



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

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, December 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 Vice Chair Vogl.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Cloutier, Coe, Frost, Idema, Turan, Vogl, *Supervisor Korth*

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Harrison, Knapp

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: 5 members of the public

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

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

IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES - none

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Update on Recommendation for DDA Director Appointment

Township Manager Suchy stated at the Township Board meeting tonight he will be presenting a recommendation to the Board to select Kevin Austin as the next DDA Director. Kevin's ability to communicate effectively and his ability to be a dynamic leader is something the DDA will benefit from. Suchy noted Kevin's prior experience as Intern with Ada Township as well as working some of the events and other related projects in Ada.

b. Consider Approval of Ada Farmers Market Branding Guide – Raquel Valverde

Valverde said the Farmers Market committee met in November and discussed changes in the branding. She went over the illustrations included in the packet and explained details (removed language 'Village', changed colors, added more craft items and how their branding will interact with the Township branding).

Cloutier commented that it is easier to read Ada Farmers Market and the colors looked better, more true. Coe mentioned the idea of adding some art from the kids events.

Moved by Turan, supported by Frost, to approve the design of the Ada Farmers Market Branding Guide with the addition of children's art.

c. Downtown Banner Update – Verbal Update

Suchy informed the new banners will be installed before Christmas at 100% vendors cost. There was also conversation with the vendor regarding the installation process and adding twist ties for securing the posts.

d. Beers at the Bridge – Verbal Update

Suchy noted at the last DDA Meeting he mentioned there were previous conversations with the community and some of the partners regarding potential changes to the Beers at the Bridge format. Suchy said he is working on setting up follow-up conversations with the community partners and committee members to discuss topics; such as, DDA action on the cancelled August event (possible refund or discounts). Suchy explained the process of cancelling an event and at what point a decision is made.

VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. DDA Financial Report, November 30, 2024

Suchy referred to the Financial Report included in the packet and offered to answer any questions.

b. Farmers Market Social Media & Marketing Report – Tara Heerspink

Tara Heerspink, Social Media & Marketing Consultant, referred to her report in the packet and said we are currently focusing on the off-season. She appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with Raquel and the Farmers Market vendors and staff to look at strategies for not only when the market is thriving, but also during off-season to keep up with market awareness, branding growth, and initiatives to support local vendors.

Tara mentioned she reached out to Cascade Community Foundation and scheduled a meeting this month to discuss a marketing workshop. The workshop aims to equip the market vendors with effective social media strategies, thus driving more traffic to the market.

c. Farmers Market Manager Report – Raquel Valverde

Valverde updated that November 19 was the first Farmers Market Committee meeting, which included 8 members. The committee focused on the markets branding and discussed the implementation of the food stamp program. Moving forward, the committee will be reviewing the vendor application packets for possible changes.

Valverde briefly went over the social media posts/stats (growth is up from last month). She said she would have an annual report at the January meeting, which will include budget/numbers for the items that were offered at the market.

d. Township Department Head Staff Reports

Suchy provided updates:

The Tinsel, Treats and Trolleys event on December 6 was very successful, as

well as the Santa Parade and the Chili & Beer Festival. He said the events were good representations of the community and what Ada has going on.

Suchy said the Township is starting the budget process and he will have a draft budget for the DDA at the January meeting. He will work with the new DDA Director and the Farmers Market Committee to guide through the budget process.

The December 14th Progressive Tastings event was cancelled due to lack of participants. Idema suggested the event be offered on a quarterly basis to help build up the marketing. Suchy acknowledged that this is good conversation for the new director and DDA Board to have, especially with the strategic planning process happening after the first of the year.

Coe asked if the January DDA meeting was a good time to bring up additional ideas to budget for. Suchy explained the process of presenting a draft budget to the DDA with a listing of the capital improvement projects that were budgeted. That will be a good time for the DDA to brainstorm new ideas or evaluate previous plans and to align the strategic planning along with the budget.

Coe inquired about the Placer.AI data update/comparisons. Suchy made note that he will review Placer.AI data and report back to the DDA.

Frost mentioned that the DDA Financial Report was difficult to track and asked if there is a newer, updated reporting process. Suchy explained the difference in the financial report for the DDA vs. the Township Board report and offered to run both formats of reporting and bring to the next DDA meeting for their review/preference.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Korth thanked the DDA members for having him on the DDA Board. He said he was a founding member of the DDA when it was first formed and looking at what has evolved in the last 15-20 years is quite impressive.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chip Clark, spoke on behalf of the Ada Arts Council where he serves as a director on the board. He said the arts council is starting a strategic planning effort and identifying critical stakeholders in the community, and the DDA is one of them. Mr. Clark extended an invitation to the DDA to participate in their strategic planning efforts.

Kim Rantala, Ada Business Association, shared there are two ribbon cutting ceremonies coming up; The Angela Bukala Agency and Workman Outfitters. She said this information is on their facebook page and website and she encouraged the DDA to get a hold of her if they were not receiving the ABA newsletter.

X. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Idema, supported by Turan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

rs:eb