

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 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

PUBLIC PRESENT: 5

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consent.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2016 MEETING.

It was moved by Bowersox, seconded by Norman, to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2016 meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT, 08/31/16

Ferro summarized the financial report for August, 2016. Kullgren noted that although the DDA has a healthy fund balance, a future revenue sharing agreement between the DDA and the Township pertaining to debt retirement payments will consume a good share of our funds.

Harrison noted that there is discussion in Lansing regarding legislation that could have an impact on the financial condition of DDA's, which we should continue to monitor.

V. REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP FUNDING FOR TINSEL, TREATS & TROLLEY EVENT, ADA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Kindell Rerucha, representative from the Ada Business Association Board, presented an overview of proposed changes and improvements to the Tinsel, Treats & Trolley community event this year, and the ABA's request for funding participation by the DDA in the amount of \$2,500.

Ferro noted this expenditure amount was included in the DDA's current budget.

It was moved by Harrison, seconded by Bowersox, to approve sponsorship funding in the amount of \$2,500 for the 2016 Tinsel, Treats & Trolley event.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. STATUS OF ENVISION ADA PUBLIC PROJECTS

a. Library/Community Building Feasibility Discussions

Kullgren updated the Board regarding discussions held between a Township working group of he, Supervisor Haga and Clerk Smith and representatives from the Kent District Library regarding the

concept of a combined library branch/community center building, sited on the future public green space between Headley Street and Fulton Street. Kullgren stated that in looking at the experience of library development in other communities in the County, the funding model seems to be a combination of community-wide funding from a voter-approved millage and donated funds from a fund-raising campaign.

Kullgren stated that to explore this concept further, Keith Hopkins from Hopkins Fundraising Consultants was invited to make a presentation to the study group regarding how a capital campaign is pursued. Kullgren stated that Hopkins suggested that if a capital campaign is undertaken, it should be broadened to include all of the significant amenities planned in the Village, including the park improvements planned on the Thornapple River frontage. Hopkins also stated that an advisable first step should be conducting a feasibility study to assess the likelihood of success of a fund-raising campaign.

Kullgren suggested having a presentation from Hopkins and/or other potential consultants to the DDA Board at the October meeting regarding conducting a feasibility study.

Board members discussed the merits of a feasibility study. Harrison noted that the feasibility study that was conducted for the Caledonia library project provided valuable information that contributed to a successful campaign.

The consensus of the Board was that competitive proposals should be sought from consultants to conduct a capital campaign feasibility study.

b. Possible Acquisition of Kent County Road Commission Garage

Kullgren noted that the Township Board was currently considering whether to purchase the Kent County Road Commission garage property at the end of Fase Street. He stated that while the DDA Board shouldn't be second-guessing the Township Board's decisions, he stated the DDA Board may be interested in weighing-in regarding potential uses of the property, to the extent that the site is being considered for uses that are already contemplated in being in the core of the Village in the Envision Ada Plan. He noted that public input that has been given has suggested the site as being suitable for a library or the Farmers' Market. He stated these suggestions concern him, given the perceived importance of their being in the core of the Village. He stated the DDA Board also may want to consider whether the resources devoted to the acquisition would hinder our ability to finance the public improvement projects planned for the Village.

VanderWulp stated he believed the site would be a good location for the Township Hall, as long as we protect ourselves from any environmental liability.

Haga stated that any Township purchase would be contingent upon completion of environmental due diligence to protect the Township from liability.

Kullgren noted that public comment at the Township Board public input session also mentioned environmental concerns.

Haga stated most of the public input at the session was from residents in the vicinity of the property, primarily Ada Moorings and Fase Street residents, and that the meeting did not provide a clear direction on a potential use for the property.

Wright stated if the Township Board felt it appropriate to move the Township offices to the Fase Street site, he saw no reason for the DDA to object to that. He stated he didn't believe the DDA should be recommending uses for the property, since it is not in the DDA District.

Kullgren stated that from the DDA Board's comments, he would comment at the Township Board meeting that the DDA Board has two concerns:

1. That some of the uses suggested for the Fase Street site are uses that are planned for the heart of the Village in the Envision Ada Plan, and we would not want to see those uses shifted away to the end of Fase Street.
2. The Township Board should consider competing demands on public resources in deciding whether to acquire the Fase Street property.

(VanderWulp left the meeting at 9:02 a.m.)

