



**BERKLEY
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Wednesday, March 8, 2017
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room**

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM with Chair Alan Semonian presiding.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Matthew Baumgarten
Lawrence Gallagher
Ross Gavin
Alanda Knox
Karen Koerber
Rob Onesko (8:13)
Matteo Passalacqua
Alan Semonian

Absent: Kathy Abrahamian
Bridget Dean – *excused*
Diane Farrington – *excused*

Also present: Vivian Carmody, Berkley DDA Director
RoseAnn Nicolai, Chamber of Commerce Liaison/Nicolai Events
Doug Penney, Resident
Dottie Popp, Planning Commission Liaison

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of February 8, 2017: On motion by Gavin and second by Baumgarten, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT: Carmody noted there is no official Treasurer's report for this month but she expects a full report next month. The agenda shows the goals going forward.

VI. ACTION ITEMS:

A. 2017/18 DDA Proposed Budget: Budget spreadsheets were included in the packets e-mailed to the Board prior to the meeting. Semonian noted that packets of information will be e-mailed to the Board in the future with details regarding agenda items.

The Budget Committee had met, reviewed the budget presented by Carmody and was recommending the budget as presented for fiscal year 2017/18. Carmody noted that the two funds, 814 and 815, would be combined for all intents and purposes, and it is legal to do so. She highlighted important components of the proposed budget, and how it would split out to work within committees going forward: Operations/Organizational and Administrative; Marketing and Promotions Committee (with Special Events and Marketing under this group), Design Committee (covering Streetscape and Design), and Business Development Committee. She said they would be looking for event sponsors to offset the cost to the DDA for events such as Hometown Holidays. With her Main Street background, she would hope that events would support themselves rather than be money-losers.

Also included under "Events" is a line item for "Placemaking Programming." Carmody noted that the Robina Plaza project has been temporarily put on hold and in its place supporting programming such

as working with Parks and Rec that supported the plaza concept but that would be spread around different downtown venues. This might include taking some parking spaces and turning them into pedestrian spaces, low cost or no cost activities

To show that the DDA is investing back into the community, a Façade Grant program is included in the Streetscape and Design category: \$4,000 for the current fiscal year and \$20,000 for both fiscal years 2017/18 and 2018/19. An application for the grant is being developed. A Design Guideline program is also being developed working with the Planning Commission that will help determine what a business owner can/should do to enhance business property, such as signs, setbacks, and the like. Historic lighting and hanging flowers baskets will be installed on Coolidge from Catalpa to Edgewood to mark it as a special district. Koerber expressed some disappointment that the part of Coolidge south of Catalpa was not included in this beautification, but Semonian stressed that Coolidge expenditures are for the most part the focus of this budget, and Carmody added that there was only a certain amount of money available for beautification as a whole. The hanging baskets in this pilot project can be reused and there will be money for more pots to be purchased in the future. There is a new line item for Public Art, that is adding one or two signature murals per year on the walls of businesses; \$5,000 is budgeted for 2017/18 and \$7,500 for 2018/19.

Under the category of expenditures for Business Development, \$26,600 is budgeted for the current fiscal year and \$8699 in fiscal years 2017/18 and 2018/19. Included in this category are line items for Market Analysis, Business Support/Training, Business Recruitment, Quarterly Merchant Meetings, and Business Database. Included in the packet mailed to the Board is a proposal from MJB Consulting for a market analysis. The proposal was prepared by its president, Michael J. Berne, described by Carmody as one of the top retail marketing people in North America. In the category of Business Support and Training, \$3,000 is budgeted for 2017/18 and 2018/19. Carmody's plan is to bring in a retail consultant to work one-on-one with a few business owners to enhance and grow their businesses.

There is \$5,000 budgeted for 2017/18 (and 2018/19) for Business Recruitment to be done after the market analysis results. For quarterly merchant meetings, \$400 is budgeted each year for 2017/18 and 2018/19. This will give business owners (and property owners) an opportunity to get together and discuss issues relevant to them. A comprehensive business database one-time cost of \$1,500 is budgeted for the current fiscal year.

The combined fund balance for fiscal year 2016/17 is \$276,626. For fiscal year 2017/18 anticipated revenues are \$286,000 with expenditures of \$375,000. Gavin noted that taxing jurisdictions, if they were to do a review, would have questions about why the fund balance is so high. The fund balances need to be tapped now that they are healthy. Semonian added that one of the reasons was the anticipation of hiring a full time DDA Director and having more projects, a goal for several years. Everything in the upcoming budget is to help Berkley businesses in the DDA district.

Passalacqua asked (and suggested) if design guidelines would be developed before the wayfinding process is begun because it would seem logical to have them in place, and Carmody noted that she hoped design guidelines will be developed by at least late summer. Then the wayfinding study should be completed and the design guidelines can be applied to the visual aspects while locations are determined. She believes that they should be able to get grant funding for about \$100,000 for the wayfinding itself. Little "parklets" along 12 Mile would be visually attractive and low cost. She would also like to utilize the grassy space next to Clarks. Semonian noted that rather than DDA projects in the past, which businesses didn't necessarily embrace, with this budget the DDA is moving towards doing things that bring positive PR and actually help the businesses.

