



**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 11, 2023, MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, December 11, 2023, 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:** Bowersox, Harrison, Idema, Knapp, Leisman, Turan, Vogl

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Coe, Frost

**STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Buckley, Deason, Moran, Said, Stichman, Suchy

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** 7

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Leisman, supported by Bowersox, to approve and amend the agenda to include the November 13, 2023, Semi-Annual Information Meeting minutes as discussed. Motion carried.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2023, REGULAR MEETING  
AND NOVEMBER 13, 2023, SEMI-ANNUAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Moved by Harrison, supported by Vogl, to approve the minutes of November 13, 2023, Regular Meeting and the November 13, 2023, Semi-Annual Informational Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

**IV. APPROVAL OF PAYABLES – none**

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none**

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Review of DDA Board Membership Terms Expiring 12/31/23 - *verbal update***

Leisman explained that when DDA Board members are appointed it is for a 4-year term, and Bryan Harrison and Terry Bowersox are up for re-appointment. Leisman said that Harrison has agreed to serve another 4-years and he will bring his appointment to the Township Board. Leisman shared that Bowersox has decided to not go for another 4-year term.

**b. Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to Outgoing DDA Board Member Terry Bowersox**

Leisman said that Terry was one of the original members of the DDA that started in 2008. He has served as Vice-Chair for several years and Chair for almost a decade. Leisman thanked Bowersox for his years of service and dedication to the DDA and Ada. Leisman presented Terry with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Township Board and the DDA. Bowersox shared that he has been a part of making a great community even greater and said that it has been enjoyable and fun for him meeting everybody and being involved, and he is grateful for it.

**c. Review and Consider Resolution of Support for the Social District Expansion**

Stichman stated that in anticipation of the upcoming expiration date of the Social District on January 31, 2024, staff convened a work session with managers and owners of the restaurants and key partners from ABA, CDV5 and Discover Ada to strategize on what the businesses want to see happen with the Social District. The conversation centered on leveraging successes, tackling challenges, proposing enhancements to expand the social district's influence, and considering broader impact while aligning with local norms and addressing safety considerations. Stichman referred to the summary of the discussion included in the packet, with specific topics of discussion: identified strengths, identified challenges, explored opportunities (possibly altering the hours of operation), and a few potential changes and their benefits.

Stichman went over the renderings of proposed options (1, 2 & 3) for the expansion and boundary modifications. Stichman concluded that she recommends the DDA Board review the proposed changes to the hours of operation and boundaries and consider approval for a resolution of support to be presented to the Township Board.

There was DDA discussion regarding the expansion of hours providing more opportunity for the businesses, extended hours would be less confusing than on and off days, reviewed the options (1, 2 & 3) and whether there were geographic concerns. Harrison and Turan spoke of being fully supportive of the expansion. Leisman suggested the DDA possibly consider public comment regarding the proposed changes.

Chair Knapp offered the public to comment at 8:22 a.m.

Mara Norden, Pastor at Community Church, said she was in favor of the expansion. She especially likes the opportunity during the larger events where they have significant traffic into their building. There was no other public comment.

Moved by Idema, supported by Bowersox, to approve Resolution 121123-1 in support of expanding the Social District's hours of operations and boundaries. Motion carried.

**d. Discussion Regarding the Recap Report for Progressive Tastings**

Stichman stated that the Progressive Tasting initiative has been successful at providing a fun and unique opportunity for businesses to collaborate and promote the area. The Progressive Tastings initiative aligns with the DDA's mission of advocating for the vitality of the Downtown Development District through promotion and business collaboration. She explained details of how the event works with 15-18 participants, two groups, highlighting 6 local businesses with

the potential to highlight up to 12, and how the visitation route is geared to showcase the walkability of the community.

Cynthia Hagedorn, Progressive Tastings consultant, confirmed that the monies charged to each participant go back to the businesses for their costs.

Following brief DDA discussion, it was moved by Vogl, supported by Idema, to approve the 2024/2025 Progressive Tastings proposal as outlined by the DDA Director and authorize the additional \$1,750 expenditure for FY23/24 and \$5,150 for FY24/25. Motion carried.

**e. DDA Director Review Process & DDA Board Feedback**

Township Manager Suchy said that the Township is going through the annual review process for employees and historically he has handled the DDA Director's review. Suchy explained the process for the department heads and their employees and said he wanted to let the DDA Board know that process was starting. Suchy invited the DDA to provide comments or feedback by December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**f. Connecting Community Campaign Presentation - Julius Suchy, Township Manager**

Suchy provided a presentation on the Connecting Community Campaign and the new Covered Bridge Park. He went over various renderings explaining details and highlighted some of the amenities.

**VII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**a. DDA Financial Report, November 30, 2023**

Stichman referred to the financial outline and mentioned a few main points: Community events expenditures of \$409.45 include various expenses for the Fall Festival, phone allowance expenditure, operating supplies/services, and continuing education. Financial activity for the Farmers Market included expenditures totaling \$4,349.98, which includes payment to Stephanie Karris for the Market Manager's services in Sept/Oct, and payment to Jennie MacAnaspie for Market Manager services dating back to June.

**b. Director/Staff Reports**

Stichman noted that she is working on a downtown walkway project for the walkway in between the Barber Shop and Nonna's. She explained that the pavers are dipping downwards causing a pedestrian safety concern. She anticipates this project to be included in the Capital Improvement Budget for next year.

**VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

Harrison took a moment to extend thank you's to: DDA Board members for their service and dedication, the Ada staff, business owners, and Terry Bowersox.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Stichman said that Wesley Deason is here this morning and she wanted to give him the opportunity to speak as our new Parks & Recreation Director. Wesley Deason introduced himself to the DDA Board.

**X. ADJOURN MEETING**

Moved by Bowersox, supported by Idema, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 a.m.  
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

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Dawn Marie Coe, DDA Secretary

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