



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 14, 2024, REGULAR MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, October 14, 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, Idema, Knapp, Leisman, Turan, Vogl

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Harrison

STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT: Buckley, Said, Stichman, Suchy, Treasurer Moran,
Fire Chief Murray, R. Valverde

PUBLIC PRESENT: 6

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Leisman requested the agenda be amended to add New Business item VI e., Discussion of DDA Director Resignation and Replacement. It was moved by Leisman, supported by Turan, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2024, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Vogl, supported by Idema, to approve the September 9, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Recommendation for Formal Charge and Structure of Farmers Market Committee

Stichman stated that after further discussions with Chair Knapp, Vice-Chair Vogl, and Farmers Market Coordinator Raquel, we have refined the goals of the Farmers Market Committee and are now recommending a formal charge for adoption. She referred to the outline with key points for committee structure, meeting schedule, and the process that meetings will be facilitated by a committee chair with committee members appointed by Chair Knapp.

Moved by Coe, supported by Cloutier, to approve the Farmers Market Committee structure, meeting schedule, and formal charge as outlined. Motion carried.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Pedestrian Walkway-project/MI Neighborhood Grant Update

Stichman said staff began discussions on potential improvements to the pedestrian walkway between Nonna's and the Ada Barber Shop. The initial conversations stemmed from pedestrian safety concerns associated with the current brick pavers, which have begun to sink due to erosion of the underlying sand base. Although the BFG staff temporarily addressed a portion of this issue by repairing part of the sand base, the long-term safety and usability of the walkway remain concerns.

Stichman said initial cost estimates from RRR Lawn and Landscape revealed that re-laying the existing pavers after repairing the base would be more expensive than replacing the pavers entirely. This spurred conversations with staff about being more intentional with what can be done to invest in the walkway while also aligning with the DDA's objectives of beautification and placemaking to increase the district's appeal.

Stichman explained that the DDA Board authorized her to submit a grant application for the MI Neighborhood Program. The grant was seen as an opportunity to bridge the funding gap, unfortunately, the grant application was denied.

There was DDA discussion regarding project options: do not want to sacrifice project funding for Wayfinding and streetscape furniture, many other projects/locations to consider throughout Ada (check into other walkways), and possibly waiting to review for next year's budget.

Moved by Leisman, supported by Turan, to table the discussion of the Pedestrian Walkway-project/MI Neighborhood Grant update until the January, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

b. Sponsorship of the Ada Business Association's Tinsel, Treats, and Trolleys

Stichman informed the DDA has budgeted \$2,500 for support of the Ada Business Association's Tinsel, Treats & Trolleys event at the covered bridge sponsorship level. The DDA has contributed for the past 5 years. The township collaborates with the ABA to facilitate the covered bridge lighting that kicks off this event every year.

Moved by Frost, supported by Vogl, to approve the sponsorship of the ABA's Tinsel, Treats, and Trolleys in the amount of \$2,500. Motion carried.

c. Review and Consider Approval of Recommendation for Winter Wonderland Installation

Stichman noted that in 2023, the DDA Board approved the purchase of replacement garland from West Michigan Holiday Lighting (WMHL)/Surface Renew to resolve persistent maintenance issues caused by the previous garland. The new garland came with a lifetime guarantee, contingent upon WMHL/Surface Renew managing installation, takedown, and storage. Additionally, the contract included unlimited service calls, which reduced some of the need for local staff interventions throughout the holiday season.

Stichman said the Board also decided to discontinue the use of Fraser Fir trees along Ada Dr., instead, WMHL/Surface Renew was contracted to install lights in the landscaping trees, which enhanced the seasonal aesthetic without the complexity of managing live trees. The total cost for the 2024 season, including garland installation and lighting of the landscaping trees, is \$20,534. Workorder #1975869 is in the packet for DDA review.

Stichman added that in response to discussions with staff and community partners about adding additional holiday lighting around the Covered Bridge and Leonard Field, we explored new ideas with WMHL/Surface Renew for this season. As part of these discussions, Workorder #1976194 is also included in the packet in the amount of \$11,170. The proposed enhancements/additions are listed below:

- Installation of LED lights along the roof outline (gutter line and peaks) of the Covered Bridge.

- Lighted garland and 60-inch wreaths around the bridge entrances.
- A 20-foot lit tree (photo provided for reference).

There was DDA discussion about the proposed enhancements and the placement/location of the 20-foot lit tree.

Moved by Leisman, supported by Turan, to approve workorder #1975869 and workorder #1976194 from West Michigan Holiday Lighting/Surface Renew for the Winter Wonderland Holiday Lighting display in an amount not to exceed \$32,000. Motion carried.

d. Beers at the Bridge Update – Verbal Update

Stichman gave a brief update on wrapping up the Beers at the Bridge season. She is meeting with the BATB committee this week to work out the final revenue and expenditure numbers and discuss some new ideas for the next season. Idema asked if there was any loss recorded from the August event cancellation. Stichman informed that based off revenue and expenditure numbers she has right now, she is not anticipating any loss.

Referring to the financial report in the packet, Cloutier asked about unused funds (with the idea of using unused funds for grants for the businesses). Stichman went over the numbers from the revenue and expenditure report and said when the final report is done, the DDA Board can discuss where any surplus funds go.

e. Discussion of DDA Director Resignation and Replacement

Stichman thanked the DDA Board for their support and giving her the ability to serve the Ada community and she appreciates the opportunity for this great experience. She informed that her last day would be November 1, 2024.

Manager Suchy shared the tentative plan for the search for Stichman's replacement with the potential start date for a new DDA Director January 2, 2025. Suchy said that he will work with Haley for a smooth transition and beginning November 2, 2024, he will step-in as Interim DDA Director. Leisman suggested a committee be formed to work with Suchy on the search for a DDA Director (assist with going through resumes, set up interviews) and report back to the DDA on status.

Moved by Leisman, supported by Vogl, to appoint a DDA Replacement Search Committee consisting of Idema, Knapp, Korth and Suchy. Motion carried.

VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. DDA Financial Report, September 30, 2024

Stichman referred to the financial outline and noted a few main points: Beers at the Bridge revenue totaling \$1,000 and expenditures of \$21,979, Progressive Tasting expenditures \$533, operating supplies/services, landscaping and beautification expenses \$2,100, and maintenance & repair improvements. Financial activity for the Farmers Market included vendor registration and sponsorship revenue equaling \$610 and minimal expenditures for internet services, mileage and expenses.

b. Director/Staff Reports

Stichman updated that the street pole banners are printed and will be installed by Fully Promoted within the next couple weeks.

Stichman said as a follow up on the MDA training, she is looking to schedule it for October/early November and that Manager Suchy will be available for the DDA TIF presentation. She will send the possible dates to the DDA in a separate email.

Stichman mentioned previous conversations about updating the 2022 Key Objectives. She has reached out to Travis Alden, The Right Place, who helped facilitate this process in 2022, and he will be available in the first quarter of 2025 to help facilitate a review of an update as well. Stichman will advise the DDA when a date is established.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Leisman said that he wanted to thank Haley for a great job as DDA Director, and that she has helped us professionalize what our DDA does. He complimented her hard work on all the events and said he really appreciates the work she has done and the attitude that she has brought to the Township.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

X. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Idema, supported by Vogl, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

rs:eb