



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 8, 2022, MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, August 8, 2022, 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, Frost, Harrison, Leisman, Vogl

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Coe, Idema, Knapp, Norman

STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT: Buckley, Fitzpatrick, Said, Stichman, Aaron McNair (DDA Intern) and Kevin Austin (Township Manager Intern)

PUBLIC PRESENT: 6

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Frost, supported by Vogl, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2022, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Leisman, supported by Frost, to approve the minutes of July 11, 2022, Regular Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES – none

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. DDA Director Performance Review & Compensation Recommendation

Leisman noted that Manager Suchy was absent. Leisman stated that at the last meeting the DDA requested Suchy to conduct a performance review of Stichman, which was done and results were included in the packet. Leisman summarized the review and said Haley was doing a great job and Suchy was very happy with the job she has been doing and gave examples; her connections made with the community, successful events like Beers at the Bridge, helped lead the DDA through a strategic planning process, and many other events in the upcoming year.

Leisman stated that Suchy recommended the DDA consider the minimum salary range that the MML Compensation Study recommended of \$65,826.09. Harrison asked to confirm the number of hours per week for the position. Stichman confirmed she works full time at 40 hours per week.

Moved by Vogl, supported by Harrison, to accept Manager Suchy's performance review and increase the DDA Director salary to \$65,826.09. Motion carried.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and Discuss Feedback about Ada Village Social District

Stichman was pleased to report a successful 5 weeks since the implementation of the Wednesday evening Social District, without any negative incidences. She said that the crowds range from 200 to 600 people enjoying both the Music on the Lawn and the Social District. Stichman reported that she has been working with CDV5 and the Ada Business Association to connect with businesses, restaurants and retail, to understand what the economic impact has been. She said the main feedback from both the businesses and the broader community has been positive and there is a desire to expand beyond its expiration date of August 31.

Stichman referred to the presentation in the packet outlining community and business feedback and went over the survey numbers; on-line/in person community responses, demographics, marketing, participation, and overall community satisfaction with the Social District.

Stichman noted that she invited a few business owners to offer their feedback:

Joe Pebbles, Garage Bar & Grill, gave a comparison of their Ottawa Avenue location downtown to the Ada location and spoke in favor of the opportunity to expand the Social District saying it would be easier to present to his guests, less confusing than restrict to just one evening of the week. He went over the benefits the Social District allows his restaurant; additional food and beverage sales, potential for additional dining space, and the opportunity to host events/combined events in the outdoor space or parking lot.

Jenn Welles, Ada Village General Store, shared that she looked at the data of last year's sales during concert and this year's concert and said with the addition of the Social District she had a 12% increase in sales in July. She also said that the sales overall during that time frame of the shows/concert has gone up 50%. She said they have had no negative affects with the Social District and she feels it is important to continue having events throughout the year so that all the businesses are supported and continue to have growth.

Mario Cascante, Luna, shared that Luna has always been receptive of the 'zone'/Social District simply because they are a low impact/high revenue and high margin way to prop-up their own income in the restaurant. He said they have received great feedback, being right next to Legacy Park, and are primarily the sales driver there, seeing a large revenue boost every Wednesday. He was very supportive of expanding the Social District and said he felt it was a good idea to go to a simplicity in messaging platform to make it easier on guests with less to think about.

Stichman concluded that she requested the Board to review and discuss the feedback regarding the Ada Village Social District, with the intention of the DDA considering a resolution of support for its expansion at the next meeting in September.

Parks Director Fitzpatrick shared his perspective on the crowds at the concerts at Legacy Park vs. the Social District parameter and said there is a piece of looking at the data and how you do evaluation more from the people at the concert vs. Social District and he compared the geography. He reminded of a few rain dates for concerts that were postponed due to weather and how that may trigger a reason to consider extending the Social District time frame.

There was Board discussion regarding the possibility of expanding the Social District beyond the August 31 date, mainly to cover an extension for the rain date concert in September; whether to extend for just the rain date or extend to the desired request of 7 days a week from noon to 9:30 p.m., whether to

consider lifting other restrictions, possible complications of alcohol approval/permits, concerns about where the Ada Township Board stands on the subject, and other pieces/concerns were considered. Supervisor Leisman expressed that he was not in favor of the motion at that time.

Moved by Harrison, supported by Vogl, to recommend to the Township Board to consider extending the Social District hours of operation through September to incorporate the Music on the Lawn rain dates. Motion carried 5-0.

Moved by Harrison, supported by Frost, to recommend that the Township Board continue discussion about expanding the Social District to seven days a week for a specified period of time to be determined by the Township Board. Motion carried 4-1.

b. Beers at the Bridge Event and Media Recap – July 15, 2022

Stichman shared a recap of the event and said despite the weather, there were 1,900 guests in attendance; beer and swag revenue was just under \$10,000; the band was moved to provide shelter from the rain; she extended a thank you to Lindsey Vogl for being the MC for the evening; total sponsorship to date \$32,000; and she concluded with the types of beer/cider/sangria with the most popularity.

Aaron McNair, DDA Intern, gave a social media and other media recap with detailed figures; a \$20 cost for paid advertising, number of posts, new followers, users reached, and best performing posts. McNair shared there was live coverage at the event by 13 on your side, WZZM-TV captured footage at the event, WFGR Radio (98.7) covered the event in things-to-do-this-weekend, and additional coverage from WOOD-TV Online and Grand Rapids Magazine.

VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. DDA Financial Report, July 31, 2022

Stichman referred to the financial outline and mentioned a few main points: specific costs involving Beers at the Bridge event, special events receipts, community event expenditures, phone allowance expenditure, DDA operations/construction expenditures, continuing education expense, contract services, and farmers market activity.

b. Director/Staff Reports

Stichman shared that there was a ribbon cutting ceremony coming up for the Ada Village Pharmacy and requested board members to attend. She noted two new businesses coming, Plumfield Books and Siren & Proper.

Stichman updated on the quota and redevelopment liquor license. She said she expects the Township Board would be making a decision about who will be awarded the quota license at the board meeting today and she explained the liquor license process.

Stichman said she and staff met with The Rapid and there is a private employer interested in chartering service into Ada, and the way The Rapid is funded and works there would need to be a public assessable bus stop in Ada. She will keep the DDA updated as more conversations take place.

Stichman said she was working with Lions and Rabbits on getting an update on the train bridge mural project and she should have a packet to review this week and plan to update the DDA at the next meeting.

Stichman informed that they have gone through the majority of the swag/t-shirts for the Beers at the Bridge event/swag table on August 19 and requested the DDA members who would be available to be present at the table and work as a DDA informational booth.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Leisman shared that the public safety millage passed and that part of that is a DDA capture and that the DDA would be seeing a request that the DDA participate in the expenses of the fire department and sheriff department.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Planning Director Said gave an update on the Master Plan process and extended an invitation for the next Master Plan workshop on Tuesday, August 16, at 5:00 p.m. at the Community Room #1 at the library. He said they have had input from 500 people through the process and at the upcoming workshop all the input would be summarized and goal settings established.

Harrison said he noticed in the manager's report that Ada was participating in the planning for the Lakeshore to Lowell trail, a very significant pedestrian infrastructure improvement, and he would like to see a presentation to the DDA to look at the implications on how the DDA can connect into that.

Parks Director Fitzpatrick shared updates on trails, riverfront DNR/grant project, Leonard Field construction next year, and he extended a thank you to Jenn at Ada Village General Store for working so well/coordinating with Mark and staff during the Music on the Lawn events.

X. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Vogl, supported by Harrison, to adjourn meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary

rs:eb