

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 8, 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, Jim Ippel, Bob Kullgren, Devin Norman, Walt VanderWulp, Ted Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Bryan Harrison

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director

PUBLIC PRESENT: Margaret Idema, 7213 Bronson St.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consent.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2016 MEETING.

It was moved by Bowersox, seconded by Ippel, to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2016 meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT, 07/31/16

Ferro presented the financial report for July, 2016.

V. STATUS OF ADA DRIVE RE-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Steve Groenenboom, Moore & Bruggink, updated the Board on the estimated cost and schedule for the Ada Drive reconstruction project. Groenenboom stated that plan review and signoff process with Chase Bank is progressing favorably, and he is targeting a September 1 date to have all approvals in place. He stated the estimated project cost is at \$2.5 million, which is \$300,000 higher than the original estimate. He noted added costs include constructing a temporary access drive and temporary parking for the Thornapple Village Shopping Center, to replace access and parking that will be lost due to raising the grade of Ada Drive. He noted that his cost estimate remains conservative, in that he is assuming high construction costs.

Groenenboom stated that the cost of placing overhead utility lines underground along Ada Drive would add an additional \$500,000 to the project cost.

With regard to schedule, Groenenboom stated the anticipated bid opening date is September 14, with a contract award date of September 26. Groenenboom stated he would like to get some utility work done this year, as well as the temporary access to the shopping center off the Headley St. extension, at the location of the future River St. intersection. He stated he anticipated a November 15 construction shut down for the winter.

Groenenboom noted that 3 contractors have said they could start work on water and sewer work in Ada Drive in early March. With this early start date, the project could be completed by the end of July.

In discussion, Kullgren stated that we need to do a good job of communicating with the public and the businesses affected regarding the changes in access and parking, including adequate signs, to lessen

disruption to the business community.

Andro asked whether Amway is subsidizing existing businesses to offset the disruption to their business. Kullgren stated he did not have any information on that, and that individual business circumstances vary greatly in terms of their plans and status. Andro stated many of the businesses have nowhere to go. She stated we should be communicating with them and listening to their concerns.

It was noted that Amway is planning to construct a new building this winter on Ada Drive that will provide space for some of the existing tenants to move into.

General discussion ensued among Board members regarding the need to improve communications with the business community and the public.

Wright suggested that we reach out to existing businesses to ask them how they are being impacted and what their short and long-term plans are.

Haga stated that the Township, Amway and the consultants have spent many hours in meetings figuring out how to design our projects and carry them out in a way that has the least impact on businesses, and this has been a primary goal.

In discussion of whether placing overhead utilities underground should be pursued, Haga pointed out this would be an added expenditure not included in our current budget. He noted that the bond issue amount was only \$2.2 million, so the additional cost would need to come from our fund balances.

A majority of Board members expressed support for burying of utilities, with more analysis needed to determine whether resources would be available to accomplish this. There was consensus that the DDA should reach out to existing businesses to seek their input on their concerns and plans.

VI. STATUS OF HEADLEY ST. EXTENSION PROJECT

It was noted that completion of the landscaping along the Headley St. extension was on hold pending extension of electrical service by Consumers Energy to the irrigation system control panel.

VII. VILLAGE PARKING EXPANSION PROJECT

Groenenboom presented a plan for addition of 42 head-in parking spaces on Bronson Street, west of Ada Drive, with a space layout that preserves several mature trees. Groenenboom noted the western-most 7 spaces would need to be removed, as the Road Commission does not want parking spaces installed any closer than 100 feet to the Teeple Ave. intersection. This would reduce the number of added spaces to 35, at an estimated cost of \$270,000. It was noted that Road Commission review and approval of the plans is needed before the plans can be put out for bid. Groenenboom stated that the bidding climate may not be favorable at this time of year. Haga noted the project was not included in this year's budget. He also expressed concern that it would not be good to bid the project, and then need to re-bid it in the winter if costs are too high.

Note: VanderWulp left the meeting at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Kullgren asked if there was any public input on the plans.

Margaret Idema, 7213 Bronson St., noted that the Citizens Council ranked parking on Bronson St as the lowest priority among the options considered for expanding public parking. She asked what the status was of plans for a parking structure.

Kullgren stated redevelopment activity in the shopping center area is starting near Fulton St., and moving gradually south toward the Headley St. extension. Given that a parking structure would be located within the southern portion of the redevelopment area, he does not anticipate construction of a parking structure any sooner than 5 years.

Idema expressed concern with loss of the tree canopy on Bronson St. She also stated that neighboring residents other than her and Joel Harner don't know about the plans for more parking. She also commented that the number of spaces being planned seems to be a moving target. Idema noted that the parking on Bronson St. seems to be full 60-70% of the time, and expressed concern about lack of parking potentially having a negative impact on businesses.

Andro commented that parking becomes an issue on Tuesdays during Farmers' Market season, due to the Market displacing parking in The Community church lot, and Market customer and vendor parking.

Wright commented that new businesses near the new Heidi Christine Salon will also create parking demand that will utilize added parking.

Kullgren asked the Board how it would like to proceed with respect to Bronson St. spaces. Wright and Norman stated they supported the 35 space plan. Haga stated he did not support constructing more than the originally-planned 16 spaces at this time, while other options are being pursued. Ippel and Andro supported the 35 space plan, with completion as soon as possible. Kullgren stated we shouldn't overlook that there are 4 spaces being planned on the east end of Bronson. Kullgren stated that he did not view the westernmost portion of the 35 spaces as being useful parking for the core of the Village, due to their distance from Ada Drive. However, he stated he agreed with Wright that they might be used by businesses in the Heidi Christine area.

It was noted that Township Board approval would be needed to approve funding for the proposed project.

It was moved by Wright, seconded by Bowersox, to recommend moving forward with the plan for 35 parking spaces on Bronson St.

Motion passed by 6-1 vote, with Haga voting no, and Harrison and VanderWulp absent.

In discussion of timing of bidding and construction, it was determined that a contract award date by the Township Board on the 4th Monday in September could be targeted.

VIII. REVIEW OF CONCEPT PLAN FOR COMMUNITY GATEWAY SIGN

Review of the plan was postponed to the September meeting.

IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Andro asked whether any consideration is being given to improving pedestrian crossing safety and traffic speed control at Ada Drive/Bronson St. and Ada Drive/Thornapple River Dr. intersections, and whether signs similar to those she sees on Wealthy St. in Grand Rapids could be placed on the street.

Groenenboom stated that Tim Haagsma, the Director of Safety at the Road Commission, would not approve placing pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of the road. Haga commented there are also a lot of pedestrians crossing the street mid-block.

Ippel asked if the topic of Village-wide sidewalk snow removal could be placed on a future agenda, and if cost estimates he has been asking for could be provided.

IX. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Ferro stated he has had developer inquiries regarding possible residential development of the vacant land located between the AGO gas station site and Headley Street.

Kullgren stated that a meeting between Township representatives and Kent District Library representatives regarding the potential for a library branch with shared-use library and community space. He stated it was a productive meeting and that there do not appear to be barriers to a cooperatively-shared facility. Kullgren reported he has also discussed with the Parks Director the need to address cleanup and appearance of the Thornapple River frontage through the Village.

Ferro noted that the City of East Grand Rapids and Kent District Library are jointly sponsoring an anniversary event at their combined Library/Community building.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary/Treasurer