



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

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, July 8, 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 8:05 a.m. by Chair Knapp, following the Semi-Annual Information Meeting.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cloutier, Coe, Frost, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Vogl

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Leisman, Turan

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

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** 4

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2024, REGULAR MEETING**

Cloutier made note of an omitted item; page 2, third paragraph, “Harrison shared concern on whether...” Cloutier also said the same thing, and the minutes were amended to read “Harrison and Cloutier shared concern on whether ...”. Moved by Harrison, supported by Idema, to approve the amended minutes of June 10, 2024, Regular Meeting. Motion carried.

**IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none**

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none**

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Review and Consider Opportunity to Participate in an In-person Board of Directors Training**

Stichman said as a member of the Michigan Downtown Association (MDA), DDA staff, board, and municipal staff have an opportunity to participate in a downtown management organization board training session. In February of 2022 the DDA hosted its first board member training to kick off the key objectives and strategic plan process. The goal of the session was to outline things like the amount of the bonds, payments, taxes received, budget, activities undertaken by the DDA in the past, district map and boundaries, etc. With it being over two years since our last training session and we have onboarded several new members, this training could once again serve as a helpful resource for new members and a refresher for current members and staff. This training will also dive into a few topics not covered in our last training session.

Stichman noted that the cost for the training would be \$900 for a 90-minute session, and she referred to the informational flyer from the MDA. She mentioned there is a potential to split the cost with neighboring communities. The available dates for this training include August 26-29.

There was brief DDA discussion on the format of the training, and the members concurred that the last training was valuable and liked the idea of collaborating with other communities, sharing ideas, as well as sharing the cost.

Moved by Coe, supported by Vogl, to authorize the DDA Director to work with DDA Chair, Justin Knapp, to schedule an in-person board training facilitated by the Michigan Downtown Association in the amount of \$900. Motion carried.

**b. Consider Additional Expenditure for Streetscape Beds Along Ada Drive Between Bronson & Thornapple River Drive**

Stichman said the DDA contracted with RRR Lawn and Landscape again this year for the streetscape maintenance and flower planting services. They completed planting for this season the week of May 20, and overall, the beds are putting on good growth and filling in well.

Stichman noted that due to irrigation issues last year, it was decided to decrease the number of beds planted along Ada Drive between Bronson Street and Thornapple River Drive, however, business owners along this stretch of Ada Drive have asked if the Township/DDA would consider planting flowers along the road if they were willing to help maintain them by watering. Upon receiving this request and discussing it with staff, she reached out to RRR Lawn and Landscape to outline additional costs associated with planting.

Stichman referred to the invoice and said the per bed cost would be \$190 for a total of \$3,990 if we planted all 21 beds. The additional cost for the maintenance visits on the additional 21 beds would be \$150 per bi-weekly visit taking the total visit cost up to \$1,050 (\$900 currently + \$150 additional). She noted that beds without flowers would get mulch added.

Stichman spoke with business owners and has identified roughly 10 beds that she received a commitment to watering.

Idema asked about repair of the irrigation issues. Stichman said the goal is to get the irrigation working again, and she summarized the repair as labor intensive and a larger project that will continue discussion with Township Staff.

There was DDA discussion regarding the irrigation issues, possible perennial plantings, fertilizer and watering process, and doing moisture reads (both RRR and Ada Staff do them).

Moved by Harrison, supported by Frost, to approve an additional expenditure for streetscape flower beds in an amount not to exceed \$3,990 with an increased maintenance cost not to exceed \$1050 for the 2024 planting this season. Motion carried.

**c. Input requested Regarding Replacement and Redesign of Light Pole Banners Downtown**

Stichman stated that the banners throughout the downtown have begun to appear faded and worn out. Numerous banners have been ripped and needed to be removed. Stichman noted that she also received an inquiry from RightBild/Baton Collective regarding replacement of the banners along River Street (in anticipation of the Ada Hotel opening). They are looking at everything as an opportunity to make a great

first impression (i.e., parking lot, lawn, etc.) and view the lights pole banners as part of this opportunity, and replacement banners were requested by July 19.

After assessing the state of street pole banners, Stichman said that staff agree that there is a need to consider a plan for the replacement. At a minimum, we could start with getting the banners taken down to get rid of the ones not in great condition. There is also the option to move forward with purchasing replacement banners with the current design while further assessing a strategy for long-term goals for banners. The DDA purchased the 82 banners in 2018 for a total cost of \$1,665 (\$1,414.39 after reimbursement from Geld). Updated quotes would have to be requested to understand the total cost for the same purchase.

