

**MEETING MINUTES  
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Wednesday, July 13, 2022, 8:30 AM  
Berkley Public Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Conference Room**



**I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.

**II. ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Matthew Baumgarten  
Erin Brick  
Donna Dirkse  
Scott Francis  
Andy Gilbert  
Chris Gross  
Jenna Hance  
Matteo Passalacqua  
Ashley Poirier  
Brian Zifkin

*Absent:* Tim Barnes  
Garrett Wyatt

*Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison  
Ric Chalmers, DPW Assistant Director  
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director  
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison  
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director  
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** On motion by Poirier and second by Gross, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting of June 8, 2022**

On motion by Zifkin and second by Gross, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

**V. LIAISON REPORTS**

**A. City Council – Steve Baker**

Baker reported that at Council's 6/20 meeting, citizen comments took up close to an hour before Council started official business. He thanked everyone who worked hard to make the first Pride festival a success. At their July meeting the previous Monday, they approved two cannabis business licenses as well as supporting Dream Cruise merchandise sales and approved the County Oakland Irish Fest on Sept. 9. Also approved was the Trick or Treat Stroll and Monster Mash events in October.

**B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner**

Kempner reported that at their last meeting, they approved a third cannabis business for 11 Mile that had corrected previous parking problems the Commission identified and sent the application on to City Council for their approval. They also reviewed the 12 Mile row house plans and recommended

that the new Coolidge brew pub developers get special use approval for outdoor dining adjacent to their building. They will hold elections at their next meeting.

**C. Community Development – Megan Masson-Minock and Kristen Kapelanski**

New Community Development Director Kapelanski reported the new brew pub developers will be seeking Council approval for their outdoor seating plan at the 7/18 meeting.

**D. Public Works – Shawn Young and Ric Chalmers**

Baumgarten welcomed Kapelanski and Ric Chalmers, who introduced himself and noted he has been with Public Works for many years.

**E. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad**

Murad reported that they need volunteers for the July 16 Art Fest on Coolidge as well as Cruise Fest. He noted that in May Berkley will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> year since becoming a village. As part of those festivities, they're partnering with the Historical Commission to identify "kit" homes in the city and organize a tour. Berkley has the second highest number of existing kit homes.

**VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Gross reported \$17,000 in revenue and \$16,000 in expenditures for the month. Expenditures included events costs (tents and tent weights), marketing (Pride T-shirts), the flower basket program, murals, public improvements, and large planters. Revenues came from Pride sponsorships and T-shirt sales and reimbursement for the Plaza. The ending balance was \$308,000, which she reported is on track with predictions.

Brick moved to receive and accept the Treasurer's report, Hance seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**VII. ACTION ITEMS:**

**A. Michigan Graphics & Awards Façade Grant Application**

McGuinness included a graphic of the deteriorating wood on the façade of the building, which will be removed to expose the brick underneath, which will be painted. He noted this improvement should be the beginning of several planned for the building. They've also discussed having a mural painted on the side of the building. The owners are asking for an award of \$4,300.00, which the Art & Design Committee is recommending be approved.

Brick moved to approve Michigan Graphics & Awards Façade Grant Application in the amount of \$4,300.00, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**B. Sum Girls Boutique Mural Program Application**

McGuinness submitted renderings of the proposed mural at Sum Girls Boutique, 3015 Twelve Mile, to the Board for their review. The proposed mural will be painted on the rear wall of their building, which forms a sort of "courtyard" with their neighboring business, The Artsy Umbrella, and is anticipated to serve as a backdrop for visitors' photos. The earlier mural painted on the wall has deteriorated and needs to be covered. The application requests a DDA contribution of \$5,000.00 to the cost of the mural, which would use up a third of the DDA's budgeted total for this line item. The Art & Design Committee is recommending moving forward with the concept.

