



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2025, REGULAR MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. at the Ada Township Hall, Assembly Room, 7330 Thornapple River Drive, Ada MI.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chair Knapp.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Coe, Frost, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Korth, Turan, Vogl

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Cloutier

STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT: Austin, Buckley, Said, Suchy, Treasurer Moran, Chief Murray, BFG Director Brinks, Farmers Market Coordinator Valverde

PUBLIC PRESENT: 2 members of the public

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Coe, supported by Idema, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 13, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Harrison, supported by Turan, to approve the January 13, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2025, SPECIAL WORK SESSION

DDA Director Austin pointed out that the numbering of agenda items were out of sync. It was moved by Vogl, supported by Idema, to amend the roman numerals in the January 15, 2025, Special Work Session minutes. Moved by Vogl, supported by Idema, to approve the amended January 15, 2025, Special Work Session minutes. Motion carried.

V. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Tree Risk Assessment

Austin updated that due to past incidents of some of the older mature trees dropping limbs and tree debris, BFG Director Brinks obtained Tree Risk Assessment quotes to help evaluate some of the concerns. Austin explained that a Tree Risk Assessment helps identify any structural issues or diseases that could lead to branches falling or even a tree toppling over, which could cause injury to pedestrians, cyclists, or

vehicles. He referred to the pictures shared in Brinks staff memo and said they have assessed there are about 300 trees in the right of way in the village area. The reports provided in the risk assessment can help the township prioritize higher risk trees for maintenance/pruning which could reduce or prevent larger scale damage events.

Austin went over the three types of Tree Risk Assessment; Tiers 1, 2, & 3. Referring to the quotes provided from three vendors and the prior work experience with Bartlett Tree Experts, Austin requested the DDA discuss and evaluate one of two options:

1. Ask for a Tier 2 Tree Risk Assessment for all 300 downtown trees. By doing this option, we will have a status of all the downtown trees with a database to inform future decisions.
2. Ask for a Tree Risk assessment for only the mature trees on Bronson Street. This is due highly to the number to limbs falling from the Bronson Street Trees and the sheer size and maturity of the trees.

Austin concluded that based on experience and past work performed, Staff recommend Bartlett Tree Experts for the professional service of a Tree Risk Assessment for \$5,475.00 with option 1.

There was DDA discussion about utilizing the data from REGIS software for geolocate tracking (transfer of data from Bartlett Tree to REGIS), timeframe of project (immediate or in the spring), setting aside funds in the new budget, and overall DDA concerns for the maintenance of the trees for safety purposes.

Austin will confirm additional information (project timeframe and data transfer) from Bartlett Tree Experts and update the DDA.

Moved by Korth, supported by Vogl, to approve Bartlett Tree Experts for the professional service of a Tree Risk Assessment for \$5,475.00 with option 1 (Tier 2 for all 300 trees), without the software component. Motion carried.

b. Connecting Community Campaign Contribution Request

Township Manager Suchy spoke on behalf of the Connecting Community Campaign. He made note he presented an outline of what the project envisioned to the DDA about six months ago. Suchy explained the history of the campaign. He said originally the two lots at the end of River Street were planned to be redeveloped as homes, but a donor came forward and was interested in preserving that land as park space. Suchy approached the Township about working on a larger plan to reimagine the park/reimagine the riverfront and created the Connecting Community in Ada Campaign. The goal of the campaign was to raise \$6.4 million dollars.

Suchy went over the details of the project referring to images/renderings/site plan layout and listed all of its amenities from the north side to the south side of the park; Veterans Memorial (working with Historical Society), dog park, splash pads, pickle ball courts, kayak launch, playground structure, seating areas and restrooms, adding parking spaces, maintenance/stability building up the bank work along the river, and so much more.

Suchy provided a copy of the cost estimates breakdown; Covered Bridge Park, HAWK pedestrian signal, Bridge (by others), Kayak Launch, and Trail (by others) totaling Ada Park Masterplan of \$6,641,973.

