**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 9, 2020, MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday,

November 9, 2020, 8:00 a.m. via video/audio-conferencing, in conformance with Public Act 228 of 2020 concerning temporary authorization of remote participation in public meetings.

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m. by Chairperson, Bowersox.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bowersox, Coe, Haga, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Norman, VanderWulp, Wright

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** 0

**STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Buckley, Ferro, Moran, Suchy

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** 3

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved by Norman, supported by Idema, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 12, 2020, MEETING**

It was moved by Norman, supported by Idema, to amend the October 12, 2020 minutes, to add information regarding the source of the cost estimate for installing snowmelt on Ada Dr. in the discussion of the $400,000 estimate on page 2. Motion carried by 7-0 vote, with 2 absent; Haga and Vanderwulp.

It was moved by Norman, supported by Coe, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried by 7-0 roll call vote, with 2 absent; Haga and Vanderwulp.

**IV. CONSIDER PROPOSAL FOR HOLIDAY DECORATIONS INSTALLATION IN DOWNTOWN ADA**

*VanderWulp arrived 8:15 a.m.*

*Haga arrived 8:16 a.m. (due to technical difficulties with zoom).*

Ginny Seyferth and Gwen Cieslak from Seyferth PR shared a slide presentation on Imagine Winter

Wonderland in Ada Village. Seyferth presented the idea of a “winter” opportunity, not necessarily

just “holiday,” but with the winter display from December through the end January. Seyferth stated the

concept was to begin to see if it’s possible to move Ada Village to become one of the best places to see

and experience the lights in West Michigan. The key element is to go beyond the current lighting of the

covered bridge, creating Village ambiance that encourages people to visit, shop, see the lights, and stay

for a meal, and allows our retailers the opportunity to offer special promotions.

Seyferth said she talked with design expert, Val Schmieder of Via Design, to work together to ensure

the expanded design plan uses the vision and work that Ada Township already has in their design of light

pole garland with white lights. The slides showed the design plan details such as, Frasier fir trees with

soft white lights and gatherings of life-size deer in groups along Ada Drive as an inviting entrance into the

Village.

Seyferth went over the Draft Budget Estimates showing an overall cost for the first year of $51,000; cost

breakdown covers the deer, trees & stands, lighting, installation and more.

Following the presentation there was board discussion. Wright asked how the trees are attached to the

light pole and the concern of snow removal in the winter. Seyferth explained the procedure for weighing

down the trees in their stands and the placement of the trees would be very strategic/crucial so they

wouldn’t get knocked down by snow plows. The diameter of the trees and the storage space are also a

concern.

Idema asked if the Township Board would be putting money toward this too. Seyferth stated she is coming to the DDA with some local community investors with the hope that the DDA would support between $18,000-$20,000 and they will raise the rest.

Idema asked if the retailers would feel like they have to stay open at night. Seyferth said it would be almost like a billboard for the retailers with their lights on at night and a classy way of saying we’re open for business all through December, January and beyond.

It was moved by Norman, supported by Haga, to approve an expenditure of up to $20,000 on the decoration concept, “Imagine Winter Wonderland in Ada Village.” Motion carried by 9-0 roll call vote.

**V. STAFF/COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**A. POTENTIAL CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN UPDATE**

Ferro stated we are working on updating our 5-year Capital Improvements Plan and also thinking about projects for next year’s budget. Items being discussed are expanding streetscape fixtures in the village buildings to include bench seating as well as trash and recycle receptacles in the village.

Suchy is looking into design and cost of new trash and recycle receptacles to be maintained by our Building and Grounds staff. He will have cost info available closer to budget review.

*VanderWulp left meeting at 8:55 a.m.*

**B. STAFF SUPPORT FOR THE DDA**

Ferro stated we would like the Board to start thinking about at what point the DDA will be ready to obtain dedicated staff support since the departure of Brian Hilbrands. Ferro mentioned that a Committee could start to look at it and have input from the Board before the budget is prepared.

Suchy supported the idea of a Committee and said we need a dedicated staff person whether it is 100% DDA or a mix between Township and DDA, that would be what a Committee could look at and talk about.

