

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.
- II. **ROLL CALL:**
Present: Andrew Agbay
Matthew Baumgarten
Donna Dirkse
Jennifer Finney
Scott Francis
Maggie Gable
Andy Gilbert
Eli Hurwitz
Mitchell Moses
Matteo Passalacqua
Razur Rahman
Wayne Wudyka

Absent: Petro Drakopoulos
Chris Gross – *excused*
Brian Zifkin – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Nicole Miller, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
- III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** On motion by Francis and second by Moses, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.
- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
A. Regular meeting of December 11, 2019: On motion by Dirkse and second by Baumgarten, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.
- V. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**
Moses reported that he hadn't received a financial statement from Mark Pollock, City Finance Director, and so had nothing to report. Pollock will be advised that Moses should get the statement a week before the DDA's scheduled Board meeting.
- VI. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**
A. Update on Interim Executive Director and Update on Permanent Executive Director Search
There was discussion about a Naples, Florida resident who was planning to relocate to the metro Detroit area and was referred to Gilbert by an acquaintance who suggested she might be a good fit for the interim or permanent Executive Director position. Gilbert said he would forward her resume to the Organization Committee. Baumgarten reported that in committee, the 10 hours proposed by the Interim Director candidate didn't seem like adequate coverage for the DDA's current needs. He also reported that the City would be open to hiring the Executive Director as a City employee with benefits, who would serve at the direction of the DDA Board and would be paid from the DDA budget, including benefits. The salary range suggested is \$75,000 (which would include regular City employee benefits).

In order to move forward expeditiously, the advertisement for the position needs to be revised with the updated salary and to show the city employee status. Gilbert said once that's done he can get it to MSOC who can then post it. Passalacqua wondered if the DDA could offer a bonus if the Director surpasses expectations, and Baumgarten thought not because that's not offered to other City employees under the collective bargaining agreement, but that the salary could be upgraded over time to keep up with accomplishments. Ultimately, if the 501c3 becomes the employer, bonuses could be paid and other incentives offered.

Even as a City employee, the Director would report to the DDA Board and serve at their direction.

The next step is to upgrade the job description, prepare the employment offer packet, and advertise the job description as many places as available.

B. Renewal of Social Media Contract with CMF

The contract with Catalyst Media Factory (CMF) has expired and they are offering to renew at the same cost as 2019. Finney noted that they go above and beyond what the contract outlines, helping also with marketing, writing press releases, and helping with the Fox2 news segments, and Finney recommended renewing the contract.

Dirkse moved to approve the social media contract with CMF, Moses seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. Update on Berkley Local Pod Cast

Gilbert reported that Pod Cast participants have been confirmed for the first four months of the year and there's interested participants programmed for the rest of the year. Berkley Eyewear and Atomic Dog have been taped for the one of the first segments. The Chamber and DDA need to promote the podcasts. The number of times they're streamed can be counted. Rahman urged getting west end of 12 Mile businesses signed up but was reminded that participants need to be Chamber members as well as being in the DDA district. When scheduling, Gilbert has tried to keep the number of 12 Mile versus Coolidge businesses approximately equal. There's a podcast promotion being aired on Facebook Live on January 8 from 3:00 to 4:00.

D. Frank's Summer Maintenance Contract

A copy of the proposed renewal of the contract (from August 2019) had been e-mailed as a reminder to the Board. Baumgarten said the regular maintenance was fine but getting Frank's to come out for individual issues that arise, such as weeds and trash in the parking lot area behind 12 Mile businesses, had sometimes been a concern (a current issue that may be outside their window of service).

Passalacqua moved to approve the contract extension, Agbay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. Student Board Member Updates:

Hurwitz reported that he and Gable were working to find their replacements when they graduate (2020) and would like more direction from the Board on what structure and expectations they have for them and their replacements (who could attend a Board meeting while Gable and Hurwitz are still student members). Passalacqua suggested they write down their own ideas and submit it to the Board for review. Gilbert would like their input on landscape design in the development of the new high school parking area on Coolidge and how to integrate with the BP gas station's proposed design upgrades (mural and façade improvements). Hurwitz said they'd be open to sitting in on certain committee meetings, such as marketing and design.