Passalacqua moved to approve Sum Girls Boutique Mural Program Application with DDA support in the amount of \$3,000.00, Brick seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**C. Consideration of Social Media Strategic Changes**

Included in the information packet sent to the Board prior to the meeting was a note from Director McGuinness to consider options for strengthening the DDA's social media communications presence and ability to respond more quickly and fully to outside communication. Catalyst Media, whose current contract with the DDA is expiring, currently provides social media and media relations

services to the Board. The Marketing Strategies and Events Committees have stressed the need for an enhanced social media presence and urged designating or hiring a dedicated social media manager. The DDA's current expenditure for Catalyst's social media services is \$600.00 per month.

Brick noted that as a volunteer, Poirier has done an "amazing job" but an actual "engager" is what's needed to expand the DDA's presence in this area. She praised Catalyst's work with public relations but said they lack the engagement their committees believe is needed to move forward. Brick recommended hiring Poirier as a contract employee to take on the job of social media manager, creating content and responding to outside contacts from businesses and residents. Gilbert and Baumgarten agreed that there didn't appear to be any conflict of interest hiring Poirier's business to be paid for those responsibilities. She would of course abstain from voting on any issues affecting her position as owner of Rad Hatter Marketing.

Zifkin moved to have Rad Hatter submit a quotation to provide social media services to the Downtown Development Authority, Gross seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **D. Board of Directors Committee Assignments for the Year**

McGuinness noted that the Organization Committee suggested as a best practice Board members identify on which of the standing committees they wish to serve each year, and July seems an optimum time to do so. Most committees have flexible meeting times.

McGuinness had set up large boards with the six committee names listed where Board members could sign up. Committees are currently: Art & Design, Business Development, Downtown Events, Marketing Strategies, Organization, and West 12 Mile. Only Board members can serve on the Organization Committee.

This agenda item does not require a Board vote.

### **VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **A. Berkley Art Bash, Berkley Street Art Fest Activities**

McGuinness included in the Board's packet a letter he had received from the Berkley Chamber of Commerce thanking the DDA for their support for both events.

#### **B. Berkley Pride Block Party Success, News Coverage**

McGuinness reported the block party had gotten extensive news coverage before, during, and after the event, and it was well supported in the community, a tremendous success. McGuinness wanted to especially thank Board member Poirier, who was event chair, and all the volunteers who contributed their efforts.

Poirier noted the event had generated a large following, which she has turned into a volunteer recruitment list based on feedback and can use for future Pride events as well as others in the downtown (more than 40 volunteer sign-ups).

#### **C. Robina Public Space Design Concepts Review**

McGuinness included in the Board packets design concepts for the space that the PEA Group generated, and he asked Board members to review and comment on them. Passalacqua had met with PEA representatives on site. Three preliminary concepts based on agreed-upon themes were presented. All three concepts include expansion of the east curb of Robina, eliminating parking on that side (one or two spaces). Extensive parking is still available behind the 12 Mile businesses and on 12 Mile itself. They hope to maintain the existing trees for the shade provided. The surface will be stamped concrete, not brick.

After feedback from the Board (requested within a week or so), PEA's next step is to provide detailed 3-D renderings of the favored concept, and Passalacqua noted the plan is to adopt a design

that is replicable at similar gathering spaces around the city. Low maintenance plantings are preferred.

Poirier reminded everyone that “retro” is the downtown’s tag line. She also noted getting comments on social media about the appearance of the blockades next to Berkley Common, and Gross (owner) and Baumgarten responded the restaurant has to comply with Road Commission standards, and at the current time, Gross doesn’t know how long they will be able to use that road space for dining. If the time is extended, they are willing to consider a public/business partnership to invest to make the space and barriers more attractive.

**D. Downtown Design Guidelines Progress**

Kapelanski reported no current movement on the Guidelines because of the cannabis business applications taking priority. She did note that some amendments may be sent forward prior to tackling ordinance changes.

**E. Downtown Master Plan Formal Adoption Progress**

Baumgarten reported that there have been conversations with the Lakota Group about the plan, which predates the current Director, and it’s been determined that the current parking study is outdated and a new one is needed. The cost for that will be shared between the DDA and the City.