Following Board discussion, Harrison stated he thought DDA should continue ‘as is’ with the current support staff (Ferro and Suchy) until they get a clearer job description for one skillset.

**C. PUBLIC WIFI INSTALLATION AT PUBLIC SITES IN THE TOWNSHIP**

Suchy stated the Township was approached by Kent County for a CARES Act Wifi Grant. The Township will be putting public wifi in at 5 locations; Ada Park, Roselle Park, Legacy Park, Township Hall and Leonard Field. The County is paying about $25,000-30,000 and they cover 100% of the cost from the grant program. The purpose is to provide wifi access for those that do not have access at home, when schools are relying on remote learning due to the pandemic.

**D. LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT UPDATE**

Ferro stated the project has been progressing well/on schedule. The construction manager at Erhardt Construction anticipates final inspections in early December, ahead of schedule. The Township and KDL are starting to plan a Grand Opening event in late January. Due to COVID restrictions there may be an occupancy limit of approximately 200 people at one time. Additional information will be provided in the future.

Idema asked for a fundraiser update. Ferro stated the projections show we are currently $1,500,000 short in fundraising towards both the original library and the pre-function lobby portion on the building which does not include the $2,000,000+ that’s needed to finish the Cultural Arts Center. In addition, there is also a cash flow issue of $450,000 of our donation commitments are spread out over the next three years. Ferro said there is a meeting scheduled this week with the capital campaign leadership, to go over status and establish some direction on where we go from here.

**E. EVENT CANCELLATIONS: TINSEL, TREATS & TROLLEYS; ADA CHILI AND BEER FESTIVAL**

Ferro advised the organizing committee at the Community Church concluded that they couldn’t do the annual chili and beer festival so the event has been cancelled and Tinsel, Treats & Trolleys is also cancelled.

**F. BRIDGE LIGHTING EVENT, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4**

Ferro stated a bridge lighting event is scheduled at the covered bridge on December 4th, along with the expanded holiday decorations plan.

**G. SIDEWALK JOINT GRINDING, SCHEDULE**

Ferro stated the contractor has not given a confirmed date as to when they will be onsite but stated they are finishing up a major job in the city of Grand Rapids and will be here in Ada to complete the work before the winter season.

**H. NOVEMBER 4 DDA CITIZENS COUNCIL MEETING**

Ferro and Suchy met with the DDA Citizens Council a week ago. Ferro stated one of the major items discussed was the Council’s concern with the future for the 4 residences owned by Geld, LLC on River Street. The Council asked staff to engage Geld regarding this.

There was Board discussion about the graffiti at the railroad viaduct by the bridge and updated plantings throughout the Village. Suchy said he has given the graffiti clean-up job a top priority. Ferro stated we could plan to budget for next year the new planting urns. Coe will share some pictures of urns and will research cost and availability and advise.

**I. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT, 10/31/20**

Ferro shared the Financial Report included in the packet and said the DDA recently received a payment of $149,289 from the Sate Local Government Stabilization Fund.

The Farmer’s Market will end the season with a slightly negative income for the season, but still have a surplus overall.

The DDA has a fund balance of just over $630,000.

**VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

Norman asked for any building updates in downtown. Ferro stated the 92-unit residential development is on hold right now, and there is no new news on when the planned hotel may start. He said construction continues on the B5 and B6 lot, the two buildings next to Zeytin’s.

Knapp stated the Grand Rapids Triathlon is planning to hold their event in 2021. He stated this would be an opportunity for us to bring a lot of people into Ada and drive traffic for retailers. Suchy stated he and the Parks Director have a meeting scheduled with the race organizers to go over some concerns; road closures, holding the event over 2 days versus 1 day, and COVID restrictions.

Idema asked where we stand on the entrance signage into the Village. Ferro stated they are still in the process of evaluating options and feedback received on the initial design.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kristen Wildes from the Historical Society, asked via chat, does the new Village signage include a map installed near Legacy Park. Suchy stated we are talking about a way-finding sign system for the Village and Trails system throughout Ada Township, at the earliest we are looking at 2022 when the new trails millage is increased.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Norman, supported by Bowersox, to adjourn meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Devin Norman, Secretary

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