

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 8:15 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:18 AM with Executive Director Mike McGuinness presiding.

- II. **ROLL CALL:**
 - A. **Attendance Taken and Quorum Determined**

Present: Desiree Dutcher
Katie Forte
Scott Francis
Chris Gross
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Matthew Baumgarten – *excused*
Donna Dirkse – *excused*
Justin Findling – *excused*
Andy Gilbert – *excused*
Talia Wittenberg – *excused*

Also present: Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Darlene Rothman, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Adam Wozniak, Berkley DPW

- III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. **Regular Meeting of February 14, 2024**

On motion by Gross and second by Laczkovich, the minutes of the regular meeting of February 14, 2024 were unanimously approved by the Board.

- V. **TREASURER’S REPORT:**
 - A. **Financial Reports for February 2024**

The Financial Report was not available from the City Finance Department as of meeting time.

- VI. **CLOSED SESSION**
 - A. **Motion To Go Into Closed Session to Discuss Employee Evaluation**

At 8:22:00 AM, Passalacqua moved to go into closed session to discuss employee evaluation, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

 - B. **Motion to Come Out of Closed Session to Discuss Employee Evaluation**

At 8:35:00 AM, Passalacqua moved to come out of closed session, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. Public Summary of Executive Director Annual Evaluation

Board members present overwhelmingly agreed with the evaluation of the Director's tenure in the position as being extremely productive as well as the direction they all agreed to pursue moving forward. They thanked him for his services and all his efforts on behalf of Berkley. Francis, part of the evaluation team, noted McGuinness's productive feedback, including plans to further develop structure, set priorities, and create a work plan. McGuinness had indicated to the evaluation team that he's very satisfied with the current state of his career moving forward, and all agreed that if his plans and ambitions change, to assure smooth transitions, they want to be notified as soon as possible. The Board also indicated their interest in adding to the Professional Development budget line item for further training opportunities for the Executive Director.

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR ANDY GILBERT'S YEARS OF SERVICE ON THE DDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

McGuinness included in the Board's Information Packet a proposed Resolution of Appreciation for Andy Gilbert's years of service on the DDA Board of Directors. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION

ACKNOWLEDGING AND THANKING MR. ANDY GILBERT FOR HIS YEARS OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE ON THE DDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHEREAS, for many years, Downtown Berkley property owner and businessman Andy Gilbert has been a catalyst for progress in our downtown; and,

WHEREAS, Mr. Gilbert has been a particularly strong, vocal, and consistent advocate for ensuring that the Coolidge Corridor received adequate attention and resources from the Downtown Development Authority through the years; and

WHEREAS, he has served for many years on the DDA Board, rolling up his sleeves to make a difference, including by stepping up to serve as the DDA Board Chair for multiple years; and,

WHEREAS, he has decided the time has come to conclude his time on the DDA Board and he will be resigning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Berkley Downtown Development Authority formally acknowledges, thanks, and celebrates the many years of strong service by Mr. Andy Gilbert as both a Board Member and as Chair; and further

RESOLVED, we wish him the very best as a continued strong part of our Downtown community and we resoundingly say "Thank You."

On behalf of the Chamber, Rothman noted his importance in making the Street Art Fest the successful event it has become. "He got it really going."

Zifkin moved to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for Andy Gilbert's Years of Service on the DDA Board of Directors, Dutcher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. At meeting's end, Board members signed a copy of the Resolution to be presented to Gilbert by McGuinness.

B. ELECTION OF DDA BOARD CHAIR FOR APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE 2024 MEETINGS

McGuinness noted that with Gilbert's resignation, a new Chair would be required to fill his term for the months of April, May, and June 2024. Matteo Passalacqua volunteered to accept nomination.

Poirier moved to nominate Matteo Passalacqua to be DDA Chair for April, May, and June 2024 DDA Board meetings, Gross seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. ELECTION OF DDA BOARD VICE CHAIR FOR APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE 2024 MEETINGS

McGuinness noted that with Barnes' resignation, a new Vice Chair would be required to fill his term for the months of April, May, and June 2024. Poirier nominated Board member Desiree Dutcher, Laczkovich seconded, and Dutcher accepted the nomination.

The nomination of Desiree Dutcher as Board Vice Chair for April, May, and June 2024 was unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. Discussion Items

A. Grant Funding Pursued to Benefit Out Downtown

1. AARP Livable Communities Mini-Grant for Walkability Audit (submitted)

McGuinness has been working with a community volunteer, Lori Branch, who is pursuing grant writing educational opportunities. She has been assisting with grant writing for the Berkley DDA as a volunteer. She worked with McGuinness to draft and submit an application to AARP for a \$2,500.00 mini-grant for a downtown Berkley walkability audit. That proposal has been submitted, and we are awaiting a determination.

2. T-Mobile Hometown Grant for Twelve Mile Arts District (being drafted)

McGuinness reported this \$50,000 grant application to T-Mobile is in the process of being drafted, is due by the end of March, and if the grant is awarded, the funds will be applied to enhancing the 12 Mile area from Greenfield to Buckingham, the new arts district.