Stichman is seeking DDA Board input for the best path to move forward.

There was DDA discussion regarding taking down banners and replacing with current banner design, then investigate the process of design change for next year. Stichman thought 82 banners (as purchased in 2018) would be enough for immediate need. DDA also discussed different banner options, changing out design styles.

Township Manager Suchy explained the process of coordinating banner design/logo/brand changes with the Township Board and DDA. He said the Township just went through the Wayfinding Signage process and he summarized the process; send out RFQ's, identify the firm you want to work with, set up a committee and work through details (the signage process took about a year), then present the project to the DDA then to Township Board for approval.

Cloutier inquired about how quickly we could get replacement banners. Stichman said she has reached out to Gilson and Verdant Graphics to get quotes and timing and when she receives information, she will advise the DDA Board. Frost recommended that Stichman get pricing for the immediate number needed to purchase now, then get the overall pricing for entire amount and investigate the process of redesign change and present to the DDA at the next DDA meeting.

Moved by Idema, supported by Vogl, to purchase 82 banners in the amount not to exceed \$3,000. Motion carried.

## **VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **a. DDA Financial Report, June 30, 2024**

Stichman referred to the financial outline and noted a few main points: Tax distribution in the amount of \$1,270.76, special events receipts totaling \$24,319 (includes Beers at the Bridge sponsorship revenues), Beers at the Bridge expenditures \$14,370.30, Progressive Tastings expenditures \$602, landscaping and beautification expenses \$18,951.77, maintenance and repair/improvements \$4,921.40, design development contractor expenditures \$775. Financial activity for the Farmers Market included vendor registration and sponsorship revenue equaling \$1,435 and contract services expenditures totaling \$10,000 to CEDEM for AmeriCorps host site fee.

Idema asked what was profit amount for Beers at the Bridge. Stichman referred to the report included and said the beer ticket sales and swag profit was \$15,819.

### **b. Director/Staff Reports**

Harrison inquired about the DDA parking fund. Stichman said she believes the funded amount is \$600,000. She will review the parking fund and provide an update at the next meeting.

There was general discussion about possible purchase properties and keeping the DDA updated, the kid's activities at the Farmers Market, feedback on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and possibly bringing in a band for next year's parade.

#### **VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

Harrison complimented on the inclusion of department reports in the packet. Harrison said that Haley is doing a great job and asked about the review process on her and when that takes place. Suchy said that Haley's review is completed as part of annual staff reviews and feedback was solicited from the DDA.

Cloutier mentioned that she would appreciate trying to get the packet out sooner allowing more time for review. Stichman explained the DDA Board Packet assembly process and said if the DDA would like to have conversation and set a goal for a deadline process, she will be happy to discuss. Suchy shared feedback on how the board packet evolutions happen and was in support of DDA discussion regarding a deadline/due date for packets. Frost noted that he appreciates receiving a full packet vs. multiple versions of a packet.

#### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Doug Lee, owner of Jamnbean Coffee Company at 590 Ada Drive, thanked Haley for her tireless work and communication. He shared concern about some of the road closures and broken irrigation that has affected his business. He also shared concerns about parking and pedestrian safety. Mr. Lee noted that he would like to see the large oak trees in Ada taken care of/preserved.

Manager Suchy addressed/updated the pedestrian safety concern and said that Ada Township is working with Kent County Road Commission on a draft policy on RFB (Rapid Reflective Beacons) and going through the criteria for most effective location placement. Suchy also noted that he and Stichman will further review the possibility of a Township wide plan and how to implement an Arborist.

Michele Caudle, 7295 Schoolhouse Drive, said that she was hoping the DDA could do something about the sidewalk and landscape along the railroad tracks (mural locations). She said that she realizes the railroad owns that property, but it is really overgrown, and she is concerned with pedestrian safety, so she did some of her own weeding there.

Kim Rantala, Ada Business Association, said she is very excited about the discussion on banner replacements. She requested that as the DDA Board goes through the process that they consider doing a permit process (like downtown Grand Rapids) so when an event comes up, you can have the banners switched out, and she explained how the permitted process works. Kim also updated that the Ada Hotel has partnered with Amway to shuttle the parking for hotel staff, as well as encourage hotel guests to use the valet service.

#### **X. ADJOURN MEETING**

Moved by Vogl, supported by Idema, to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

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Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary