

MEETING MINUTES
Berkley Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, August 10, 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: Matthew Baumgarten
Diane Farrington
Lawrence Gallagher
Alanda Knox
Karen Koerber
Rob Onesko
Matteo Passalacqua
Alan Semonian
Margie Simmons (8:11)

Absent: Kathy Abrahamian
Bridget Dean – *excused*
Ross Gavin – *excused*
Keith Logsdon – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Doug Deeds, Environmental Advisory Committee
Brian Camiller, Plante Moran
Doug Penney (resident)
Dottie Popp, Planning Commission Liaison

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of July 13, 2016: On motion by Gallagher and second by Farrington, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Deeds reported that the garden volunteers will be planting the area near the 12 and Coolidge left turn lane, similar to what's been done on Woodward in Birmingham. They also will be refurbishing the planting at the 12 Mile and Woodward bus stop and making a new planting at the "Welcome" sign area near the cemetery. There is no irrigation there but they're planting drought tolerant perennials.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE: No report.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS:

A. City Council Liaison: Baker reported that the committee deciding if the RTA proposal would be put on the November ballot finally agreed at the last minute to allow voters to decide the issue (with urging from leaders in the three counties and Detroit). Baker acknowledged that there were some good suggestions from Hackel and Patterson that were adopted. There were over fifty signers on a letter to Patterson requesting his support of the measure. The entire Berkley City Council signed on to that.

A SEMCOG Task Force released its Michigan crash statistics which showed that, among other types of accidents involving automobiles, 55% of bike fatalities and serious injuries occurred within or adjacent to an intersection and less than 3% of bike accidents occurred in a bike lane (demonstrating the safety bonus from bike lanes), and more than 65% of pedestrian fatalities happened when the pedestrian was in the roadway and not in a designated crosswalk. He thinks these statistics will be useful to the Coolidge Action Task Force as they work to make Coolidge safer and more inviting.

A third meeting of the West Twelve Mile merchants will be held Thursday morning, August 11. Knox, Baker, and Baumgarten expect to attend. Knox reported that a lot of great ideas came out of their last meeting including having outdoor movies in downtown parking lots (moving around the downtown) and holding outdoor jazz concerts. The venues would change regularly. Knox had checked on the cost of putting on an outdoor movie and got a quote of \$1,200. Koerber suggested she contact Parks & Recreation because they hold outdoor movie screenings as part of their Summerfest.

B. Planning Commission Liaison: Popp reported that the Commission had a full house at their last meeting on July 26. The Commission approved a site plan change for Michigan Graphics to upgrade their façade. Present and future residential districts were a concern for citizens who attended the meeting. The Commission will hold an open meeting with residents on August 23 at the Community Center. Farrington said she was approached to sign a petition about rescinding the proposed amendment to the Master Plan about form-based codes (from August 2015) that angered so many residents in June and July. Supposedly, they have gathered 2,000 signatures on the petition. Popp said that it was just a “proposed” change, and that miscommunication was partially responsible for the angry response of so many residents.

Koerber noted that once explained, people should realize that the proposed zoning changes would have no immediate impact. The current problem is more about education and communication. People are concerned about the city losing its “character.” Passalacqua described it as a situation where communication is difficult until people are on the same level, such as him talking to an engineer about cars. Popp said concerned citizens just want to keep Berkley a community of single family homes. Semonian wondered if they are afraid of Section 8 housing being built. Baker noted that when emotions are high, the intellectual part of the brain are suppressed and can’t get to work until the emotions are calmed.

C. Chamber of Commerce Liaison: Semonian reported that Cruise Fest will be held on Friday, August 19, and the Pub Crawl on Thursday, August 25.

D. Beautification Advisory Committee: Deeds reported that the community garden on Coolidge is doing quite well, and the mural on the wall next to the garden will be painted around the end of August. His group will soon be expanding the Library plantings, and is asking the DDA for a donation for the work they are doing and will be doing next year. He has five high school students who’ve volunteered to work with him now. The School Board is going to give him a new greenhouse at the high school.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: None.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Robina/12 Mile Project: Traffic Study Test – Baumgarten reported that City Council will be voting on temporary closure of Robina (north and south) at their next meeting August 15. They’re awaiting more information from HRC which is expected in advance of the Council meeting. The closure is expected to start mid-September and last at least 30 days. At that time a determination will be made on whether to keep it closed, with signage explaining what’s going on. Semonian asked about activities planned for the space, and Knox suggested the previously discussed outdoor movie or jazz concert.

Passalacqua noted that at the current pace of projects moving forward, he could envision the concrete barriers being in place for two years, not a pleasing environment. Baumgarten noted that other than Bridget Dean he’s had no input from the business people on Robina. He also noted that on the south side of Robina there are logistical issues with PNC’s parking lot and drive-through. Baker stressed that the space be esthetically pleasing. Koerber suggested the merchants there hold outdoor sales or mini-marts. Passalacqua proposed a monthly theme and suggested looking back at the comments from the public about what they’d like to see in the space when the concept was

presented at Art Bash two years ago. Baker suggested using the Web site and the marquee to solicit ideas from the community. Baumgarten said Parks & Recreation already has some events planned there when the road is temporarily closed.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. DDA Manager Search Committee – The Search Committee set up a meeting to go over the draft of the job description Baumgarten prepared and passed out at the meeting. The job will be posted as soon as they finalize that and advertised through September 23. Applications will be reviewed through September 30, first round interviews October 3 through 7, and call backs after that, a six-week timeline. He would like to interview finalists for the position at the DDA Board meeting on October 12. Passalacqua asked about compensation, and Baumgarten said \$50,000.00 is budgeted for fiscal year 2016/17. Baker suggested researching what the market is paying. As far as an office location is concerned, Baumgarten said a space in City Hall would not be good. Popp said there is space available a block from her on Coolidge. Passalacqua noted that once a candidate is hired, he or she may have a good idea where to locate. No money is in the budget to pay for an office space. Sharing space with the Chamber would reduce the expense, and Semonian says that they have more money now to spend on something like that and have no regular space either. He said he would bring it up to them. The Committee set up a meeting to finalize the position outline.

B. Coolidge Action Task Force – Absent – no report.

C. Maintenance/Beautification Committee – No report.

D. Promotions Committee: A joint meeting of Maintenance/Beautification and Promotions is scheduled for August 22. The focus will be on advertising, the West Twelve Mile activities, and Robina events. Farrington reported that the donation to the last Ladies Night Out was well spent.

E. Budget/Finance: Margie Simmons – Brian Camiller of Plante Moran reported on the finance director work his firm is doing for Berkley, what they call the “gap team.” Plante Moran has gap teams in 18 cities, temporarily and also permanently. He reported figures for the fiscal year ending June 30, pending the audit. The starting balance for both funds was \$257,000, revenues were \$291,000 (including State reimbursement of personal property tax), and expenditures totaled \$304,000, with an ending balance of \$247,000. He noted much of the fiscal year expenditure was for one-time expenses.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 AM on motion by Farrington and second by Koerber.