



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES OF THE MAY 13, 2024, MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, May 13, 2024, 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:** Frost, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Leisman, Turan, Vogl

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Cloutier, Coe

**STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Buckley, Said, Stichman, Suchy, Chief Murray, Treasurer Moran

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** 6 members of the community

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 8, 2024, REGULAR MEETING**

Moved by Vogl, supported by Harrison, to approve the minutes of April 8, 2024, Regular Meeting. Motion carried.

*Turan arrived at the meeting at 8:02 a.m.*

**IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none**

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none**

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Beers at the Bridge Summer Concert Update – *Verbal update***

Stichman shared an update on the Beers at the Bridge budget and sponsorships. She said she has seen a decrease and increase in some of the expenditures in terms of what is budgeted, and she gave a brief overview of costs: new sound management system increased \$1,500, cups decreased, fencing cost decreased (Give Em a Break savings), total cost of event at \$77,000 and intends an overall surplus. Stichman mentioned an option to purchase projection screens to enhance vendor advertising/banners. The cost for the screen would be \$1,200 and the DDA members concurred to the expense.

**b. Review DDA Walkway Project Concept Plan from Progressive Companies and Consider Proposal for MI Neighborhood Program Grant Funding**

Stichman said Progressive Companies has provided plans for the walkway project between Nonna's and the Barbershop and she has included it in the packet for DDA review. She met with both property owners to discuss potential improvements and they are supportive and eager to see the project move forward. She went over plan details, landscape design, paving, benches, lighting, and screening elements.

Stichman stated the DDA budget includes a \$40,000 expenditure for this project. Based on rough cost estimates from Progressive Companies for the design presented, we would be looking at a \$90,000-\$100,000 investment. She has identified grant funds that could be utilized to bridge the gap in funding. The MI Neighborhood program is managed through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Public amenity projects are being funded through this program for up to \$75,000. This program is being used to support the statewide regional housing plan and The Right Place is a co-lead for our Region F (West MI). After speaking with Travis Alden from The Right Place, she feels confident that this project is a good match for the public amenity portion of the grant. Travis Alden has offered to help facilitate a letter of support from The Right Place for any grant application that may be submitted for this project.

There was DDA discussion regarding: the budgeted amount vs. the \$90,000-\$100,000 cost, maintenance of the walkway, walking over and reviewing the project area, and the process and timing for applying for the grant.

Moved by Vogl, supported by Harrison, to authorize the DDA Director to work with the Township Manager to apply for MI Neighborhood Program grant funds of up to \$75,000 to support the DDA Walkway public improvement project.

**c. Review and Approve 12-month Renewal with Placer.ai for Foot Traffic Analysis Services**

Stichman informed the DDA Board budgeted \$10,000 last fiscal year for the implementation of foot traffic analysis software. Placer.ai is the leading provider of foot traffic analytics that offers insight into (1) how many people have visited an area, (2) where visitors come from and go afterwards, and (3) where visitors work and live, other favorite places as well as demographic information. Placer.ai can provide this data for any location in the US, and data goes back to 2017, which has allowed for comparison to historical data.

Stichman said through utilizing the software we successfully improved our ability to analyze the impact of special events and have shared data with our community partners. Over the next 12 months, the goal is to concentrate on compiling demographic information through the placer.ai platform.

Stichman is requesting approval of the renewal of this contract (includes a standard 5% increase) which brings the 12-month contract price to \$10,500 for FY24/25. The DDA fund budget doesn't include a line item for this expenditure, however, with anticipated revenues the DDA fund would have a positive net of revenues with approval of this expenditure.

There was DDA discussion about concerns of understanding and utilizing the data, and whether a presentation or a written report from Placer.ai illustrating how to use the data would be beneficial. Following extended discussion, Chair Knapp appointed a sub-committee (Harrison, Frost, and Knapp) to meet with Stichman and review ways to understand and utilize the data and will report back to the DDA Board.

**d. Consider Train Bridge Mural Maintenance & Repair Recommendation from Lions & Rabbits Center for the Arts (LRCFA)**

Stichman explained details of the process for the repair of the train bridge wall and trestle murals (the murals were subjected to graffiti in the spring). Jarran Fountain from Lions & Rabbits Center for the Arts said they contracted the original artist to undertake the restoration work and he explained the process for the repairs.

Jarran said the additional repairs to the train trestle will require the closure of one lane to Ada Drive to facilitate safe access for the artist and their equipment. He referred to the quote from Give Em A Break for the road closure for \$2,575. He also went over long-term suggestions to mitigate the risk of further vandalism, lighting fixtures, surveillance cameras, patrolling measures, and others.

Moved by Leisman, supported by Turan, to approve the proposal to repair the mural from Lions & Rabbits and recommend the Township Board approve the road closure. Motion carried.

