



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2024, REGULAR MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, September 9, 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: Cloutier, Coe, Frost, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Leisman, Turan, Vogl

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: 0

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: 3

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 12, 2024, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Vogl, supported by Turan, to approve the August 12, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Parking Study – Update

Planning Director Said summarized the parking study and plan memo included in the packet. Said stated that upon receipt of the proposals from the two consultants, Fishbeck and Walker, staff had follow-up conversations to discuss details of their proposals, strategies to manage costs and expected outcome. Said noted there would be further discussions on developing a parking plan/strategy, determining what the supply and demand is, and what Ada wants to get out of it.

Said explained that parking is a primary topic of community conversation, which merits significant focus by the Township overall and the DDA in particular. A far-reaching strategy of establishing a parking plan/policy would be an optimal outcome in lieu of simply completing a new study and both consulting firms were receptive to this approach. Said/Staff believes it is important to commit to a more extensive effort than simply updating the 2017 study.

Said talked about the timing of the parking project over the next six months to include refinement of the parking study and plan project focus, set up an interview team, followed by interviews and selection of one of the two consulting firms, then proceed in the new fiscal year with budget and work plan.

Township Manager Suchy said there have been many conversations with Staff on how to go about the direction of the parking study. The original concept was to update the 2017 plan; after discussions with the consultants, we questioned if the goal was to update the 2017 plan or is it to get a usable plan that has a real impact. Suchy said though the quoted cost is more, we have a more robust conversation around that. He noted how the different users view the parking/problem and that we need to better understand the different user demands of our system – use it as a policy study.

Coe asked if we are aware of any future (large) building projects in Ada. Said responded that we are not likely to see anything large scale in the immediate future. Frost and Leisman made note that they appreciate and support the team approach to the project. Turan noted that he would like to see an extended parking review beyond the spring/summer months.

Suchy updated the status of the new Township Hall and said we are working through the purchase process on the property between the library and Community Church and hopes to be closing on the property in the next month or so.

b. Discussion of Brand Guide for Ada Farmers Market

Stichman recapped the discussion from last month's meeting. She said that we initiated a project to develop a comprehensive brand guide for the Ada Farmers Market. The goal was to enhance the market's visual identity by collaborating with the artist responsible for last year's poster design. Lions and Rabbits Center for the Arts (LRCFA) facilitated the process, with the intention of improving the readability and visual impact of our promotional materials.

Stichman noted at the August meeting the Board raised concerns whether the market's branding aligns with the Township's overall brand and trail wayfinding signage, given the time spent over the past year developing the trail wayfinding design. Additional comments were noted regarding the colors and vector elements. Based on those discussions, the agenda item was tabled, and it was requested that staff contact Corbin Design (Wayfinding project) for further input on the brand guide.

Suchy said he did reach out to Corbin Design and left a voicemail. Referring to design examples in the packet, Suchy inquired about what is the intent of the DDA Board in terms of the design decision (artists own design or matching with the Township).

There was extended DDA discussion strategizing ideas about the current branding vs. new design, consistency, keep the branding simple, color palette (traditional colors), consistent fonts and wording (remove the word 'Village'), and creating a hybrid design/font. The DDA discussions established that the DDA Board trusts its Farmers Market Committee for their input/review and that the final updated proposal for branding should go before the DDA Board for review and approval.

c. Update Regarding Status of Farmers Market Committee

Stichman informed that she met with Chair Knapp, Vogl and Cloutier to further discuss and refine the formal charge and structure of the Farmers Market Committee. During these discussions, we came to a consensus on some key aspects of the committee's composition and meeting schedule to ensure a balanced representation and efficient operation.

The agreed-upon structure for the Farmers Market Committee is as follows:

- 2 Board Members

- DDA Staff: Director and Farmers Market Coordinator
- 5 vendors
- 1 programming partner/sponsor

Stichman said they determined that the committee should consist of no more than 10 members to keep it manageable and ensure productive discussions. Additionally, we emphasized the importance of Maria, the new Farmers Market Coordinator, having the opportunity to conduct further outreach to vendors to fill these committee roles.

They identified the following meeting schedule:

- Bi-monthly meetings during the market season (May-September), as this is a particularly busy period for the Farmers Market.
- Monthly meetings during the off-season (October-April), with flexibility based on the Farmers Market Coordinator's schedule and workload.

Stichman explained they outlined the committee structure and meeting schedule, there is no recommendation to adopt a formal charge for the committee at this time. It was identified that it would be beneficial for Maria to first get up to speed in her role and provide support in determining the committee's focus. This will allow her to evaluate the current needs and priorities before establishing a formalized directive for the committee.

Knapp characterized their meeting as a very lively and passionate discussion with a focus on the structure and meeting schedule. He said we have a good structure to bring in diverse opinions and have good discussions on where to go. Vogl agreed with Knapp and said it is a good idea to get Maria on board and get her in the discussions. Cloutier explained her intent of being on the farmers market committee and shared concerns with the previous market managers goals and resistant viewpoint, but she said she wants to help elevate the Farmers Market so it can be better in the community.

Vogl left the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Leisman and Suchy spoke of their support for the Farmers Market Committee (and its expectations) and that the DDA Board will decide on what charge to take.

VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. DDA Financial Report, August 31, 2024

Stichman referred to the financial outline and noted a few main points: Beers at the Bridge revenue totaling \$800 and expenditures of \$9,758.83, operating supplies/services, landscaping and beautification expenses \$6,699.00, maintenance & repair improvements, and bond interest payments in the amount of \$40,063.50. Financial activity for the Farmers Market included vendor registration and sponsorship revenue equaling \$1,510 and expenditures totaling \$3,410.

Stichman informed that she would have an updated report/financial status at the October meeting regarding the effects of the cancelled Beers at the Bridge event in August.

b. Director/Staff Reports

Stichman made note that she will provide a report in October regarding questions about sponsorship refund due to the Beers at the Bridge cancellation.

Stichman provided updates on the replacement banners, the downtown walkway project/funding, and ideas related to the shop local campaign.

Cloutier said the DDA training session was informative and asked what the plan is to review the strategic plan. Stichman said that she is in touch with Travis Alden, The Right Place, about additional training sessions as well as review of the strategic plan.

Harrison left the meeting at 9:17 a.m.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Idema noted the garden beds around the bike shop are all weeds. Suchy said he would check into the garden bed responsibilities at that location.

Stichman introduced Maria Raquel Valverde that is starting today on the Ada Township team, as the new Farmers Market Coordinator, a yearlong service position through AmeriCorps. Maria shared that she graduated from Kendall College and has a background in design experience, and she is very excited to be a part of the Ada community.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

X. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Idema, supported by Turan, to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

rs:eb