

MANISTEE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024
8:30 A.M., WSCC EDUCATION CENTER
400 RIVER STREET, MEETING ROOM B

PRESENT: Kyle Mosher, Bruce Allen, Tyler Leppanen, Sammie Lukaskiewicz, Karen Goodman, Deanna Marsh, Lindsey Swidorski, Ben Crowley, Bill Gambill

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Anita Shaffer, Chief Glass, Angie Fischer, Councilmember Grabowski, Laura Heintzelman, Andrew Stafford, Nicole Kaminski

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 8:32 a.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Ben Crowley, second by Bill Gambill to adopt the agenda as presented.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. Anita Shaffer, co-chair of Fall Festival, and Angie Fischer, co-chair of Fall Festival: They commented that they were unaware of a new event application submitted. They noted that ample communication and planning went into the festival, and the applicant had multiple opportunities to join. Concerns were raised about insurance liability.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 14TH, 2024 REGULAR MEETING**

MOTION by Karen Goodman, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz to approve the minutes from the August 14th, 2024, Regular Meeting.

5. **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- a. Funds are being moved from the general fund into Michigan Class for better investment returns, with significant transfers occurring in August.

MOTION by Sammie Lukaskiewicz second by Lindsey Swidorski to approve the August 2024 financials.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

6. **EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

- a. Andrew Stafford provided an update on economic development in the DDA District.
- i. He continues to assist business owners with the application process for the facade grant.
 - ii. Currently working to fill vacancies, with two new businesses moving into River Street, reducing downtown vacancies from 16 to 14. Working with property owners on how to best market their properties and assist in finding tenants.

7. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

a. Facade Grant

i. Marketing for the Facade Grant application is ongoing, with the DDA board asked to help promote it. The deadline is October 15th. Current outreach includes emails, e-blasts, and word of mouth, with Bill Gambill suggesting the addition of mailers.

b. Streetscape

i. The streetscape committee and Brandon Jenson from Rightside Design reviewed River Street to identify design elements and strategies within the budget. They are assessing improvements block by block to maximize existing resources and create lasting benefits. Bill Gambill will request a timeline from Jenson at the next meeting. Bill Gambill will ask Brandon Jenson to provide a timeline at the next meeting.

c. Events

i. Event Trailer Items

(i) No new items have been purchased. Additional funds will be needed for future purchases, and the DDA event committee is advised to begin exploring trailer options.

ii. New Procedure

(i) Guidelines have been created and will be sent out to board members for comments.

iii. Fall Decorations

(i) The Fall Festival Committee received a \$311.12 quote from Orchard Market for corn stalks. The committee will pick up and install the corn stalks with help from volunteers.

(ii) Fall planters from Weesies:

MOTION by Karen Goodman second by Bill Gambill to purchase fall planters from Weesies.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

d. Gap Financing

i. Verbiage and Education

(i) The TIF (Tax Increment Financing) plan provides a 25-year projection of funding, focusing on key redevelopment projects.

(ii) The DDA's funding comes from the difference between the frozen property tax rate and the actual tax value. The TIF plan will expire in 2044 unless extended by the city.

(iii) The maximum amount of financial assistance the DDA can offer can be determined by taking the new property tax - old property tax.

(v) TIF agreements can be capped by the program's duration or on a case-by-case basis and may not apply to all downtown projects.

ii. Proforma Examples

(i) Andrew Stafford will schedule a meeting with each board member to further explain the program, where more in-depth examples will be shown.

8. OLD BUSINESS

a. Revolving Loan Fund

i. USDA requests a formal resolution from the DDA and Venture North regarding the transfer of funds.

MOTION by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, second by Bruce Allen to sign the resolution to transfer the Revolving Loan Funds from the DDA to Venture North

Voice vote—Motion approved

b. DDA Bylaw Changes

i. The City Council has approved the bylaw changes. The revised bylaws will be uploaded and distributed accordingly.

c. SHINE

i. Tim from Shine repaired 20 broken strands of lights. Damage looked to be caused by squirrels.

d. Riverwalk

i. The City will re-bid the project due to bids being significantly higher than expected. To manage costs, they may purchase some materials themselves and consider scaling back the project, though this could lead to a reduced grant from the EDA.

e. Trash - Collection

i. One dumpster on Clay Street has been replaced with a cardboard-only dumpster, so the current setup on Clay Street is now two trash dumpsters and one cardboard dumpster.

ii. Deanna Marsh has asked for improved marketing and signage to prevent misuse of the dumpsters.

iii. The lease agreement with LRH, for a temporary dumpster enclosure is on hold until all options for dumpster placement are exhausted by the business owner.

f. **Social District**

- i. Participating businesses need to have their logos added to their cups alongside the social district sticker. A compliance packet will be created for all participating businesses, detailing the necessary requirements.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Richard & McDougall Annual Contract**

- i. Andrew Stafford signed a renewal contract with Richard & McDougall for their services.
- ii. Karen Goodman recommended that the accounting services for the DDA be put out to bid for next year. Ben Crowley supported this.

b. **Fall Festival Street Closure Review**

- i. The requested space appears excessive in relation to the proposed activities. Scheduled closure from 10 AM to 4 PM on a Saturday, this event could significantly impact downtown businesses.
- ii. Chief Glass noted that in the event of DDA's recommendation of approval, he suggests closing the whole block of River Street for safety concerns.
- iii. Deanna Marsh noted that the Fall Festival event has been well talked about and collaborative efforts have been initiated from the beginning. Noting that we need to stay collaborative.
- iv. Manistee Inn & Marina parking lot has been offered as a location for other wanting participants to set up.

MOTION by Deanna Marsh, second by Ben Crowley to not recommend approval to the City Council and to keep the Fall Festival event as already been defined and approved.
Voice vote—Motion approved

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Angie Fischer thanks the board for hearing the Fall Festival event committees' concerns.

11. **BOARD COMMENTS**

Bill Gambill: Discussed concern for a DDA event tent regarding liability in set-up and take-down. The event committee will further discuss this and provide an update to the Fall Festival committee.

Ben Crowley: Inquired about his absence last meeting being an excused absence.

Deanna Marsh: Asked for a copy of the food truck regulations. Pointing out concerns about safety and brick-and-mortar store competition.

12. ADJOURN

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9th, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in the WSCC Education Center, 400 River Street.

MOTION by Karen Goodman supported by Ben Crowley to adjourn at 9:45 a.m.

Nicole Kaminski

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Acting Recording Secretary