**e. Review Farmers Market Branding Statement of Work from LRCFA**

Stichman referred to the statement of work from Lions & Rabbits for the development of a brand guide for the Farmers Market. This project aims to collaborate with the artist responsible for last year's poster design to create supplementary brand materials for the Farmers Market. Acting as the project manager, LRCFA will facilitate this process at the artist's request. Stichman said she received input from the Farmers Market Committee and community collaborators, and it was determined that the poster was difficult to read, so adjustments will be made to certain aspects of the poster to enhance its impact.

Stichman said the proposal from LRCFA outlines a \$2,500 project expenditure. There is \$14,000 budgeted for contract services related to the Farmers Market for FY24/25 (\$10,000 will be utilized for the AmeriCorps position), the additional \$4,000 budgeted could be used to cover the cost of this project.

Moved by Idema, supported by Vogl, to approve that statement of work from Lions and Rabbits Center for the Arts for the development of a brand guide for the Ada Farmers Market and authorize the DDA Director to execute the project management contract in the amount of \$2,500. Motion carried.

**f. Review and Approval Farmers Market Marketing Plan Consulting Proposal**

Stichman said the feedback from both vendors and community members has made it clear that staff needs to focus on raising awareness of the Ada Farmers Market this season to increase weekly foot traffic. To increase attendance and engagement, raise awareness of participating vendors & sponsors, and encourage community involvement and support of the Ada Farmers Market, she connected with Tara Heerspink, a local business owner and Ada resident with vast experience in developing comprehensive content strategies for local brands. After reviewing a basic social media content framework with Tara, she submitted the attached proposal outlining tasks and services she can provide to help improve the Market's content strategy and social media presence. Stichman noted that she has also included a copy of the integrated marketing plan she developed to give board members an idea of the strategy Tara would be helping to tailor for the 2024 Farmers Market season.

Stichman stated the proposal from Tara outlines a \$600 monthly consulting fee and Staff anticipates a total cost of \$3,000 for 5-months of social media/content strategy consulting. Stichman explained that there is \$14,000 budgeted for contract services related to the Farmers Market (\$10,000 will be utilized for

the AmeriCorps position), and the additional amount could be used to cover the cost of this consulting fee.

Moved by Leisman, supported by Turan, to approve the consulting proposal from Tara Heerspink for Content Strategy Development & Management at a monthly rate of \$600, not to exceed \$3,000 over 5 months and authorize the DDA Director to execute the contract with Tara Heerspink. Motion carried.

**g. Consider Cascade Community Foundation's Proposal for Enterprise Workshop Series Partnership**

Knapp disclosed that he serves on the Cascade Community Foundation Board, and he abstains from participating in this agenda item. Vice-Chair Vogl presided over the meeting.

Stichman said that Cascade Community Foundation (CCF) submitted a proposal for support of its Enterprise Workshop Series. A hands-on professional development module uniquely designed for small businesses and nonprofit leaders seeking to enhance operations. Support of these workshops would allow the DDA to provide professional development opportunities for its local businesses. By rotating the workshop locations, we have an opportunity to engage with a broad range of businesses within the development district. Stichman referred to the proposal in the packet and said, as outlined and during discussions with executive director Justin Swan, CCF is willing to tailor workshops based on Ada business input and provide unique opportunities for the Ada Farmers Market.

Stichman said the proposal does outline a \$9,500 investment per year for two years. She is requesting the DDA Board to consider a \$5,000 investment this fiscal year with a commitment to budget \$10,000 for FY25/26.

Justin Swan, Executive Director of CCF, explained how the event works and the benefits of the hands-on experience, specifically with the uniquely tailored group workshops for Ada Farmers Market and other businesses.

Following DDA discussion, it was moved by Harrison, supported by Turan, to approve the \$5,000 investment in the CCF Enterprise Workshop series for FY24/25. Motion carried 6-0, with 1 abstained and 2 absent.

**VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**a. DDA Financial Report, April 30, 2024**

Stichman referred to the financial outline and mentioned a few main points: Beers at the Bridge revenue totaling \$2,700, Progressive Tastings revenue \$1,635.81, Progressive Tastings expenditures \$5,279, community events expenditure, and contract services. Financial activity for the Farmers Market included vendor registration and sponsorship revenue equaling \$2,950 and expenditures totaling \$6,000 (which include payment for the expanded kid's programming).

**b. Director/Staff Reports**

Stichman noted two initiatives that Staff is working on; bringing downtown Ada in collaboration with the Right Place, Developer Day, and the Place Matters Summit.

**VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

Idema mentioned a concern with the very white pavers recently installed around the older flower beds. Stichman explained that the new pavers are white and in time may weather like the others. Stichman said she will follow-up with the BFG Director about the color/wear.

Leisman shared that the Connecting Community Campaign is going very well and has raised \$5.2 million.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none**

**X. ADJOURN MEETING**

Moved by Frost, supported by Vogl, to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

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Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

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