

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 12, 2016 MEETING**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: 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: Approximately 5

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consent.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2016 MEETING

It was moved by Bowersox, seconded by Harrison, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2016 meeting as presented.

Motion approved unanimously.

IV. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT – 11-30-16

Ferro stated the Famers' Market would have a net income loss of about \$1,000 for the 2016 season. Wright questioned whether the Farmers' Market was worth the expense. Ferro pointed out that the majority of the Market's expenditures are covered by income from vendor registration fees, which have been over \$9,000 this year. He also pointed out that since 2009, the market has generated positive net income in excess of \$13,000.

V. STATUS OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Bronson Street Parking Expansion:

Ferro stated we're still waiting on railroad approval on the Bronson Street parking.

Ippel suggested that in light of the delay, we revisit the scope of the project and expand the number of spaces toward Teeple St. as originally proposed.

Kullgren suggested that consideration of this be postponed until the parking study update is completed.

Wright suggested making a recommendation regarding the scope of the project to the Township Board.

Kullgren stated if a change is to be made in the scope of the project, it should be placed on a future meeting agenda so that the public is informed about it.

Ada Drive Re-construction:

Ferro stated we are in a lull period between now and March on the Ada Drive re-construction project. We continue to work with the utility companies and the contractor on coordination of construction. We are still in discussions with Chase Bank, and making minor tweaks to the agreement for temporary access to their property to re-construct a portion of the parking lot, and for a temporary driveway connection with 5/3 Bank; hopefully that will be concluded within a week or two. We are also working on communications coordination with the Ada Business Association, and have a meeting to talk about the marketing campaign the ABA is planning to implement involving some signage, social media and a branding campaign that's focused on "Ada is Open".

Kullgren asked if there is any feedback from the businesses in that shopping center area regarding the temporary access on the extension, whether it's working for them or not.

Ferro stated he has only talked to a couple of businesses and hasn't heard any negative feedback. It was a little rocky when the driveway changes in the shopping center were first implemented. He noted there have been good crowds in the businesses at the rear of the center. He noted the Riverhouse has had some large holiday group events, and Gravel Bottom Brewery seems to be doing fine.

VI. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL FOR PARKING STUDY UPDATE

The Board reviewed a request for proposal sent to the consultant who completed the Village parking study in 2015, requesting a proposal to update the study based on new information regarding future projected growth in the Village and projected parking supply. Board members discussed whether to proceed with engaging the consultant to complete the update.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, second by Norman, to approve the Proposal for Parking Study Update as presented.

Motion carried 8-1, with Ippel voting no.

Haga suggested that Kullgren appoint the Liaison Committee to work with Rich & Associates in the early stages of the project.

Wright and VanderWulp stated they will be on the committee.

VII. CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FEASIBILITY STUDY – REVISED CASE FOR SUPPORT

Kullgren summarized the information contained in the proposed case statement.

Following discussion, it was moved by Harrison, seconded by Norman, to approve the case for support and its use in completing the feasibility study..

Motion carried 9-0.

VIII. EXPLORATION OF DETAILS FOR A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Ginny Seyferth, Seyferth PR. thanked everyone for the relentless energy to try to build the community for our kids, and the vibrant discussion of the issues. Seyferth presented a written overview and comments regarding current communications tools being used by the Township with respect to the Envision Ada Plan implementation.

(Norman left at 10:00 a.m.; VanderWulp left at 10:05 a.m.)

Seyferth pointed out that different people have different preferences for the method of receiving information. Communications needs to be a component of the Project Management role. She stated the web site is very community oriented, went over all the things that are on the site. Understanding the Township helps you understand how they receive communication. She stated multiple platforms, your different ways to communicate, is really important for the community. Ginny described the DDA model in Grand Rapids, which was separated from the City, but they're connected from a communication perspective. She encouraged a consistent communication strategy between the DDA, the Township, and the Planning Commission. She doesn't see the need for a different communication platform; just better coordination of existing communications. Ginny suggested the use of more FAQ's so people could hear some of the same questions that the Board asked. She also suggested the DDA survey businesses that are leaving or expanding.

Harrison stated the Planning Commission and the DDA should receive each others packets.

Andro stated we need quarterly joint meetings.

Eileen McNeil, Seyferth PR, stated the businesses in the DDA district should receive information using their preferred communications medium.

Ginny suggested using a group of gatekeepers; key people who can communicate with others, neighborhood leaders, church leadership, etc., and consistently get their feedback, which allows you to have that voice of what is going on in the neighborhoods. Whatever you do, in the long run it needs to connect with whomever this project manager is; in the short run somebody could try to see if there is a more efficient and cohesive way that the DDA could influence a two-way process through these tools that you have right now.

