

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
JANUARY 6, 2022
APPROVED MINUTES**

Chairman Mark Sochocki opened the meeting at 8:02 a.m. and asked for a roll call.

PRESENT: Mark Sochocki, Jeff Mossel, John Miedema (Hybrid), John Milan, Clinton Zimmerman (Hybrid), Bob Patterson (Hybrid)

ABSENT: Paula Robison and Charlene Nowlin

ALSO PRESENT: Heather Bowman, Director of Public Works, Aaron Kohn, City Treasurer, Paula Priebe, Director of Community Development (Hybrid), Mark Gifford, City Manager, and Jessie Black, Community Economic Development Specialist (Hybrid)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion moved by Jeff Mossel, seconded by John Milan, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting, October 7, 2021. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Aaron Kuhn presented the Quarterly Financial Status through December 31, 2021. The first of the four support transfers to the DBA totaled \$5,000. Expenditures this quarter related to fall decorations downtown and the remainder of the farmer's market. Total expenditures \$18,624. In addition, two quarterly transfers took place during this quarter, both regarding the remaining \$7,500 balance of the \$15,000 budget for the Hemlock Park Project. Overall expenditures for the year thus far is \$41,461.61. Total revenues for the year thus far total \$60,960.28. The current fund balance as of the end of the calendar year is \$76,809.35.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard

BUSINESS

Flowers - Karnemaat: Heather presented the board with the flower lineup for 2022 downtown Big Rapids flower display. The hanging baskets will be the same as previous

years due to the many compliments from residents. Marlies Manning does an incredible job and City Staff have already placed the order. Excited for Spring!

Capital Improvement Projects: Heather stated that two capital improvement projects have been submitted, but Staff is still completing the process. The two projects submitted on behalf of the DDA and DBA are the downtown tree lighting project and for the repair of the two historical signs for downtown. The tree lighting project consists of lighting the entire tree from the branches to the trunk and will look vastly different from previous years. The estimated total for this project is \$49,500. The historical signs project includes the sign located on Perry Avenue and the sign located on N State Street near the Airport. The signs are ten years old and are showing their age. City Staff received a quote to repair both signs, which is estimated at \$22,000. Parking lot paving behind the Fairman building has been submitted and Staff will update board members with further information.

Farmer's Market: The past season was pretty successful, however, the 2022 farmer's market will have a few changes. Vendors suggest changing the Tuesday market hours between 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Friday market hours to 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The change in hours focuses on the lunch hours as well as complimenting the Pocket Park Concert Series' hours. The 2022 season is scheduled for May 6, 2022- October 28, 2022 for the Friday markets and May 24, 2022 - September 27, 2022 for Tuesday markets. The holiday market will be on November 18, 2022. The pre-season meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2022. Other changes include more advertising through the radio and social media compared to previous years.

Other: John Milan asked Josh Pyles if Staff further discussed the conversation that took place during a DBA meeting in regards to helping downtown businesses. Josh summarized the conversation, stating that there was an idea of having a food truck court during Friday Farmer Market days. During the DBA discussion, members felt that instead of focusing on new restaurants coming into town, more help should be offered to the existing downtown businesses first. Josh stated that an idea in the works consists of marketing and advertising more for the existing downtown businesses. Staff will research options to help businesses and bring more information to the board.

Mark Gifford stated that he spoke to the building owner of the old JcPenney's who is in the process of removing the existing signage. Mr. Gifford has been having conversations with a housing developer who is interested in the old AMC Theater building downtown. Two issues arise: payment in lieu of taxes and the Zoning Ordinance stating that in the C-2 Commercial District, dwelling units within commercial structures are permitted, except on the main floor and basement of those structures.

Paula Priebe updated the board on the changes to the marihuana ordinance. One substantive change is in regards to curbside pickup for marihuana businesses. The Zoning Ordinance was written to prohibit curbside pickup. However, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, every business started offering curbside pickup. The Staff recommendation to the City Commission is to allow curbside pickup only on private off-street parking lots. This would prohibit curbside pickup in public parking areas. All the marihuana businesses located downtown do not have private parking lots, so they could not offer curbside pickup. If a business is interested in offering curbside parking, they would have to apply for it during their annual Permit renewal process. The Planning Commission will be discussing this matter during the January 19, 2022 meeting.

Next meeting will be held on April 7, 2022 @8am this will be an informational meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Szymanski & Trina Poulos
Recording Secretary