**F. Coolidge Crosswalks Activation, Enhancements Progress**

McGuinness reported he’s reached out to the City’s engineering firm to get their opinion about the proposed direction and also the DPW about acquiring the materials needed to implement the plan (bollards, etc.). He apologized for the delay in implementation and couldn’t give a timeline for when the crosswalks would be functional again.

**G. Public Space at Coolidge and Catalpa Progress, Naming Determination**

McGuinness reported a good response from Board members regarding naming the space, and top choices were Art Space as the favorite and Berkley Terrace as second choice. When the three stakeholder representatives meet, they’ll have a final vote between the two.

**H. Main Street Reaccreditation Presentation at Berkley City Council July 18 at 7 PM**

McGuinness reported Main Street will present Berkley its Main Street reaccreditation at their 7/18/22 City Council meeting.

**I. Economic Vitality Session with Oakland County July 22 at 9 AM**

McGuinness reported Main Street Oakland County identified Berkley to receive economic vitality resources, a needs and current viability assessment group meeting. A location hadn’t as yet been confirmed for the meeting, but Gross offered the second floor space at Berkley Common. A show of hands indicated good attendance for the Board at the meeting.

**IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Absent – no report. McGuinness reported Wyatt, who’s entering his senior year, will be returning, and a second student will be identified.

**X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**A. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua**

Passalacqua had nothing additional for his committee report. McGuinness said a social media exchange on the residents’ forum had led a commenter to join this committee.

**B. Business Development Committee – Jenna Hance**

Hance had nothing additional to report.

**C. Downtown Events Committee – Erin Brick**

Brick reported plans for BOO!kley are underway, and their first open to the public meeting will be held at Casa Amado, July 21 at 6:30 PM with free food. Kempner is chair of Monster Mash in 2022 and Coolidge will be closed for trick or treaters. When events are scheduled, they will regularly hold public meetings for volunteers. McGuinness added Pride Fest volunteers will have a debriefing and planning session for next year.

**D. Marketing Strategies Committee – Ashley Poirier**

Poirier reported that the committee is looking for additional members, and McGuinness noted he had been contacted by individuals interested in volunteering. There is currently no set meeting date for this committee.

**E. Organization Committee – Scott Francis**

Francis had to leave the meeting, so there was no report.

**F. West 12-Mile Committee – Brian Zifkin**

Zifkin reported meeting with Barnes and noting the changes/additions on that end of 12 Mile. They appreciate the resources allocated to the west end (bike racks, benches, planters). He hadn't been able to make contact with the realtor offering the vacant property near D&D Bikes.

Joe Novitsky, architect for the new art studio, told them the owner wants to have a mural of his own artwork painted on his building. He was told by the City Attorney he would have to relinquish all ownership rights to the art. McGuinness subsequently found out that only applies if the DDA funds the mural, not if the artist pays for it himself. The mural application process would still be in force, in that the artwork would be reviewed by the DDA Art & Design Committee, but the DDA would have no ownership interest in the mural. ZBA involvement regarding signage regulations is uncertain.

Baumgarten said he could give Zifkin the phone number to contact the vacant property's owner directly.

**XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

**A. Downtown Berkley Business and Real Estate Updates**

McGuinness reported that Gilbert told him that the building on the southeast corner of Franklin and Coolidge is vacant and up for sale. Construction is ongoing at the LaSalette development. Peninsulas' has moved into their new location down the street, and Monger's is in talks to open a tasting room in the vacated space. There is talk of having an open meeting space in the old Family Video part of the building at Catalpa and Coolidge. Fresh Collective was just sold to one of its current renters, MI Meals. The new coffee shop on 12 Mile will be applying to have local artist Howard Fridson paint a mural on their east facing wall.

**B. Downtown Berkley Recent Media Coverage**

Nothing additional to report.

**XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:**

None.

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** The opportunity for public comment was offered, and there were no in-person requests to address the body. Gilbert asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

**XIV. Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Gross.