

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE JULY 11, 2016 MEETING**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: LeBlanc, Hurwitz, Jacobs, Proos, Smith

PUBLIC PRESENT: Approximately 10

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consent.

III. PRESENTATION FROM LANCE WERNER, DIRECTOR, KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY

Board Chairman Kullgren stated that a library branch in Ada has become a topic of community interest. He provided some background information regarding the Village amenities study that was completed last December, and the ranking of various community amenities that contained in an online survey conducted at that time. Kullgren stated Mr. Werner was invited to make a presentation to the DDA Board and Township Board regarding the feasibility of a branch in Ada Township, and the process for doing so if we wished to pursue the concept.

Lance Werner, KDL Director, provided information regarding the process for establishing a new branch library. He stated the local government is responsible for the cost of constructing and maintaining a facility, while the KDL district covers the cost of staffing, technology and the collection. He noted the District also reimburses the local government at the rate of \$1.50 per square foot per year to offset some of the cost of maintaining the facility.

Werner stated that a library branch can be a transformational facility in terms of impact on the community, and is more than simply a place to check out books. He described the types of programs offered by the KDL in the areas of early childhood development, activities for adolescents, activities for seniors, assistive devices and other opportunities for social interaction.

Werner stated KDL had 2.8 million visits last year at its facilities, and is the must-visited cultural resource in the County. He stated that a library can be an anchor institution that adds value to the community.

Board member Norman asked Werner what he thought of the site of the proposed community building in the Envision Ada Plan. Werner stated he thought it was a wonderful location.

Kullgren noted that the site between Headley Street and M-21 is highly visible. He also noted that in his visits to several KDL branch locations, he noted that many of them have a room dedicated to local history.

In discussion of possible shared-use of facilities between Township use and library use, Werner noted that the Wisner Center at the Cascade branch is an example of co-locating facilities.

Werner suggested the possibility of using Mitchell Research as a polling consultant to measure public opinion regarding a branch library proposal in Ada Township.

In discussion of square footage needs, Werner stated that it would be desirable to have 11,000 square feet for a library facility in Ada. In response to a question regarding hours of operation, Werner stated that 5-6 days per week would probably be proposed.

Kullgren invited comment from the public in attendance.

Corky Paul stated he has long had an interest in a library coming to Ada. He stated a library branch would be a destination that helps bring the community together. He stated he has witnessed the benefits of a library with his grandchildren in East Grand Rapids, and he would do what he could to help bring a branch to Ada Village.

Penny Zurgable stated she is a 13-year Township resident, and KDL employee. She stated that her effort to organize a social media campaign in support of a library was very easy to accomplish, because of the enthusiastic response she received. She stated a library would add a 12-month draw to the Village, to complement the other amenities that are primarily seasonal, outdoor amenities.

Noelle DiVozzo, stated she believes a library is a great idea for the Village. She suggested less emphasis on book collection stacks in the facility in favor of more space for activities and programs. She also stated she does not support offering video games.

Jim Ferro noted that he had attended a Cascade Friends of the Library book sale in the Wisner Center several years ago, an example of shared use of facilities by the Township and the library.

Werner stated he is willing to work with the Township in the future as we go through the process of deciding whether to proceed with a branch library proposal. Kullgren stated we would be interested in working with Lance in developing a survey to better measure public interest in a library, and in creating a representative small group to work with KDL on a shared use space concept.

Note: (Andro and VanderWulp left the meeting at this time.).

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 13, 2016 MEETING.

It was moved by Wright, seconded by Bowersox, to approve the minutes of the June 13 meeting as presented.

Motion passed by 6-0 vote, with 2 absent and Norman abstaining.

IV. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT, 06/30/16

Ferro stated there was a fair amount of financial activity in June related to the new storage shed for the Farmers Market, which appears under the operating supplies/services category. Ferro also noted that there is an error in the Farmers' Market budget, due to the contract services budget amount for the Market Manager's services being assigned as a general DDA expenditure rather than a Farmers' Market expenditure.

V. RESULTS OF BOND SALE

Ferro noted that the Township capital improvements bonds sale was competitively bid, with 6 bidders. Ferro stated the interest rate received was 2.5%. With the bond sale completed, funding is now in place for the Ada Drive reconstruction project. He noted we would be in compliance with IRS rules requiring that that a minimum percentage of the bond proceeds be spent within 6 months.

VI. RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEVY OF AN AD VALOREM TAX BY THE TOWNSHIP OF ADA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO

Ferro presented a proposed resolution for Board adoption that authorizes a 2-mill property tax levy within the DDA District. He stated that this would be an annual action that needs to be taken by the DDA Board.

Following discussion, it was moved by Bowersox, seconded by Harrison, to adopt the resolution.

