross noted that after the audit, her figures differed from the audit’s figures by @\$30,000, but that has since been resolved. Gross described what she’s getting from the City is more of a “snapshot”; figures might change day by day. The actual beginning fund balance was @\$289,000. For January, revenues (tax capture) were @\$6,000, expenses @\$29,000 (normal monthly plus Robina project

engineering), year-to-date figure was @\$82,000 positive, and an ending fund balance of @\$372,000. Baumgarten noted that with property values and property taxes increasing, there should be an increase in the DDA's share of the incoming revenues (possibly 5%, according to Baumgarten). McGuinness noted the increasing investment in downtown property and new construction.

Zifkin moved to receive and approve the Financial Reports for December 2023 and January 2024, Forte seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VI. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Adoption of Downtown Berkley 2024 Promotional Events Strategy

McGuinness provided to the Board in their meeting packet a draft roster of the 2024 Downtown Berkley Events, running from March through December 2024. Some events are expanded from previous years and some are new additions for 2024. McGuinness described details on some of the expanded and/or new events. Building on the BOO!kley branded event, he suggested a "dog days of summer" for the warmer season branded "Barkley."

Passalacqua moved to approve the Downtown Berkley 2024 Promotional Events Strategy, Dutcher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Façade Enhancement Grant Application for America's Stamp Stop

McGuinness provided details of the renovations for the building at 3860 Twelve Mile, the long-time Berkley business America's Stamp Stop. The oversized renderings and architectural blueprints were too large to be scanned and included in the Board packet, so McGuinness brought originals to the meeting for the Board to review.

Owners are only applying for a façade grant for the portion of the renovations closest to 12 Mile Road, in the amount of \$3,900.00. This amount will be applied to replacement of the current mansard roofing with metal roofing material that matches that used on the warehouse portion of the business.

Passalacqua moved to approve the Façade Enhancement Grant Application for America's Stamp Stop in the amount of \$3,900.00, Forte seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

McGuinness said he expects the business to apply for a mural funding grant as well.

Passalacqua noted that grant applicants should be checked for any open violations (property) with the City.

C. Considering Budget Amendments for Current 2023-2024 Fiscal Year

McGuinness included in the Board packet a list of Budget Amendments to be submitted for the 2023/24 fiscal year, to be made to cover the actual costs of the items on the list:

\$1,400.70 (Special Events: DPW Workers, Overtime, and FICA)

\$18,900.00 (Streetscape and Design: Façade Grant Program)

\$336.00 (DDA Administration: Workers Compensation)

These amendments total \$20,636.70.

Passalacqua moved to approve the proposed Budget Amendments for Current 2023-2024 Fiscal Year, Dirkse seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

D. New Spending Priorities, Investments in Growth for Upcoming 2024-2025 Fiscal Year

As budget planning for the 2024/25 fiscal year is getting underway, McGuinness included in the Board packet a list of proposed spending priorities for the Board to consider for the upcoming year.

Application for Oakland County's placemaking matching grant program is due at the end of March, and the DDA has in place project plans that fit the criteria for receiving a 60/40 matching grant in the approximate amount of \$100,000 from Berkley. The County's matching percentage may change depending on whether any of the other downtowns drop out.

In addition, allocated funds in the 2022/23 budget that were not spent are available, including remaining money in the flower basket program, that can be spent the current fiscal year on large planters for the West 12 Mile Gateway district. Other monies not spent can be applied to these 2023/24 projects/priorities. The new or increased investment in shown in parentheses:

- Postage and printing for monthly DDA newsletters to be mailed to all downtown businesses (\$3,600)
- Triangular promotional pole banners to hang on existing ornamental downtown poles (hardware already in place) (\$8,000)
- Expansion and promotion of the downtown Thursdays Farmers Market series (\$15,000)
- Roll out and promotion of the Downtown Social District (\$10,000)
- Upgrade of the public space landscaping (\$25,000)
- Increasing mural installation funding especially in the Gateway West Creative District (many walls available) (\$20,000)
- Public Art/Placemaking upgrades to Dorothea/Coolidge (\$20,000)
- Public Art/Placemaking upgrades to Robina public spaces, North and South (including installation of sculpture) (\$10,000)
- Four or more (at 50% match) façade grant awards (\$40,000)
- Robina public space improvements (\$90,000)
- Dorothea public space improvements (\$10,000)
- Placemaking upgrades to the Historical Museum public space (\$20,000).

Many of these priorities can be addressed in the DDA's matching grant application.

Discussions regarding setting an appropriate fund balance percentage were discussed and will be addressed at the March meeting. Baker noted that the DDA is expected to be investing in the downtown and so they want to tap into the fund balance (but not too much). McGuinness noted that since Oakland County grant funds are hopefully available this year, he would like to aggressively capture that for the downtown public spaces. Main Street and the Michigan Downtown Association should have recommendations on the appropriate fund balance.