Koerber asked what would happen if they didn't get the \$100,000 in grant money to support wayfinding, and Carmody responded that wayfinding is one of the most popular things receiving grant money, and there are state, local, and federal funds available.

Gallagher moved to adopt the budget as presented, Koerber seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Board Strategic Planning Session Proposal: RFP's were sent out to several firms and a response was received from the Lakota Group, whose information was included in the packet sent to the Board. Carmody was proposing to hire the planning company to facilitate a two-part Strategic Planning Session for the Board on 3/31 (with Council) and 4/1 (Friday night and Saturday morning). The cost for the site visit and planning session is \$2,750. Semonian said he would be out of town for that weekend, and Carmody said she would try to get a couple of other dates from Nick that Semonian could attend. Information on the Lakota Group was included in the packet sent to the Board. Carmody noted that the goal would be to take some of the strategies that come out of the sessions and implement them with annual work plans. She hopes strategic planning becomes an annual activity.

Baumgarten moved to accept the proposal from the Lakota Group to facilitate the planning session, with dates to be determined, and Onesko seconded. Passalacqua asked about their experience in Michigan, and Carmody said they had done a lot of work in Oakland County and the Main Street program. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Carmody had included a copy of the DDA bylaws in the meeting packet and noted that she is working on draft revisions, which would be helpful prior to the strategic planning sessions.

C. Market Analysis Proposal: Discussed previously in Section VI.A. The market analysis will help the DDA target the kinds of businesses to recruit and help determine the target market. MJB is offering a significant discount on their services because of their relationship with Carmody Consulting. Baumgarten noted that because the firm chosen for the market analysis, MJB, is a unique service provider offering a significant discount of almost 25%, there would be no strategic benefit of putting a proposal out to bid. Carmody suggested an early April date for their study. Passalacqua suggested looking closely at what is happening with Beaumont at 13 Mile and Woodward, and Semonian noted studying the competition of Birmingham and Somerset Mall.

Knox moved to approve the market analysis proposal from MJB, Passalacqua seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

D. Frank's Landscaping Proposals: Carmody had talked personally with Frank and was able to get a favorable discount on the enhanced plantings on 12 Mile with dragon wing begonias as well as the addition of hanging baskets on Coolidge. The cost for that will be @\$17,000, in addition to their continued summer maintenance at a cost of @\$11,000. Carmody said they'll be getting some form of attribution for their work.

Knox moved to accept the proposals from Frank's Landscaping, Gavin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Promotions: Nicolai reported that they created a new Instagram account and the full page C&G newspaper ad featuring weddings and the Berkley connection was running that weekend. The first Ladies Night Out will take place on March 30. The DDA's new branding has been changed to "Downtown Berkley." The Ladies Night Out ad will have some co-op advertising, which cuts the cost to the DDA for advertising, and digital advertising is also being tried.

B. Design/Beautification/Coolidge Action Task Force: The Coolidge Action Task Force was scheduled to meet the following week.

C. Business Development: No report.

D. Organization: No additional report.

VIII. STAFF AND COMMUNITY REPORTS:

A. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Carmody expressed the need to find a small space for her DDA office and asked all to let her know about anything they're aware of.

She demonstrated the new DDA Web site she put together, which is still a work in progress. The site is searchable by several different categories. There is a link to the DDA site on the city's web site. There are links to the Berkley businesses, and each has its own individual page with contact information and a link to its web site. There will also be a section for Business Resources that will include such things as information about the Façade Grant program.

She will be paying the current owner of the URL Downtown Berkley \$500.00 to transfer ownership of that over to the DDA.

She asked Board members to each send her a biographical blurb about themselves. All that's listed now are their names.

B. CITY COUNCIL: Baker was out of town but e-mailed his report to Semonian to read. Council met on Monday the 6th. Among other topics, they discussed how to ensure temporary sidewalk closures due to construction activity were safe, and the notion of owning backyard chicken hens as pets. For both topics, they agreed to have work sessions at some point in the future, so they could thoroughly discuss the intentions, implications, and intangibles of these decisions and craft ordinances that best fit Berkley's needs.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION: Popp reported that their February 28 meeting was short and dealt with the revised land use amendment, which was adopted. The Commission was scheduled for a work session the following week. Baumgarten said the work session has been called to discuss the proposed layout for the LaSalette school property with townhouses and an apartment complex, retaining the school building itself. Apartment parking is planned for the first floor, underneath the apartments themselves.

D. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: Nicolai reported that the next Chamber Chat would be held at Yad Ezra on March 17. Time is running out for artists to apply for the June Art Bash. The Art Fest is still being planned for July 15.

IX. BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS: None.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 AM on motion by Koerber and second by Knox.