

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE JULY 12, 2021, MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, July 12, 2021, 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, Bowersox.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Bowersox, Coe, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Leisman, Norman, Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: VanderWulp

STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT: Buckley, Ferro, Stichman, Suchy

PUBLIC PRESENT: none

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Harrison, supported by Coe, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 8-0, with 1 absent.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Leisman, supported by Harrison, to approve the June 14, 2021 minutes as presented. Motion carried 8-0, with 1 absent.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, 2021 SEMI-ANNUAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Moved by Harrison, supported by Idema, to approve the June 14, 2021 minutes. Motion carried 8-0, with 1 absent.

V. STRATEGIC PLAN

a. Strategic Framework

Ferro stated that when the budget was prepared for the current fiscal year the DDA discussed a desire to conduct a strategic planning exercise to establish future direction for initiatives the DDA would be undertaking and there were funds budgeted for the possible need of a consultant.

Ferro referred to the synopsis included in the packet of the township board's strategic plan that was prepared by a consultant 3-4 years ago. Ferro said the DDA board should discuss when they want to initiate the process and whether they would like to have it facilitated by an outside facilitator.

There was board discussion about whether the value of going through the process (time, energy, expense) would be worthwhile, the importance of focusing on a manageable number of initiatives, and how to carry out the planned initiatives. Ferro stated once the strategic plan is in place you have to keep your eye on the ball by keeping the plan on your desk and referring to it frequently.

Wright asked if the idea for the strategic plan is for the DDA to come up with their own plan or to work with the township to update their existing plan. Suchy stated the DDA plan would be separate of the

township plan but it would be important to maintain a strong connection between the two groups. Suchy mentioned there was discussion during the budgeting process that they go through and review what the DDA mission is, what does the business community expect from the DDA, and what does the DDA want to accomplish. Leisman said that it makes sense to bring in a consultant to focus on the downtown development district and what the specific DDA role should be.

There was board discussion about encouraging the township to review and update their strategic plan/goals since its adoption in 2017, the necessity for the communication between the other boards and commissions during plan implementation, and getting the new DDA Director input on what our DDA could be stepping into.

DDA Director, Stichman, stated she has had conversations with Julius, Jim, and DDA members on items like way-finding and communication in the community, and she has started looking at what other communities are doing that are similar to Ada and looks forward to sharing information with the board.

Suchy stated that staff will work on a report card on the township strategic plan from 2017 on where they left off and what still needs to be done and report back to the DDA so they can move forward with the DDA strategic plan.

Harrison stated that he would welcome a planning consultant/session for the DDA to review what has been done & what to work towards in the next five years. The other DDA members concurred with Harrison.

Suchy stated the next step will be for Haley to look into research for RFP's/consultant and bring back to the DDA board for review.

VI. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT, 6/30/21

Ferro stated there was not much financial activity with the DDA fund in June. He said we received some late tax revenue and started receiving sponsorship revenues for the Beers and the Bridge event in August, as well as Farmers Market weekly registration fees.

There was board discussion and positive comments about the exciting activity on Tuesday's with the Farmers Market and the KDL activities at the library.

VII. DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORTS

a. INTRODUCTION

Haley Stichman introduced herself as the new DDA Director and said she is looking forward to getting to know the DDA members and learning about who they are and what drives them to get involved in the community. Stichman said she has been getting involved with the upcoming events and that her first experience with the 4th of July was exciting and very successful.

b. BEERS AT THE BRIDGE SUMMER CONCERT: August 20

Stichman referred to the flyer in the packet for the Beers at the Bridge event on August 20 and shared information on the sponsorships and advertising.

Leisman brought up as board discussion with Haley that the township board packet includes monthly reports from staff in each department with informative details of happenings in their department and he said that it is an efficient, handy way to keep track and know what is going on. Leisman stated he would like to see a similar report that Haley puts together with DDA updates and it would also be a great opportunity to hear more about what is going on with the local businesses. Stichman stated that the reporting could go both ways because the businesses don't know the DDA board and what support the DDA can offer them so it would be beneficial to build the communication between the DDA board and the businesses in the downtown area.

Harrison expressed interest to share the township manager and departmental reports in the DDA packets as well. DDA board members concurred with Harrison.

There was board discussion about the need for better ways for the DDA to connect with the citizens and businesses and the interest to get input from other DDA boards and share ideas.

Suchy stated he has been working with Haley on establishing relationships. Suchy said Haley has been in contact with the Michigan Downtown Association to get a membership to connect with networking with other DDA Directors, setting up meetings, making introductions, providing business cards, and creating relationships.

Knapp asked the board if we have/need a DDA logo. Suchy stated he and Haley have had conversations about a DDA logo, the graphics and artwork, and utilizing different software programs for marketing features. Suchy said with Haley's background he feels her attributes will be utilized to bring the organization forward.

There was board discussion about how the DDA logo could look to give the DDA their own identity.

Norman shared congratulations on a successful 4th of July, welcomed Haley to the DDA, and he said the new fireworks location was awesome.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Leisman announced that this was Jim Ferro's last DDA meeting before retiring at the end of the month. The DDA board members all stood up and applauded Jim Ferro and Norman said none of this would have been possible without you Jim.

IX. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Bowersox, supported by Norman, to adjourn meeting at 9:07 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary

rs:eb