Suchy said the project has currently been engineered to 30% design and staff are working with Progressive Companies on updating cost estimates and receiving a proposal for the final design to take the project out to bid this year.

Suchy said he is requesting DDA board consideration for a pledge towards the Connecting Community Campaign of \$75,000 per year for three years – a total of \$225,000. This is a signature project in Downtown Ada that will improve the quality of life for residents and visitors and serve as an attraction to downtown. This project aligns with DDA boards goals of creating a vibrant downtown and increasing parking supply in the downtown district.

There was DDA discussion (with Suchy/Staff) regarding park location and floodplain concerns, the size of lot area for specific amenities, ways to do effective fundraising through DDA events, donor opportunities for the components needed (tables, benches, trash receptacles), identified ways of sharing information with the public/advertising for pledges, and following discussion about determining financial obligations/capacities within the new budget, the DDA members concurred in support of the project.

Moved by Idema, supported by Vogl, to approve the DDA pledge to the Connecting Community in Ada Campaign in the amount of 225,000 over a period of three years (\$75,000 per year), with the pledge amount to be reviewed by DDA each year. Motion carried.

c. Review and Discuss Proposed 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget Draft #2

Austin referred to the proposed second draft of the budget included in the packet. He went over some of the changes from first draft to the second draft; Revenues: TIF, DDA Millage, Special Events, with Revenues total of \$1,045,765; Expenditures: Connecting Community Campaign, Contract Services, Marketing/Promotion, Maintenance Repair, Improvements, and Community Events, with Expenditures total of \$1,011,605; Net of Revenues of \$34,160.

Harrison asked whether or not the DDA fund balance is invested. Suchy informed that Treasurer Moran works to make sure he is maximizing your return in a safe way (with cash flow that is adequate and maximizing our yield when opportunity to do so). Frost inquired about the amount budgeted for trash receptacles and benches to be sure of an adequate amount distributed throughout the village.

VIII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. DDA Financial Report, January 31, 2025

Austin noted the new format for the financial report that was preferred by the DDA. Austin added a note to the report that we have started to acquire the DDA Millage and we have actually received about \$76,000 and taxes are due February 14th.

b. Farmers Market Manager Report – Raquel Valverde

Valverde updated that she completed and submitted the application to implement SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at the market. Once the SNAP application is approved, they can apply for Double Up Food Bucks program. This program is especially beneficial at farmers markets because it helps increase access to fresh and locally grown food.

Valverde said the committee met on January 21st and covered topics: an update on the marketing workshop, EBT application process, and vendor application packets. The updated application packet includes a mission statement, market hours (changed to 9A-1P), a single full-season structure, enforcement rules, and a vendor responsibilities section. Following the review and approval of the application packets, vendor applications were sent out to all returning vendors and will open up public applications on February 28th via the website and social media.

Valverde said she began the Farmers Market Manager Certification program, which includes a combination of a conference and webinars covering essential topics in farmers market management. She will complete

the course on February 12th and feels she will be better prepared to implement strategies that support vendors, improve market accessibility, and ensure the market operates smoothly while adhering to regulations.

Valverde made note that the social media consultant contract concludes with Tara Heerspink on February 11th but she will collaborate with her again in April and May to help execute some marketing goals like organizing school visits, engage with preschools and retirement homes, and initiating partnerships within the local community.

c. Township Department Head Staff Reports

Austin summarized his Director Report for February 10, 2025, as included in the packet.

IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT - none

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Austin informed the DDA that Travis Alden, The Right Place, is going through a job transition right now, however, he is committed towards guiding the DDA through the Strategic Planning Work Session. Travis is currently working on the survey that we will be disbursing to all the stakeholders. Austin noted the third work session the DDA will work through on their own, as Travis will have transitioned by then.

XI. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Idema, supported by Turan, to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

rs:eb