On a call of the roll, the vote was:

Yea: Bowersox, Haga, Harrison, Ippel, Kullgren, Norman

Nay: Wright

Absent: Andro, VanderWulp

The Resolution was adopted.

VII. STATUS OF ADA DRIVE RE-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Township Engineer Groenenboom reported on the status of discussions with Chase Bank regarding their review and approval of the Ada Drive reconstruction plans. He stated that Chase Bank is agreeable to allowing a temporary drive interconnection with the 5/3 Bank site during construction. This will allow the construction timeframe to be condensed. He stated that Chase has requested revisions to the grading plan for their new driveway, and this is being accommodated. They are still reviewing the proposed change from 2 driveways to one driveway. Groenenboom stated they are working toward having final approval by Chase Bank by September 1, which Chase Bank views as reasonable.

Groenenboom stated we are looking into placing all of the overhead utility lines on Ada Drive underground, and that the preliminary estimate is that the cost will be \$600,000-\$700,000, compared to a line item in the original Envision Ada cost estimates of \$100,000.

VIII. STATUS OF HEADLEY ST. EXTENSION PROJECT

Ferro reported the Headley St. Extension project is substantially complete. He noted the one-way portion of Thornapple River Dr. can't be opened to traffic until the Road Commission installs traffic control signs, which is expected this week. He also noted there are 3 decorative street lights remaining to be installed, due to an electrical contractor's equipment breakdown. In addition, the landscape plantings and sod placement will not be completed until electrical power is installed by Consumers Energy to serve the irrigation controller.

Wright asked about the incomplete condition of the Knife driveway on Headley St. Ferro stated that the Road Commission's position is that this driveway access cannot be completed and used unless the property owner agrees to either have his Ada Drive driveway converted to a right-in/right-out only design, or combined in a shared access with the Speedway site. He stated the property owner has not been willing to accept the right-in/right-out only option.

Wright commented that traffic speeds on Ada Dr. have increased as a result of losing the signal at the Ada Dr. /Thornapple River Dr. intersection. Ferro noted we have heard feedback regarding this from other people.

Ippel commented that we need LED flashing signals at pedestrian crossings as are used on other communities. Ferro noted that the Road Commission has refused requests to install these signals at the Faze St. crosswalk in the past.

Kullgren noted we have changed circumstances in the Village now that need to be considered, and we should go back to them with these concerns.

IX. VILLAGE PARKING EXPANSION PROJECTS STATUS

Groenenboom reported the Road Commission staff has indicated that they will permit installing additional head-in parking on Bronson St. - either the 16 spaces as proposed, or more than 16 spaces, up to 100 feet from the Steeple St. intersection. Groenenboom stated he has also spoken with railroad representatives, and they stated that a license agreement for additional parking on railroad right-of-way can be completed within 1-2 months. There will be a license fee of approximately \$1,000/year for 16 spaces. He added that about 50 spaces could be added on Bronson St., staying 100 feet from Steeple St., and that he does not know if the license fee would be higher for a larger number of spaces.

Ferro reported that the DDA Citizens Council met last Thursday and again reviewed parking expansion options. He stated that Council members commented that traffic speeds have increased on both Ada Drive and Thornapple River Dr. Ferro added that the Council's priorities for parking expansion have remained unchanged, with head-in parking on Bronson Street being their lowest-ranked priority.

Ferro stated the Council also suggested looking into the possibility of expanding parking at the front of the Township Hall by combining the AT&T parking lot with the Township parking lot. Council members also commented that their appears to be many business employees that are still parking in close-in parking spaces, and the parallel parking spaces on new Headley Street are going largely unused, except on Farmers' Market day.

Ferro noted that the comment was also made by a Council member that adequate parking is important to the success of businesses in the Village.

Ferro stated that 3 members of the Council are present today who may have additional comments.

With regard to acquiring additional parking behind the businesses on the west side of Ada Drive, Ferro stated we have learned that one of the family decision-makers regarding any sale of the property at 7257 Bronson St. is out-of-state, in Alaska, for the summer.

Wright commented that we need to think about long-term conditions, and that parking conditions today are likely to be different in the future.

Kullgren stated that we also need to be aware of the negative feedback we have gotten from citizens regarding loss of mature tree canopy in the Village, and we need to be sensitive to this concern.

Ferro stated he has also noticed that the Township Hall parking lot off Thornapple River Drive has been greatly underutilized for the past few weeks, because of the construction on the street making it difficult to access.

Wright asked if we have any metrics on the impact of the new Nonna Café on parking. Ferro responded that we have several lunch time counts that were conducted after the café opened. Ferro stated we have not done any recent evening parking counts, since the Nonna Café did not have their liquor license until recently. He noted that we are now in the heart of the summer vacation season, which affects overall business activity levels.

Ferro stated he has not yet completed an analysis of the count data. His observations are that parking is in short supply on Farmers' Market day, especially during the lunch hour, except in the Township Hall front lot. This is due to the Church lot not being available for public use on Tuesdays.