Kullgren suggested that Board members share their observations in writing on improving communications.

Wright stated it's a great idea to communicate, communication is the key.

Bowersox stated he agrees that the project manager has to communicate, but there should be a separate communications manager.

Ginny stated if they're a really effective communicator and they're comfortable with the tools, then maybe it's part-time help to cover meetings.

Kullgren stated there should be a one-page synopsis of what is going on in the meeting that should be sent out to the public. He stated he is certain this meeting will present another nine pages or more of minutes.

Ginny stated if the public needs to know more, they need to know how to access the minutes so they realize there is that transparency. It's really just organizing it from a backroom perspective.

Haga stated when you talked about synopsis of minutes, that's what the Board does exactly; they're one page, and they're published in the Cadence. On communications we have two needs, one, is an immediate need to gather communication on a regular basis; and two, is long-term communications. We need to look at it from a two-phase standpoint, an immediate need, and then the long-term need.

Ginny stated in the short-term one option is to use an outside consultant; a person who could enhance the flow of information using existing tools. Also, you could try to get more people to like you on Facebook and share their emails with you.

Ginny stated when you hire a manager they will be attending all of the different meetings; whether or not they will have the capacity or talent or both to be able to then effectively and efficiently communicate it. Seyferth offered assistance in the short term in helping to facilitate streamlining our communications efforts, and stated she would prepare a proposal for a 90-day assistance effort.

Kullgren stated in the interest of time that makes sense to me.

IX. REVIEW OF DRAFT RFP FOR ENVISION ADA PROJECT MANAGER

Haga stated this is a response from the committee requesting the development of a request for a proposal. At the meeting the focus was more of a contract person versus an employee position.

Wright stated the No. 1 problem the Project Manager will need to address is parking, but he doesn't see mention of it.

Haga stated there is nothing specific on parking, or any specific project that would be his/her responsibility.

Wright asked if this goes out as a posted position and whether there's a salary associated with it.

Haga stated he anticipated a \$40,000 to \$50,000 range, but noted we have not done any formal compensation study.

Haga stated our first question is whether we want to look at it as a contract versus an employee.

Ferro stated a big source of potential candidates is likely to be people who are or have worked for other DDA's. The City of Grand Rapids has staff members who are referred to as project managers.

The question was posed whether the position will be open to members of the DDA, or is that a conflict of interest.

Haga stated we're not being exclusive if an individual meets the qualifications; of course, he/she could not sit on the Board of the DDA.

Motion by Harrison, second by Haga, to authorize distribution of the RFP for Envision Ada Project Manager, subject to a January 15, 2017 deadline, with a report from the Committee to this Board.

Motion carried unanimously.

X. STAFF UPDATE

Ferro referenced written materials in the Board packet regarding 3 items:

- a. Adoption of Revisions to Sign Regulations
- b. Meeting Notes from November 30 Meeting with Kent County Road Commission
- c. Minutes of November 30 Citizens Council meeting

Ferro also updated the Board regarding development proposals currently before the Planning Commission, and a proposed Brownfield Plan which would involve use of tax increment financing to reimburse Geld for costs of environmental remediation and demolition associated with redevelopment activity in the Village.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Kullgren stated regarding Item b. under staff comment, it is pretty clear that the Road Commission is our adversary. He stated he is intending that we come up with a collaborative grass-root effort with representatives of the DDA, the Township Board, and the Planning Commission, and folks who can sit down with the Road Commission and say all the technical reasons for this not being a safe place for pedestrians need reconsideration. He stated he is not not satisfied at all with the Road Commission saying can't do this, can't do that, whether it's a four-way stop at Thornapple Drive and Ada Drive or whether it's trying to slow the traffic coming into the village.

Ferro noted the Citizens Council did ask that someone from the Road Commission be invited to their next meeting in January. He stated he indicated to them that we should wait and see what interest there is at the DDA Board level and Township Board level in also participating in some type of a face-to-face dialogue with the Road Commission at some point.

Harrison suggested engaging the County Commissioners, as well. Even though the Road Commission is governed by an independent board, they are sensitive to political considerations.

Haga stated he received a thank you card from Marilyn Thompson for our action on the sidewalks.

XII. Public Comment

Noelle DiNozzo thanked the Board for snowplowing the sidewalks. She stated she doesn't see how there could be enough parking for the KDL/community building, and wonders if this is a good time to revisit the Fase Street Road Commission building as giving us options and spreading out some of this stuff. Also, she agrees with slowing down on the Envision Ada projects, and would like to encourage Amway to hold off selling any more property to developers until we're further down the road and can assess a little better where we are before proceeding further. She stated it needs to be remembered that the residents are stakeholders.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by consent at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Devin Norman, Secretary/Treasurer

DN/dr