

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kendra Jickling at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Julia Robbins, Kendra Jickling, Charlie Bush, Robert Lentz, Scott Keys, Dennis Cargill, Sara Redman, and Neil Bishop.

Also Present: City Treasurer, Sarah Kady; City Manager, Corey Schmidt.

Audience Members: Andrea Donley, Donley Realty

It was moved by Sara Redman and seconded by Rob Lentz to approve the December 12, 2017 minutes as presented. Motion Carried.

New Business:

A. DDA Project Review

City Manager Corey Schmidt provided a memo detailing various projects considered by the DDA Plan and past DDA Boards. He asked the Board to provide guidance on which projects or purchases should be pursued.

Kendra Jickling stated that it had been the intent of the DDA in the past to complete certain sidewalk projects, including extending the sidewalks completed in 2016 to the southern edge of town and also along Main Street between Church and Kilgour. Mayor Cargill suggested completing an assessment of sidewalks and determining what each section would cost. Rob Lentz asked if any sidewalk work could be done in-house. Manager Schmidt responded that sidewalk work is within the skillset of the DPW, but the projects on M-53 are tricky due to required traffic control, grade changes, and inclusion of driveway approaches. It was agreed that staff would obtain estimates to replace the sections of sidewalk discussed.

Discussion moved to a possible upgrade of the electrical service available at the City parking lot at Marlette and Fenner Street. Sara Redman noted

that the electric was not sufficient when attempting to host events there in the past. She also noted there were concerns about the condition of certain poles in the parking lot. It was agreed that staff would contact DTE Energy to determine which entity is responsible for various poles in the parking lot and how an upgrade would occur. Kendra Jickling asked if DTE Energy could take a look at the pole near Speedway on M-53 as well.

Rob Lentz indicated he would like to see the DDA explore the Farmers Market concept. Discussion ensued. Rob Lentz, Charlie Bush, and Sara Redman volunteered to comprise a subcommittee to further explore a Farmers Market concept, including researching questions such as where it would be located, what day it would be offered, and how to locate and entice vendors to join.

The Board then discussed property acquisition concepts. Andrea Donley, Donley Realty, indicated the price for the old Macha Doctor's Office building north of City Hall has an asking price of \$89,900. She asked if the DDA would be interested in making an offer. Mayor Cargill commented that the cost to purchase the lot, demo the structure, and upgrade the parking lot didn't make sense to him, since the property would also no longer pay taxes if the DDA acquired it. Scott Keys said it would be expensive to rehab or restore and would likely incur unexpected expenses along the way.

Charlie Bush asked if any businesses have shown an interest in the business façade program idea. Manager Schmidt said he has been asked about a program a handful of times.

Julia Robbins commented that the Veterans Memorial idea in the DDA Plan was met with the memorial at the library and cemetery and also the VFW building. She noted that if the DDA sponsors any events, it would be helpful to establish a merchant committee so that the businesses have some ownership over the success of the events. She suggested a business member serve as a liaison between the businesses.

B. Summer Festival Survey

Mayor Cargill stated that he and Manager Schmidt were working with the Festival Committee to send a survey to the community about the Dog Days of Summer Festival. The survey asks the community if there is interest to keep the festival going and if it can generate new volunteers.

C. Beautification Subcommittee

Kendra Jickling commented that she would like to see a beautification subcommittee formed along with a budget to help with decorations, similar to what was done for the fall season. It was determined she would talk with Barb Moore who spearheaded the fall season decorations.

Discussion ensued on repainting or replacing deteriorating trash receptacles and benches in the downtown. Manager Schmidt said he would get quotes for this work for the next meeting. Board members commented on wanting to see more planter pots in the downtown corridor. It was suggested that many businesses do not maintain the planters and some pots have gone missing. Charlie Bush suggested an “adopt a pot” program.

Other Business

Sara Redman asked if a budget report could be provided at the next meeting. Staff said it would be provided.

Scott Keys inquired as to what the DDA Board can do to generate more revenue for the DDA. Neal Bishop commented there is a need for more economic development activities. Discussion followed.

It was moved by Sara Redman and seconded by Scott Keys to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 a.m. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Kady