

MEETING MINUTES
Berkley Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, June 8, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:03 AM with Chair Alan Semonian presiding.

II. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:

Present: Kathy Abrahamian
Matthew Baumgarten
Bridget Dean
Diane Farrington
Ross Gavin
Alanda Knox
Karen Koerber
Keith Logsdon
Matteo Passalacqua
Alan Semonian

Absent: Lawrence Gallagher – *excused*
Rob Onesko – *excused*
Margie Simmons – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Keith Koppmeier, Berkley resident
Dottie Popp, Planning Commission Liaison

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: On motion by Abrahamian and second by Farrington, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of May 11, 2016: On motion by Gavin and second by Logsdon, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE: Semonian welcomed the new City Manager, Matthew Baumgarten, who said he was excited to join the City and the DDA Board. He said in his experience, it's one of the more exciting Boards to be a on and help put some tracks to the city's vision. He's looking forward to working with the group.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS:

A. City Council Liaison: Baker also welcomed Baumgarten and noted his great DDA experience.

Baker announced that David Sabuda had retired from his position as Finance Director and a search for his replacement is ongoing. In the meantime the city is working with the auditors, Plante & Moran, to cover his responsibilities. Baker said the city was grateful for Sabuda's focus and discipline. Logsdon added that before he came to the position, the DDA's finances were a mess, not that they were poorly managed, but that he kept the Board informed about their finances and raised that aspect to a whole new level.

Baker said it is part of the DPW's plans to resurface and repaint Coolidge this fiscal year, in part to make it safer and friendlier to pedestrians and drivers alike.

The Regional Transit Authority recently released their master plan for the four-county area (rtamichigan.org). The master plan talks about a coordinated, regional, rapid, and reliable system with primary lines running from Detroit up to Pontiac along Woodward, from Detroit to Mt. Clemens

along Gratiot, and from Detroit to Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor with express rail to Metro Airport, in addition to east-west community connector lines (such as 12 Mile Road) between them.

In an effort to garner community input, they would be holding an informational open house at the Berkley Community Center on June 22 from 4:30-7:30 PM.

B. Planning Commission Liaison: Popp reported that the Commission's last meeting was rather short, with discussion of form-based codes and introducing it to the public. They need to be stricter in that discussion. They are also discussing ways to regulate, if possible, tourist homes in Berkley.

C. Chamber of Commerce Liaison: Semonian reported that the annual Art Bash will be held Saturday, June 11, on 12 Mile Road. Passalacqua asked if there's any plan to extend the art fair all the way to the 12/Coolidge intersection, and Semonian said it is about a block longer going east this year, but access to some businesses closer to 12 Mile with no alley access would cause problems if the art fair got much closer to Coolidge.

Dean announced two events she's involved in (Have You Any Wool?): World Wide Knit in Public Day, June 18 and the I-75 Yarn Crawl from Kentucky to Michigan, August 9 through 14. She will have flyers on Art Bash Saturday. One of the activities during the Yarn Crawl will be a "yarn bombing."

D. Beautification Advisory Committee: Absent – no report.

VIII. New Business:

A. Committees for 2016/17 (Priorities)

1. DDA Manager – Semonian noted that the DDA Manager position is a 2016/17 budget priority, with marketing Berkley a primary duty. Ferndale's mayor noted in a conversation with him that a DDA manager is a necessary step in moving DDA priorities forward and a requirement to join the Oakland County Main Street program. Berkley's new City Manager, Baumgarten, is very pro-DDA. Semonian noted that a DDA Manager can work actively to seek out businesses to relocate or open here, and recruit a wider variety. Baker has been working with a group of merchants on the west side of 12 Mile, and notably Deb Kobayashi, owner of Articipate, not technically considered part of the downtown, to get their input on how to improve their part of the business district.

Logsdon also noted that the DDA would like to recruit more retail businesses for the downtown area. Baumgarten served as Lathrup Village's DDA Director for five years and hired several DDA Managers, and so he has a great deal of experience in that position, as well as most recently serving as the village's City Manager. Passalacqua, who's a Berkley resident, noted that most of the "action" downtown in the evening is at the bars and restaurants. Dean agreed and said that she has adjusted the hours of her business so that she can be open later for customers, and Thursday is the best for her later hours. Knox added that she's also open until 8:00 on Thursdays and on most other nights until 7:00 PM.

Logsdon suggested that MML might also help the DDA with their manager search. Baker said there would be some fee associated with that and also that he was willing to help make the connection with them. Popp stressed that when Coolidge is repainted, the merchants would love to see a crosswalk for pedestrians in the area between the traffic signals at Catalpa and Wiltshire. Those Coolidge merchants have attempted to restart their "Coolidge Collection" without a lot of success.

Semonian asked for volunteers to serve on the DDA Manager search committee. He and Baumgarten were the first, and Dean, Koerber, Abrahamian, Passalacqua, and Farrington also expressed interest. Semonian asked all Board members to e-mail him their ideas even if they don't want to join the search committee. Logsdon has notes from the two prior times the DDA hired managers.

Koerber noted that the Board has changed since those two tries, has “grown up,” so to speak, and become more organized and focused. Logsdon, who serves on the Berkley School Board, suggested the DDA emulate the way they run where they give the managers directions and provide vision, and then let them do their jobs. Baker noted that’s how City Council operates as well.

2. Coolidge Action Task Force – Semonian appointed Logsdon and Gavin to the Coolidge Action Task Force and will advise Blanchard, the chair of the task force.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Robina/12 Mile Project: Traffic Study Test – A meeting was held with HRC, Baumgarten, Vansen, Public Safety, and Derrick Schueller to discuss the test in more detail. Baumgarten noted it wasn’t a decision making meeting but to get all departments on the same page. He said HRC needs to provide more line item details about what their \$22,000 quote would cover and also where the test will be done and for how long. Reports are supposed to be included. Signage is not. Baumgarten said HRC is planning for a 30-day test, but Logsdon suggested that may not be long enough. He also suggested that the fee should cover everything with no add-ons. He asked also that someone from the DDA Board be included in any future meetings.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

B. Maintenance/Beautification Committee – Farrington said the flowers are all in on 12 Mile and look good. There’s more color and height. Semonian said next year they’ll try their pilot program of putting hanging baskets on Coolidge. It’s too late to try for this year.

C. Promotions Committee: No report.

D. Budget/Finance: Margie Simmons/David Sabuda – No report.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 AM on motion by Farrington and second by Koerber.