

**ADA TOWNSHIP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 5, 2010 MEETING**

The regular April 5, 2010 meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Vice Chairperson Terry Bowersox.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Bowersox, George Haga, Jim Ippel, Tom Korth, Betsy Ratzsch, Walt VanderWulp, Ted Wright

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Bob Kullgren, Devin Norman

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jim Ferro, Planning Director

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by consent, with addition of a report from Ratzsch on an upcoming event.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Korth, seconded by VanderWulp, to approve the March 1 meeting minutes, with a correction to reflect Board member Norman as present.

Motion approved unanimously.

**FARMERS MARKET UPDATE**

Ferro distributed a report from Kullgren regarding the status of Farmers Market planning for this year.

Ratzsch questioned if there are any requirements for produce to be locally-produced. Ferro stated that the vendor rules do have “truth in advertising” requirements, which call for origin information to be displayed for vendors’ products. Ferro distributed copies of the vendor rules and registration forms.

Ratzsch commented that the discretionary language in the rules allowing some arts and crafts vendors could pose problems in administration.

**BRONSON ST. PROJECT UPDATE**

Haga reported that the Township Board did not include funding in the adopted budget for the Bronson St. project, but did include \$12,000 specifically for engineering and permitting for the project, in anticipation of completing it in the summer of 2011. He stated that the Board’s postponement of the project was based on concern that the Township may need to dedicate more funds in the upcoming year to road repairs, based on reports of deterioration this spring on several roads.

Haga also reported that he has researched the possibility of short-term borrowing from the public safety fund to complete the project, and that the opinion of the Township’s auditors was that borrowing from a voter-approved, property tax-supported fund would not be appropriate. Haga stated that it still may be possible to borrow short-term from the Township’s utility funds, but the availability of funding to loan will not be known until a pending rate study is completed.

Ratzsch suggested that the DDA should send a written communication to Bronson St. residents informing them of the status of the project.

Bowersox stated he would address this with Bob Kullgren on his return.

Ippel stated he is disappointed in the project not moving forward this year, noting that in the past 10 years since he acquired his property he has paid about \$200,000 in property taxes, and the project was proposed to be completed at that time. He stated he appreciates the Township being fiscally responsible, but there is a need for this project, particularly the added parking to serve the business district.

Korth stated he is concerned that the Township hasn't been addressing funding for roads all along, rather than just discovering the need now and responding in a reactive way.

The Board discussed various options for communicating its position regarding the project to the Township Board.

Following discussion, it was moved by Korth, seconded by Ratzsch, to direct that a written communication to the Township Board be prepared, encouraging the Board to complete the Bronson Street project in 2011, and identify a source of funding for the project.

In discussion of the motion, Haga expressed concern that the communication may not be favorably received by the Board if it is cast in a negative tone, and that he would accordingly vote against the motion.

Bowersox clarified that it was his intent that the proposed communication to the Township Board would be brought back to the DDA Board at the next meeting for review and approval by the Board.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### **REPORT FROM RATZSCH ON RETAIL EVENT**

Ratzsch reported on a new event being planned by the Retailers group – a “Spotlight on Ada” event, featuring women of talent in the community. The event is a major change from the previously-held annual women's shopping event, which was perceived to be too narrow in focus and a “tired” format.

Ratzsch reported the event is planned for May 6 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. She noted that a small amount of funding support was being provided by the ABA, and that no funding was being requested from the DDA.

#### **M-21 BRIDGE PROJECT UPDATE**

Haga reported on the positive outcome of the Township's engagement with MDOT regional office in getting the plans for complete closure of the M-21 bridge changed, so that limited traffic on the bridge will be maintained during its replacement.

Haga reported that the local effort was a collaborative one involving local businesses, several local governments, the Lowell Chamber of Commerce and State Rep. Dave Hildenbrand.

He noted that it has not been determined yet whether the project will be able to be scheduled for 2011 completion, or whether it will need to be postponed to 2012.

Ippel stated that the DDA will still need to be prepared to address the impacts that the project will have on local businesses, even with limited traffic being maintained across the bridge.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

#### **BOARD COMMENT**

Ippel commented on plans by University Motors to move out of the Township, and stated that he believes there needs to be a more supportive approach by the Township to keep businesses healthy in the community. He suggested that the DDA should make an effort to ask businesses what we can do for them to help them be successful.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Tom Korth, Secretary