

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2017 SPECIAL MEETING
ADA, MICHIGAN**

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:00AM by Chairman Bob Kullgren (via videoconference) at the Ada Township office, 7330 Thornapple River Drive SE, Ada, MI.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Bowersox, George Haga, Bryan Harrison, Jim Ippel, Bob Kullgren (video), Devin Norman, Walt VanderWulp, Ted Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Sarah Andro

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director

PUBLIC PRESENT: Pete Lazdins and Mike Oezer (Progressive AE), Steve Dertz, Geld, LLC, Margaret Idema (DDA Citizens Council), Betty Jo Crosby, Gwen DeVries Cieslak, Seyferth PR

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consent.

III. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL FROM PROGRESSIVE AE FOR DESIGN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR RIVERFRONT PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Bob Kullgren stated that this special meeting was called to help move the Riverfront park design services along to coincide with the work being done on River Street so that both projects can be completed at the appropriate time. The work product from this proposal, if approved, will be presented at the next regularly schedule DDA meeting in February, so that requests for bids can go out in April along with the River Street bids.

Jim Ferro introduced the Progressive AE proposal as a more complete, three-dimensional concept of what could be done to improve the riverfront site. This proposal will include everything necessary to get the project ready for construction drawings and documents: budgeting, materials, quantities, cross-sections, grading plan, and an understanding of flood plain issues and discussions with the DEQ for permit application needs and possibilities.

Pete Lazdins stated that the current "Settler's Grove Park" rendition has been recently updated to reflect ownership issues regarding the pedestrian bridge across the Thornapple River (eliminated). The bridge may still be done in the future and this proposal will include its location and other considerations so that if the bridge is pursued it will not require re-constructing the park.

Our next steps include determining the flood way line and associated issues so that opportunities for park development fall in line with what can be reasonably approved by the DEQ (or possibly outside of the flood way line so that approval/permitting is not a requirement). Progressive will meet with Matt McGregor of King and McGregor, who will serve as their flood plain and water way specialist, to determine the exact elevations of the flood plain and what can and cannot be done in and around the flood plain. In addition, further to the east of the park, there are a number of possible pathways continuing eastward towards the M-21 bridge and connecting to the Ada Township trail system that will be included in their scope of services.

Progressive will meet next with the DEQ representative to learn early on what the DEQ will and will not approve and what, if any, permitting is necessary for the proposed amenities. Additionally, they will discuss river bank restoration possibilities with the DEQ. Currently the river bank is steep and harsh and it is important to determine what the DEQ may allow in restoring it to a softer, natural bank.

One of the other important items to determine is the location of the old schoolhouse. This has to be completed before the new street is completed because the structure needs to be set at the proper elevation.

Ted Wright asked if parking was considered, and will be considered, in the development of the park. Lazdins responded that parking is front and center on their radar and they are currently looking at the overall parking scheme and trying to find ways to maximize available parking on River Street. This is another reason why the park design needs to happen in concert with the engineering of River Street.

Mike Oezer stated that one of the goals of the park is to have as large a flat space as possible so that the area is more usable. This will require a retaining wall between the park and River Street to make up for the elevation change. River Street will be at the same elevation as Ada Drive (with buildings having a finished floor height of 632.5') so that buildings are out of the flood plain. George Haga asked if there is another fee attached to actual construction documents, Oezer responded yes. This proposal is not for construction plans and bid documents, but includes a good working map of what the DEQ will allow and provides a budget for the proposed amenities. Actual construction documents will be needed before the project is sent out to bid.

Walt VanderWulp asked if head-in parking on River Street would require a higher retaining wall than parallel parking – Oezer responded no. The wall height is dependent only on the height of River Street and what elevation the park is at to create the largest usable, flat space. It is anticipated that the wall will be 5-7 feet tall. Bryan Harrison asked that the materials used for the wall be considered an additional amenity, ie. Murals, climbing wall, etc. It was also asked if the river walk would be a boardwalk or a different material – Lazdins responded that most of the walk will likely be a paved surface due to cost considerations. It was also suggested that the old schoolhouse site may have a cantilevered deck to allow for more room around the structure, but to not encroach on the flood plain.

Kullgren confirmed that Progressive's scope of services includes the planning for the future pedestrian bridge over the Thornapple River – Lazdins confirmed it is. Kullgren also asked that Progressive divide out the budget costs associated with the path connection to M-21 and the rest of the Township's trails, as this is not formally part of the DDA's riverfront amenities. Finally, Kullgren asked that Progressive honor the prior cost estimates for the riverfront park (approximately 1.2M) and not come back with a plan that costs substantially more, knowing that that would create a different dynamic that could/would halt our process.

Lazdins stated that the deadline to get River Street out to bids is late March/early April and that the bids for the park construction need to go out at the same time. If the DDA approves the work product as proposed at the February DDA meeting, then Progressive will need 6 weeks to create the construction design documents to put out to bid. This assumes that the park will be built in two phases and that Phase 1 will include everything that interacts with the new River Street. Phase 2 can include any amenities that can be completed within the park itself, without affecting the roadway.

Oezer stated that they will talk to the DEQ regarding the logistics and permitting necessary for the bridge over the Thornapple River, but be aware that it likely will be a multi-year permitting process.

Harrison asked that the standard agreement provisions proposed by Progressive exclude items P. (Hiring of Personnel) and Q. (Site Signage) because the DDA currently has an open job posting and pre-design services for the park do not really rise to the level of needing signage.

MOTION:

It was moved by Harrison, seconded by Haga, to approve retaining Progressive AE for the services described in the proposal, for a stipulated sum of \$14,750, plus reimbursable expenses, subject to deletion of Paragraphs P and Q from the proposed services agreement.

Motion PASSES 8-0.

IV. BOARD COMMENT

Harrison asked that Progressive continue to be mindful of our concerns regarding parking and to encourage public parking on both sides of River Street. Even if it requires making the park a bit narrower, parking is very important to giving public access to the space.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Idema asked how many trees will come down for the park development. Lazdins stated that they have a tree survey and will report back to us next month with a schedule of the trees that can be saved, given their position and elevation. Additionally, Idema wonders if “Settler’s Grove” is a good name given the current lack of trees. It was suggested that may the Ada Historical Society could help with some history on the actual size of the grove and/or any photos. Also, more trees could be planted to recreate a grove over time. She also asked for an idea of seating capacity in the amphitheater area – it was suggested that likely 150 people could be accommodated.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Terry Bowersox moved to adjourn the meeting. Harrison supported. Motion passed. Kullgren adjourned the meeting at 8:44AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary/Treasurer