Poirier moved to approve the proposed New Spending Priorities, Investment in Growth for the Upcoming 2024-2025 Fiscal Year, Passalacqua seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. Discussion Items

A. Welcome Signage Corrected Near Alco Glass on Greenfield

McGuinness reported that DDA wayfinding welcome signage at 12 Mile and Greenfield that had partially blocked an Alco Glass exterior sign had been successfully lowered so that it no longer blocks their sign. The cost to make the change was @\$1,500.

B. Crosswalk Signal Activation Pole Struck, Slated for Repairs

McGuinness reported that the base plate for the activation pole outside Casa Amado that a vehicle struck and damaged has been ordered, and DPW will reinstall the pole when the plate is received.

C. Downtown Holiday Lights Removal, Power Challenges

McGuinness reported that the holiday lights have been taken down. Passalacqua suggested taking them down approximately two weeks earlier in the future. There are challenges to be addressed by

DTE as some never lit up or partially lit up. The City's new community relations person will be engaged to address this issue with DTE and may be invited to a Board meeting to discuss these (and other) issues.

D. Ongoing Landscaping Needs and Opportunities in our Downtown

McGuinness noted Frank's, the DDA's landscaping contractor, will have a multi-year contract after the current fiscal year. He reiterated that the plan is to install large planters in the Gateway West District. Dutcher and Kempner suggested varying the color scheme throughout the downtown.

VIII. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported the Council is also in budget season. At their 2/5/24 meeting, they dealt with procedural issues and building changes at City Hall as well as activities and security issues for the upcoming Berkley Days. The City is continuing to partner with the Smart Bus to provide transportation services to Berkley seniors. The City budget will be finalized in May.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Kapelanski reported they are reviewing parklets and outdoor seating application renewals. They also expect to send the Coolidge/Columbia PUD plans for approval. There is interest in the former Vitrine space, and the proposal for that will be going to the Planning Commission for review.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner reported the Commission did not meet in December. A façade update for one of the new cannabis businesses on 11 Mile came before the Commission in January. Zoning updates are moving along, optimistically done by April.

D. Public Works – Ric Chalmers

Nothing additional to report.

E. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported they are discussing having Oak Park join the Berkley Chamber, and Berkley's Chamber is gearing up for the new fiscal year. They have five new Board members and will hold a Board retreat. Volunteer recruitment is a focus. This year they will hold a Zombie Pub Crawl during BOO!kley month. Applications for Art Bash are already coming in. Berk Perk cards were gifted to all School District employees. They plan to meet on a regular basis with the Mayor and City Manager.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Findling reported the high school is celebrating Valentine's Spirit Week. Recent activities include volunteering at Ronald McDonald House, holding a cardboard boat regatta at the pool, and a senior citizen prom at a local senior center.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee

(Next Meeting, Tentatively: **February 15**, 9:00 am, Virtual)

B. Business Development Committee

(Next Meeting: Brandon Adolph with U.S. Small Business Administration)

McGuinness will be scheduling a meet-and-greet with the SBA and Berkley business owners.

C. Downtown Events Committee

(Next Meeting, on Pride: **February 21**, 7 pm, City Hall)

Planning is underway for this year's event.

D. Marketing Strategies Committee

Marketing Strategies (Next Meeting, on Social District: **February 14**, 11:30 am, City Hall)

E. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

Hiring Ad Hoc (Recently Met on **January 29**)

The Board will get feedback on McGuinness's evaluation – more to come in e-mail and at next month's meeting.

F. West 12-Mile Committee – Brian Zifkin

(Next Meeting Date and Time to be Determined)

Zifkin did some research about lights in the area and found replacements are very expensive.

McGuinness responded that existing poles will be replaced. Questions to be resolved are who owns which poles and who pays for replacements.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Main Street America Annual Accreditation Process, Evaluations, Approval

McGuinness reported that Berkley's DDA has been re-accredited for this year.

B. Main Street Oakland County Main Street Summit March 19

McGuinness reported that he would be out of town for the summit but someone from the Board was welcome to attend in his place.

C. Executive Director on Vacation March 19-26

McGuinness reported he would be out on vacation for that week.

D. National Main Street Conference May 6-8 in Birmingham, Alabama

McGuinness reported he would be attending and that Main Street covers the cost.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS: None.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS: The opportunity for public comment was offered, and no requests to comment were made at the meeting. Anyone with comments or questions is asked to e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

XIV. Adjournment:

The regular meeting was adjourned at 10:01 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Francis.