Kullgren asked if there was any public comment on this issue.

Betty Jo Crosby asked why the Township would consider paying \$400,000 for the property, when an appraisal estimated the value at \$350,000. Haga responded that the appraisal valued the property strictly as a government-to-government transaction, and that the Road Commission believes the value would be higher if the property were sold on the open market.

Penny Ladd stated she agrees that a library can play an "anchor store" role in the Village, and she agrees that if a library facility is pursued, it should be in the heart of the Village.

c. Headley Street Extension Project

Steve Groenenboom, Moore & Bruggink, noted that the minor flooding that has been observed in the street during rain storms is due to the required silt control fabric that is in the catch basins, and that needs to remain in place until vegetation is established adjacent to the street. He stated it would be removed soon.

d. Ada Drive Re-Construction Project

Groenenboom reported that the Ada Drive re-construction project is out for bids, and there are 7 bidders on the bidders list. He stated there is a mandatory pre-bid meeting that will be held soon, and that the bid opening is on Tuesday, September 20.

Groenenboom stated that one sticking point is the amount of \$35,000 that Chase is asking for to remove and re-locate their existing sign on Ada Drive.

Harrison commented he thought it would be less expensive to demolish the old sign and install a new one.

Kullgren noted that providing temporary directional signs to businesses will be important in this project.

e. Bronson Street Parking Expansion Project

Groenenboom reported there are 6 prospective bidders for the Bronson Street parking project, and that bids are due on Thursday, September 22.

Kullgren commented that we need to be concerned with cumulative loss of tree canopy in the Village.

Ippel commented he felt the Bronson Street project was being given excessive scrutiny as a result of the much greater tree removal impact from the Headley Street project.

Groenenboom stated the railroad is currently reviewing the plan, and he hopes to have their approvals in

place by October 3.

VII. REVIEW OF CONCEPT PLAN FOR COMMUNITY GATEWAY SIGN

The Board reviewed the concept plan that has been developed by the Parks and Land Preservation Advisory Board for a community entry sign at the corner of Knapp Street and Grand River Drive. Ferro stated that the Advisory Board was soliciting input from other Boards and Commissions, given the potential applicability of the design to other locations in the Township. Ferro noted the approved DDA Development Plan includes placing entry signs at the east and west ends of the DDA District.

Harrison commented that the Township logo should be more prominently displayed on the sign.

Betty Jo Crosby commented that the property in its current condition is somewhat of an eyesore. The Advisory Board is attempting to create a more attractive appearance on the site, with native plant materials, and some visual identification of the Township.

Some concern was expressed as to whether the Knapp/Grand River site was truly a community gateway.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Ferro commented that construction of the Kingma's Market and the multi-tenant building adjacent to Kingma's on Ada Drive would begin soon, after demolition of the Lake Michigan Credit Union and Sheldon Cleaners buildings in the next two weeks.

Ferro added that the Ortez Insurance building would be occupied soon.

IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Haga reported he has heard numerous public concerns about visibility issues at the Thornapple River Drive/Ada Drive intersection, and that he has asked Groenenboom to evaluate possible solutions to the problems.

Groenenboom presented a concept plan for installing some curb "bump-outs" at the intersection, and removing the dedicated left-turn lanes on Ada Drive. He stated that no final design decisions would be made until after the Road Commission collects detailed traffic counts at the intersection, which is expected soon. He stated the cost of the improvements shown on the concept plan would be about \$300,000.

Jim Ippel stated he would like to see cost estimates and a plan and decision this year regarding sidewalk snow removal by the DDA in the Village.

Following discussion, it was moved by Harrison, seconded by Bowersox, to direct that specifications for sidewalk snow removal be prepared and presented at the October meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Betty Jo Crosby, on behalf of the Historical Society Board, reported that the Society's grant application to the State for funding assistance for an addition to the Museum was denied. She stated the Board would be obtaining feedback from the State regarding the reasons the grant was not approved.

Wright suggested the Museum project be included in the scope of a capital campaign feasibility study. Crosby noted that the Museum land and building were Township-owned facilities, and an important facility in the Village.

Penny Ladd commented she shares concerns with loss of tree canopy in the Village that has occurred.

Crosby noted that Tom Rooks from Rooks Landscaping has offered to supply bur oak trees that he has in his nursery for a tree planting program in the Village, at a reduced cost.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary/Treasurer