3. Oakland County Revitalization and Placemaking Matching Grant (participating)

McGuinness reported this application for a 40/60 matching grant is being submitted, with the Robina North/South space as its focus.

B. Michigan Statutory Compliance for Website Posting of Annual Information and Documents

McGuinness reported that these State reporting requirements on TIF funds has been met with the update to the DDA Web site. Discussion ensued about how to best communicate on an ongoing basis about the progress that the TIF funds are generating for the downtown.

C. March Promotional Activities with Scavenger Hunt and Leprechaun Ladies Night Out

McGuinness reported that the trolley would run for the event and he will be on board.

D. Updating of Opportunities in our Downtown for Landscaping Enhancements

Wozniak reported that Director Young has reached out to several nurseries about replacement trees, recommended by Berkley's Tree Board and a State of Michigan arborist, but has not received responses yet. McGuinness also reported they're getting estimates from Frank's Landscaping about options to enhance the downtown plantings, especially West Twelve Mile, as well as Dorothea and Robina North and South. The new fiscal year landscaping program with Frank's will include Art Space. The DPW Director is working with DTE to replace the dated, short light poles around the downtown. Passalacqua noted that he would like at least to see what replacements are proposed and what entity gets the final say.

IX. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Absent. In his absence, McGuinness reported that Council may vote on the Coolidge and Columbia Planned Unit Development proposal in the coming weeks, as well as the former Vitrine space

developer's request for special land use, to use the space as an office as opposed to retail, as it's currently zoned.

Gross introduced discussion regarding recruiting more retail to encourage pedestrian traffic.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

In Kapelanski's absence, McGuinness reported their Web page has information about business parklets and requirements for businesses interested in creating one in the public space in front of their location.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Absent – no report.

D. Public Works – Ric Chalmers

Wozniak reported the timing of the crosswalk lights on Coolidge has been adjusted (lengthened).

E. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

In Murad's absence, Rothman reported the Chamber is full speed ahead on planning for the Street Art Fest. From May through July, they'll be focusing on promoting the arts, including running a photo contest May through July about Berkley events. They also plan to publish a map of Berkley murals in a booklet launching in April. That may evolve into a coffee table type book, with some of the book proceeds donated to the schools' art programs. Forte has been closely involved. With the Red Cross, they will be sponsoring a "Vampire" blood drive October 29 and could name the October Pub Crawl the Zombie Crawl. Proceeds from sales of a skeleton T-shirt will be split with the DDA, and discounts could be offered by local businesses if their customers wear their skeleton T-shirt.

X. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Absent – no report.

XI. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee

The Committee met last month, and McGuinness would like for the group to meet again before March is over, probably at an arts district location.

B. Business Development Committee

The official ribbon cutting for Bombshell Treats is scheduled for April 19 with, hopefully, the City allowing Dorothea to be closed, creating a public space.

Rachel Pinch's Coolidge law office will have its ribbon cutting on May 2.

Victual and Vine, across from the Library on Coolidge, is pursuing a redevelopment liquor license. That needs Council approval before going to the State. Little Lou's Hot Chicken is pursuing the same type of license.

Two new businesses are moving into PUCK HCKY's old space: A Royal Oak marketing firm on the second floor, and a retailer on the ground floor that will complement their neighbor, Reware Vintage.

McGuinness knows a new business that's pursuing a lease at the old Chet's Rent-All on Coolidge, with more details to be shared when available.

McGuinness met with Brandon Adolph of the U.S. Small Business Administration, and they would like to schedule an April session in Berkley about government resources available. They will need a larger space to hold the session.

Time Travelers will be moving into the space next to TLC (formerly Making Waves) on 12 Mile, and Council Resale will expand into their old space on the south side of 12 Mile. There are mural possibilities at Time Travelers' new location.

At Cumberland and 12 Mile, there is new construction for a dentist's office.

Red Arrow Tattoo (Coolidge just north of Wiltshire) is moving to Clawson because of high costs and losing two tattoo artists. Berkley Fine Wine is purchasing that space.

There is action at the Ellwood/12 Mile corner, south side, the owner applying for a new business license.

The School District will lease space from the church next door on Catalpa for their Robotics Team and adults with special needs.

C. Downtown Events Committee

The next Pride planning meeting will be at Gatekeeper Games, 7:00 PM, Wednesday, 3/20.

D. Marketing Strategies Committee

No additional information.

E. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

McGuinness thanked the committee for their work on his annual evaluation.

F. West 12-Mile Committee – Brian Zifkin

No reports.

XII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Executive Director on Vacation March 19-26

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

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

McGuinness reported he would be attending and would miss the May Berkley DDA Board meeting.

C. Michigan Downtown Association Summer Workshop May 31 in Harbor Springs

McGuinness reported he attended the last Association meeting and invited all to attend the Summer Workshop with him.

XIII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

Francis reported that Food Truck Fridays are starting up again, the first Fridays in April and May.

XIV. 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.

XV. Adjournment:

The regular meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Poirier.