



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 12, 2024, REGULAR MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Tuesday, November 12, 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, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Leisman, Turan

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Frost, Vogl

STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT: Buckley, Said, Suchy, Treasurer Moran,
Farmers Market Coordinator Valverde

PUBLIC PRESENT: 5

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Knapp requested an adjustment to the agenda to add item VI f., Banner Update. Moved by Harrison, supported by Turan, to add an agenda item under New Business, VI f., Banner Update. It was moved by Harrison, supported by Idema, to approve the agenda in its entirety. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 14, 2024, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Coe, supported by Turan, to approve the October 14, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Consider Extended Consulting Proposal from Tara Heerspink for Content Strategy Development & Management at a Monthly Rate of \$600, Not to Exceed \$1,800 over Three Months

Interim DDA Director, Manager Suchy, presented the proposal. Suchy said he and Haley discussed the interim period with her departure and making sure no momentum was lost for the market moving forward with the connection to the vendors. He referred to Haley's memo outlining a potential extension with Tara's contract for 3 months at \$600/per month. The memo explains with the recent resignation of the DDA Director, staff recommend extending Tara's contract through February 11, 2025. This extension would provide continuity and essential support for Raquel, our Farmers Market Coordinator, who has taken over management of the Farmers Market communication strategy. Tara's continued engagement will bridge the

gap until a new DDA Director is hired and allow for uninterrupted support of the Farmers Market's marketing and community engagement efforts. The goal is to establish an off-season marketing plan.

Suchy said that staff is supportive of the contract extension and made note that the DDA is not currently paying the Director salary, so the cost is offset by the savings of the salary.

There was DDA discussion regarding the volume/level of activity and/or frequency of the social media posts. Suchy said he will meet with Tara and have her provide a content update of what is being posted, and what is being done, as a report mechanism to the DDA.

Moved by Leisman, supported by Turan, to approve the extended consulting proposal from Tara Heerspink for Content Strategy Development & Management at a monthly rate of \$600, not to exceed \$1,800 over 3 months and authorize the Township Manager to execute the contract with Tara Heerspink.

Motion carried.

b. Farmers Market Committee Update – Raquel Valverde, Farmers Market Coordinator

Valverde informed that last month the Farmers Market staff and vendors had an end of the season potluck/meeting. There was discussion on forming the new farmers market committee and vendors shared interest in being a part of the committee. She shared the vendor names (Ridgeview Farm, Frozen Creek Farms, Better Place Farm, Starlight Farms, Sister Hawk Farm, and Blackwolf Woodworking & Iron) and said she thought they would be a good group on the committee since they come from all aspects of the Farmer's Market. She also informed that the meeting dates for the Farmers Market committee would be on Tuesday's, once a month during the off season.

Valverde said there were other items discussed for the committee to review, such as the market hours, the parking (too far distance for some), and review of the branding (for approval for next season). The new committee should be in place within the next two weeks.

Valverde touched base on the different types of social media ads/notifications and how they work. There was brief DDA discussion about the importance of the off-season media activity and reviewing options on introducing a food stamp program for the market.

c. Beers at the Bridge Update -- Verbal Update

Suchy explained that the follow up Beers at the Bridge committee meeting did not have two board members in attendance to have discussion to bring a report back to the Board. There was a request from Baton Collective to look at a way the Township and the DDA could reimagine the event (that involves removing the fencing). Further discussions need to take place with the committee.

Suchy will reach out to Knapp and Harrison and the committee to get together again within the next two weeks to reconnect and have the conversation update to provide to the DDA at the next meeting.

Suchy said there was financial discussion regarding the August cancelled event and whether refunding sponsorships would take place. The conversation evolved so that if the committee were to do something, the recommendation would be to discount next year's sponsorship.

d. DDA Director Recruitment -- Verbal Update

Suchy mentioned all the shared locations the DDA Director job is posted and has received 15 applications. He will get with the recruitment committee and review the applications, identify candidates to interview, set aside dates for interviews, at the December 9th DDA meeting the committee will make a

recommendation to the DDA Board, lastly the DDA will make a recommendation to the Township Board. The plan is to have new DDA Director on board January 2, 2025.

e. Right Place Strategic Planning – Verbal Update

Suchy spoke with Travis Alden from the Right Place and Travis wanted to plan sessions for the first quarter of 2025. Travis indicated that they would do multiple work sessions starting with the first existing objectives document that was created a couple years ago and move forward from there.

Suchy said Travis asked if the DDA wanted to do the sessions as part of a regular board meeting or is there a desire to do a separate meeting entirely (sessions could run 2-3 hours). The last time the DDA went through the sessions they were separated from the regular board meetings. Suchy will send out an email to DDA members requesting their preferences.

Harrison asked for clarification that the Right Place simply acts as the facilitator. Suchy shared the history of the Right Place in that they opened up a place-matters group to provide value to Right Place members and the Township supports the Right Place with annual funding. The Right Place leans into the place-making and community development side of things.

f. Banner Update

Suchy said the DDA board approved Fully Promoted to move forward and replace the banners downtown. Suchy explained the last banner proof the DDA reviewed had the ‘Village’ language on it and the DDA board indicated to Fully Promoted that they wanted to see the word ‘Township’, instead of Ada Village the DDA wanted Ada Township. Fully Promoted ended up printing the banners with the word ‘Village’ and the banners have been installed.

Suchy explained Fully Promoted offered to print more at a 10% cost reduction and Suchy requested the DDA to discuss their options.

There was DDA discussion regarding the incorrect banners already installed and whether to leave them up until next year, to have new/correct banners made for the spring at the cost of Fully Promoted, and/or Fully Promoted to issue a credit for the already installed banners and apply cost to next year’s order.

DDA members concurred to have Suchy follow up with Fully Promoted and ask for a credit for the full amount of the banners to be applied for future work and DDA will pay installation cost.

VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. DDA Financial Report, October 31, 2024

Suchy referred to the Financial Report in the packet. He noted the one thing that was productive was when the DDA Board attended the TIF presentation which also turned into a financial conversation and financial review of how we present financials and what they mean. Suchy said that moving forward with any new DDA member joining the board, staff will do a better job on-boarding to make sure that everyone is aware and understand the reports and what their purpose is.

b. Farmers Market Report/Staff Reports

Idema asked for clarification on the planning department report. Planning Director Said explained that staff are working on zoning ordinance rewrite language and his report supplies samples of sections they have worked on (including new charts and tables).

Harrison shared that he appreciates the planning department's zoning ordinance review, and he feels Ada does a good job at setting community standards.

Harrison asked what Ada has done on a residential scale for solar energy. Said explained Ada has not undertaken a specific ordinance for solar energy requirements, and he further explained how permits requesting solar panel placement are regulated.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Leisman said it has been an interesting 4 years, and he went over all that changes in Ada and the addition of several new buildings (Village East apartments, Mosaic property, Ada Pharmacy building, Luna's building, the software lab building, the library, the hotel block, Garage Bar, etc.). He said that all of that has come to fruition in the DDA area over the past 4 years. Leisman made note that this DDA Board represents a nice blend of how we have kept up with changes and yet had some stability. He said it has been a really good 4 years, and he wished everyone all the best.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

X. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Harrison, supported by Turan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

rs:eb