

**ADA TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 6, 2009 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairperson Bob Kullgren.

PRESENT: Terry Bowersox, George Haga, Tom Korth, Bob Kullgren, Betsy Ratzsch, Walt VanderWulp, Jim Ippel and Ted Wright.

ABSENT: Devin Norman

OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk Burton

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Kullgren asked for approval of the agenda. It was moved by Haga, seconded by VanderWulp, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 23, 2009 MEETING

It was moved by Ratzsch, seconded by Bowersox, to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2009 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION TO RATIFY PLAN REVISIONS MADE SINCE MARCH 23 MEETING.

It was moved by Haga, seconded by Korth, to ratify the changes to the Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan and to recommend the Plan, as ratified, to the Township Board in accordance with the approving and recommending resolution adopted by the DDA Board on March 23, 2009.

Motion passed unanimously.

Kullgren proposed adjusting the order of agenda items, to place discussion of project ideas first, review of committee structure next, and proposed bylaws last. The Board concurred with this change.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PROJECT IDEAS

Chair Kullgren reviewed handouts: The DDA Project Idea List for 2009/2010; and the email from Planner Ferro regarding the project list, and a first cut of a proposed committee structure for the DDA Board.

Kullgren reported on three meetings he has participated in within the last few weeks, on behalf of the DDA.

He has met with representatives from the Township, the retail community and The Community Church concerning efforts to improve the Farmers' Market in Ada, and enhance coordination and cross-promotion of events in the community. A concept has been developed for a "Tuesdays in Ada" event theme, with several activities occurring on that day of the week, including the Farmer's Market and the Music on the Lawn event at the Museum.. He reported there is also discussion with The Community Church about making their parking lot available for the Farmers Market, and for general public use during the week. Kullgren stated there may be a role for the DDA in helping get the Farmer's Market up and running.

Kullgren stated he also attended a meeting of retailers in the Village concerning the coordination of a series of events in the fall under the umbrella of a Pumpkin Festival or Harvest Festival in Ada. Participants included the Arts Council, the Parks Department and the retailers group.

Other items on the list of tasks or projects reviewed by Kullgren included:

- a phone number at the Township, that can be checked periodically.
- a web site, either piggy-backed on the Township web site or independent from the Township web site.
- planning of the Bronson St. project.
- expansion of bike paths connected to the Village
- design and completing the park on Amway property on Fulton St.
- a report to the community regarding Charrette implementation progress and DDA Plan implementation progress.
- new banners in the Village
- signage on the railroad trestle
- support for Tuesdays in Ada, Farmers Market, and August in Ada
- striping parking spaces.
- developing plans for “gateway” landscaping at east and west ends of the DDA District.

Kullgren referred to the “Bike It, Shop It and Walk It” slogan that was developed a year or two ago by the Village retailers, and suggested that the DDA may want to promote that same concept, rather than “re-inventing the wheel.”

Kullgren stated that all of the projects identified for 2009 are relatively inexpensive, and shouldn't involve more than about \$7,00-\$10,000 in cost.

In Board discussion, Walt VanderWulp pointed out that the business community has had carriage rides at Christmas time, and perhaps this could be done for Tuesdays in Ada. Walt stated he gets lots of inquiries about the history of Ada, and perhaps we could feature historical information in signs. Walt mentioned that one of his tenants, John Barfuss, provides web site services. Walt also suggested involving the schools, churches and day care centers in our coordination efforts.

Betsy Ratzsch pointed out that sign restrictions place limits on merchants ability to communicate activities and events. She suggested using the existing billboard on Fulton St. to promote our events.

Kullgren asked about business experience with advertising in “On the Town” and the Advance, for a coordinated series of events. Betsy Ratzsch stated that a group of retailers put together a “Friday Night in Ada” promotion last year, and it was not hugely successful. She stated that both physical signage and print advertising is needed.

VanderWulp pointed out there is a once-per-month pull out advertising section in the Cadence that is relatively inexpensive. He also suggested using the Lowell Buyers Guide.

Note: VanderWulp left the meeting at this time.

Haga stated he supports the idea of moving the Farmers Market to a location that is more conducive to it being successful.

Ratzsch made the comment that getting involvement of the school community is sometimes difficult, because of the full schedules of teachers and students.

Kullgren stated he is hopeful that the DDA can be successful in making some of these things happen in the community. He believes it is important for us to make early strides toward achieving some of these goals.

Ippel concurred with Ferro's suggestion of accomplishing new banners this year. Ippel also suggested concentrating on improving some of our existing improvements rather than focusing on new ones, such as striping crosswalks, and beautification of what we have, such as the area next to the railroad viaduct.

Korth suggested that the DDA might take direct ownership of some of these things, to take them off the Township's back.

Kullgren stated that with some idea of a project list, we have a better idea of needed committee structure. He asked for feedback from Board members on Committee participations. The following Committee assignments were tentatively agreed upon:

Kullgren, Haga and Korth: Resource/Relationship Committee.
Bowersox, Ippel and Ratzsch: Project Planning/Implementation
VanderWulp and Wright: Communications/Promotions Committee.

Kullgren will confirm VanderWulp's participation with him.

Betsy pointed out that the retailer's group has a history of working on project implementation, and our committee should coordinate with them. Kullgren mentioned two upcoming meetings regarding event planning that Project Planning/Implementation Committee members may wish to attend. He will e-mail schedule information regarding these meetings.

Ratzsch stated that signage is something that should be moved up on the priorities, as it has been an ongoing source of frustration. A coordinated sandwich board sign effort has been discussed in the past, and consideration should be given to accommodating these.

Korth suggested that there should be provision for some sort of permanent signage allowed for the DDA.

Betsy Ratzsch stated that the area of greatest need is for signage for special events.

In discussion, it was suggested that there may be a role for the DDA in administering sign rules.

Ippel raised the question as to how it is determined whether an expense is a DDA expense or a Township expense. Korth suggested the possibility of transferring both some responsibility and some funding from the Township to the DDA for some of the items that the Township has been responsible for in the past, such as landscape maintenance and light pole banners.

Kullgren stated he sees the DDA's role as emphasizing new projects rather than taking over existing Township responsibilities.

Haga pointed out that he already serves as a liaison from the Township to the ABA, and suggested he could also play this role on behalf of the DDA.

Ippel stated he would like to see progress on Bronson St. as the major big project to undertake.

Ippel stated that with the lack of funding at the Road Commission, if we are willing to pay for improvements, he can't imagine the Road Commission saying no.

Haga stated they probably would, since it is their road.

Korth suggested the possibility of privatizing the road as a solution.

Kullgren stated he would follow through with the following items:

1. Try to put some cost numbers to the project list.
2. Incorporate some of Jim Ferro's suggestions, to the extent they were accepted by the Board, into the project list.
3. Put out a list of Committee members for concurrence and call for leadership assignments for each Committee.

It was pointed out that Committees would need to coordinate and interact with one another.

Kullgren stated he would put the direction from this meeting in written form for the Board's formal concurrence at the next meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Kullgren stated that he planned to work on selecting an alternating meeting date and time, to try to better accommodate Walt VanderWulp's schedule.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED BYLAWS

Kullgren pointed out that no immediate action was needed on Bylaws at this time, and suggested postponing that item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Susan Burton, Ada Township Clerk, stated she believes that the DDA Board is moving in the right direction.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert Kullgren, Chairperson