Kullgren commented that 2 business vehicles are consistently parked in the west Bronson head-in spaces, which are taking up spaces that could be used by customers.

Kullgren stated that progress is being made on obtaining needed approvals for additional head-in parking on Bronson St., and that progress on acquiring additional property for more off-street parking is going to be a slow process.

Ippel commented that the parking issues seem to be created primarily by the new Nonna Café, without any additional parking being required for this new business. He has tenants who are very upset with current parking conditions. The parking study showed a parking shortage in this part of the Village. He stated it appears to him that the only short-term solution is additional parking on Bronson St. He stated he hoped this could be accomplished this year, and that we should go for up to 30 additional spaces, with efforts to save mature trees.

Kullgren invited public comment.

Bev Swanson, Thornapple River Dr. resident, commented that restaurant parking needs to be close to the destination, and that parking behind the businesses makes the most sense. She stated if we place more parking on Bronson St., we need to be sensitive to tree removal.

Kullgren suggested the possibility of developing a plan for Bronson St. that provides more than 16 spaces, but that also preserves mature trees. Groenenboom stated we can develop a plan that accomplishes this, but that working around preserved trees would result in a higher cost per parking space, due to the larger length of retaining wall needed. Kullgren stated he felt this was worth looking into.

Haga commented we need to consider the residential atmosphere on Bronson St., and we also need to be aware of the potential for parking spaces on Bronson St. being used for private vehicles of residents rather than by business customers.

Kullgren suggested and Board members concurred with asking Groenenboom to develop a “happy medium” plan that provides more than 16 parking spaces and preserves mature trees, without extending parking so far down Bronson St. that it is too far to encourage use by customers.

Shelli Rottschafer, 7370 Thornapple River Dr., stated that whether we add 16, 30 or 60 spaces, we should consider doing more shallow motorcycle parking in front of mature trees. Rottschafer suggested that Joel Harmer’s written communication be read.

Ferro read Harmer’s communication, which commented that new Headley St. parking is mostly unused, Thornapple River Dr. parallel parking needs re-striping, that more spaces could be provided in front of the Township Hall with coordination with the AT&T lot, that there is an inoperable vehicle on Bronson St. owned by an Ada Grill employee that has been there for over a month, that 3 spaces on Bronson St. are used by occupants of residences and that two vehicles owned by the Ada Bike Shop are always parked on Bronson St.

Kullgren stated he agrees with Ted that we will never have enough parking, and that we need to pursue all available options while preserving the important tree canopy.

Noelle DiVozzo stated she believes the tree canopy should have priority over additional parking and that additional parking on Bronson Street should be off the agenda. She suggested we take a long-term approach instead of a short-term fix. She suggested that Amway acquire land behind the businesses for additional parking, and pay for it by selling the other homes they have acquired in the Village.

Wright suggested the DDA communicate to the Planning Commission that parking demands need to be

considered when new development is proposed.

Bowersox suggested another joint meeting with the Planning Commission and Township Board. He stated the Nonna Café approval made no sense whatsoever.

Ferro stated from a planning perspective, there has never been a development proposal turned down due to lack of on-site parking. At the time the Nonna Café was proposed, we had a parking study that said there was a parking surplus in the Village, and that the parking supply available was not being effectively used or managed. Given those facts, it did not make sense to, in effect, put a moratorium on new business expansion in the Village. The parking study also suggested that providing adequate parking should be primarily a municipal responsibility, and that is the strategy we are now undertaking. He stated we are now going through the growing pains of meeting that need, without telling a successful local business that they can't expand.

Kullgren asked if we ask a zoning applicant if they believe there is adequate parking. He stated he would want a clear answer to that before he would invest in a new business. Ferro stated that wasn't discussed with the applicant, but that he assumes the business owner believed there was an adequate parking supply, otherwise he wouldn't have made the investment.

Bowersox stated he felt that perhaps we needed another parking consultant. Ippel questioned whether we value a parking consultant's opinion over the opinions of business owners.

Kullgren questioned whether we have sufficient resources to meet the parking needs of the Village.

Ferro stated another potential resource to consider is the establishment of a formal required fee payment to a municipality parking fund as a condition of development approval.

X. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Ferro provided information to the Board regarding the proposed new 20,000 square foot, 2-story mixed-use building on Ada Drive, adjacent to the proposed Kingma's Market. He stated Geld, Llc would be developing this building to provide space for existing shopping center tenants to move into.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Harrison commented he appreciated the library presentation, but noted that it came in 10th on the prioritizing of amenities. He also noted that the public's views may change when it comes to paying for a library.

Haga thanked Kullgren for organizing the KDL presentation.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Bowersox, seconded by Harrison, to adjourn at 10:25 a.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary/Treasurer