

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
January 5, 2023
APPROVED MINUTES

Chairperson Mark Sochocki opened the meeting at 8:18 a.m. who asked for a roll call.

PRESENT: Jeff Mossel, John Miedema, Clinton Zimmerman, Mark Sochocki and John Milan

ABSENT: Charlene Nowlin, Bob Patterson and Paula Robison

ALSO, PRESENT: Heather Bowman, Director of Public Works, Carla Staffen, City Treasurer, Josh Pyles, DBA Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion moved by John Milan, seconded by John Mossel to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2022 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carla Staffen presented the Quarterly Financial Status through September 2022. At the present time the revenue is at \$80,902.95 Expenditures of 77,914.17 with end fund balance of \$68,452.06. The expenditures are expected to outpace revenue with the biggest expenditure being Twinkle Lights. Carla also noted that the Hemlock Park contribution has not been added to the number as of this date. Josh explained that Spectrum Health has a program where they hand out packets of 10 one-dollar coupons to those that hold the bridge card. Spectrum reimburses the city for these coupons as they are used throughout the year.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO AGENDA

BUSINESS

Heather introduced Lilly Franklin, the city's Public Relations/Communications Coordinator. Lilly has been hired to increase communication within City Hall and the public. Lilly plans to have a monthly newsletter, ramp up all social media awareness to the public, commission and employees.

Downtown Flowers – Heather stated that Marlies Manning has put the design together and the flowers have been ordered for the upcoming season. Heather has had at least 3 other communities reach out to her on regards to information on the city's flowers. Heather will put together and send out a packet on the 2023 design.

Twinkle Lights – Heather shared that the new twinkle lights have all been installed. Zoro will continue to maintain for 3 years and Heather expects they will last an additional 2 years after with the life expectancy of approximately 5 years.

CIP'S – Heather reported she has reached out to D&D signs out of Traverse City and they are more than likely going to refurbish the signs from Perry Street and by the Airport. The city is opting to refurbish due to zoning codes and ordinances that would make new signs way too small to be desired. The cost of refurbishing is approximately \$25,000 and will take close to one year to complete.

The city is also looking to complete the State Street Sewer Project as soon as possible as MDOT is planning to mill and fill all of Maple and Pine Street this summer. The city would have to close the entire sections of Maple to Pere Marquette, this will be a large and very hectic detour and the city is still engineering this, however it will make the job time approximately 2 – 2 1/2 weeks vs. 1 – 1 ½ months. All aspects of the project are still pending approval from EGLE.

Farmer's Market - Josh announced the schedule for the upcoming 2023 season will be Friday's starting May 5, 2023 through October 27, 2023 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Tuesday's starting May 22, 2023 through September 26, 2023 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday markets continue to be very slim. Clinton suggests the possibility of eliminating Tuesdays and making Fridays larger. Josh is working with the Michigan Farmer's Market Association in hopes of recruiting more farmers. Josh shared that the state is going to cut the Double Up Food Bucks this year. Last year the state matched up to \$20 this year the match will be \$10. Farmers requested a Food Truck be booked at every market.

Hemlock Park Update – Heather informed the board the city is working with Jon Coles on Playscape and a committee has been formed to help with the design. The committee consists of Sarah Fuller, Makenzie Currie, Alexis Cummings and Josh Pyles. The committee will be picking color schemes and making the park a universal design, with an open floor plan and segway to the Splash Pad. The current structure will be removed by whomever wins the bid. The bid will go out late Spring and pending lead times be replaced in the fall. The city is working closely with Roger Schneidt, Pat Klarecki and Bob Daniels to be sure to save as much memorabilia as they can. Basketball Courts, Tennis Courts and Pickleball Courts all need surfacing as soon as the weather permits. Kayak launch will be installed in the Spring.

DDA Director – Jessie Black had put together a packet and highly recommended that a full time DDA Director be hired to promote all events and do the marketing for the city. Heather stated that this is already in Josh Pyles work description. The board recommends therefore that the Title just be recognized to Josh's position. The DDA does not have room in their budget for a whole new position. The link to review the report is located under the Community Development page on the city's website. The position/title may help the city acquire more grants (i.e., Match on Main).

Other – Mark Sochocki informed the board the downtown housing will undergo some major renovations/upgrades. The Housing Commission was granted funding of \$372,000 to help in housing the middle class. Housing Commission to build 10 new houses this Year.

Heather mentioned the Red Fox, Blue Cow and strip entry/Jets Alley were all paved this past summer and the next one up for bid will be the Farmer’s Market/City Hall Parking Lot.

Next meeting of the DDA will be April 6, 2023 @8am.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Poulos
Recording Secretary