Passalacqua suggested they could undertake a “capstone project” related to a specific Berkley district issue. Wudyka suggested a scholarship funded by the DDA or a donation to the school as a reward for their participation. Hurwitz and Gable will brainstorm with input from the Board and bring ideas back to the next meeting.

Both had worked on graphics for the original Coolidge crosswalk project. There is sentiment to re-start the crosswalk initiative, especially since the lane reduction eliminates some issues that existed prior such as cars moving around traffic stopped in front of them. Cost of upgrading to larger or overhead signals is being investigated, and Baker and Miller spoke about finding old e-mail communication from Cheryl Gregory, DDA Traffic Consultant, that discussed those costs. Rahman suggested MSOC might be of assistance, and Baker suggested visiting other communities’ crosswalk installations for ideas. Passalacqua said he would like to get involved in moving forward. Gilbert said that pedestrians are going to cross Coolidge regardless of whether the crosswalks are there or not, and with the investment the DDA’s already made, it seems a shame not to move forward.

VIII. Standing Committee Updates

A. Business Development Committee:

Moses reported they’ve been working on a flowchart for new businesses as well as the community investment initiative.

Design Committee: Matteo Passalacqua

Passalacqua reported the Tootie and Tallulah’s mural is finished, paid for, and looks great. The committee has been discussing design issues with the section of Coolidge from Catalpa to Lock City and how it currently is a “sea of concrete.” He suggested that the School District and DDA Design Committee work together to establish what the new parking lot design and landscaping will be to better coordinate with the BP station’s plans for a mural and façade improvements.

Baumgarten noted that the Downtown Master Plan included ideas about that area of Coolidge. Regarding Design Guidelines previously adopted, Passalacqua said he didn’t see the need for a Design Committee to be created to review projects and make recommendations to the City and Planning Commission, but rather have the new DDA Executive Director work with the City’s Economic Development professional to develop a joint recommendation to present to the City and Planning Commission.

B. Marketing and Promotions: Jennifer Finney

Finney reported that MerriMonth activities, even with scaling back, were pretty successful, including the chamber concert at the Methodist Church, which they hope to repeat in 2020. Shopping Night volume was down, but Ugly Sweater, Santa at the Library, and Small Business Saturday attendance were up.

Instead of Art and About, Marketing is planning an evening market event for a night in May and a night in September. They’re also planning two Berkley Nights Out, tentatively in June and August. In order to build better crowds for shopping events, they are considering holding an event on 12 Mile with Coolidge business pop-ups and another on Coolidge with 12 Mile pop-ups. They also plan an open meeting at Berkley Common on Feb. 25 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM with business owners and then residents giving their input to the businesses. A survey for those who can’t make the meeting will also be available. Twelve Mile construction in the summer of 2020 will pose challenges. They’re working on recruiting volunteers for 2020 MerriMonth.

Organization Committee: Scott Francis

Francis noted there was nothing additional to Director search activity to report.

IX. Staff & Community Updates:

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported Council received the Annual Report from the Library. Both cannabis ordinances (zoning and licensing) were approved, and Council's now working on the points scoring metric. The Vinsetta Garage parking issues are a continuing discussion. Council also passed a snow emergency ordinance, are discussing a review board for the ethics code, and issues with wireless poles (there is little local control now).

B. Planning Commission – Matt Trotto: Absent – no report.

C. Citizens Engagement Advisory Committee – Absent – no report.

D. Chamber of Commerce – Nicole Miller

Miller reported the Chamber will offer a mid-day professional meet up at Bagger Dave's on the second Tuesday of each month from 11:30-1:00. They are offering another session of Berkley U on January 31 8:00-9:30 at the Library. Gift certificates will be available for a few more months, but they need a 6-months sponsor for \$600.

X. Board of Directors Comments:

Baumgarten reported that the Wayfinding informational packet from Corbin Design was sent to DPW and Parks & Rec. He would like to send it out for bid in hopes of Spring/Summer installation.

XI. Public Comments: None.

XII. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 AM on motion by Passalacqua and second by Baumgarten.