



LINCOLN PARK DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Minutes of the DDA Regular Meeting

June 10, 2021

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Regular meeting of the DDA held via zoom, called to order by Sam Eckman at 5:00 pm. A quorum was present.

Present: Sam Eckman, Jim Fox, Mayor Tom Karnes, Leslie Lynch-Wilson, Victoria McLain, Bob Steele, Daniel Wright

Absent: Eleas Moraitis

Also present: Director Carl Malysz, Assistant Director Timarie Szwed, Councilwoman Tracy Duprey, Councilwoman Maureen Tobin

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mayor Karnes. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2021, Regular Meeting was made by Mr. Steele, seconded by Ms. Lynch-Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES

A motion to approve an invoice from William Look, dated May 14, 2021 (\$178.50) for legal services was made by Ms. McLain, seconded by Mr. Wright. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMERS MARKET REPORT

Ms. Lynch-Wilson gave the June 2021 Lincoln Park Farmers Market Report. Report was placed on file.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Director presented the May 31, 2021, financial reports. He stated that the DDA is within budget, with three weeks left in the current fiscal year. A question was raised about being overbudget on the Social Security line. The Director will discuss this with Lisa Griggs (Finance Department) and report back to the DDA at the next meeting. Reports will be placed on file.

OLD BUSINESS

- **CGI Communications Inc., 2021 Community Banner Program**

The Director gave an oral report on the progress of the Community Banner Program. He stated that

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there will be 125-135 banners installed. The banners will be installed by mid-July.

- **DTE Fort Street Decorative Lighting System Upgrade**

The Director gave an oral report on the decorative lighting system, reporting that the upgrade was completed, and that all concrete that was torn up in the process has been repaired. DTE has not leveled the grass in the median or reseeded. The Director will contact them to find out when this will take place.

- **2019 DTE Tree Planting Grant**

The Director gave an oral report on the Tree Planting Grant, stating that an extension was granted to the end of May for purchasing and planting the trees. DPS was able to get them installed and mulched, but it will be necessary to keep an eye on them due to drought conditions. Documentation that we implemented the program must be submitted by June 30. We stand to receive \$3,000 in state funding. He added that it was necessary to make last minute changes in tree variety, as the arborist felt that there were too many locust trees in the downtown, and a few that would not be viable in the median. There were 25 trees installed. There are other medians that would benefit from additional tree installation in the future. The Director will inquire with DNR as to when we can submit another application.

- **DDA Committee Chairman Appointments**

The Director stated that committee chairs were given the appropriate handbooks. Meetings will be scheduled with the chairs beginning in July, to discuss volunteer recruitment so that committees can start moving forward. Ms. Lynch-Wilson stated that the Design Committee will be meeting in July.

- **Proposed Downtown Strategic Plan and TIF Plan Amendment: Eastside 2200 Block of Fort Street – Acquisition/Rehabilitation and Incubator Program**

The Director provided an oral report regarding the acquisition/rehabilitation efforts in the 2200 Block of eastbound Fort Street. He stated that the DDA/EDC staff are recommending that the block be worked into the Downtown Development Plan for DDA to acquire the properties, and the EDC focusing on lending to the businesses that located within the block. He stated that the current Strategic Plan and TIF Plan are outdated, based on RRC best practices, and steps should be taken to extend their shelf lives by five years. Regarding possible underground tanks at 2231 Fort St, he stated that documents from 1998, provided by the property own (Park Medical), were inconclusive. He added that Phase I and Phase II, Brownfield studies can be accomplished through the Downriver Brownfield Coalition, and that any necessary mitigation can be considered during purchase negotiations. He added that there is no way to know what needs to be done until this project is in the Downtown Development Plan. He assured the Board that DDA Staff will not move forward or spend any money on this project without the approval of the Board.

- **Possible sites for activation**

The Assistant Director gave a report regarding possible sites for activation. She reported on a possible grant opportunity that could aid in funding site activations. Sites being considered include a green space between Albert's Furniture and the Moose Lodge (1612 Fort Street), a walking path adjacent to Save-a-Lot (1716 Fort St.), a walking path adjacent to Painter's Supply (2040 Fort St.),

and an alley between the Community Policing building and Fast Splash Car Wash (approx. 1394 Fort St.). Additionally, she gave a presentation with conceptual ideas for 1612 Fort St. The Assistant Director will meet with the Design Committee to discuss the site activations further.

- **Façade Grant Policies**

The Director led a discussion regarding the current Façade Grant Program policies. He stated that there is a disconnect between the original intentions of the program, and what businesses are asking for help with. The program was intended to address the front faces of buildings. He stated that it may be possible to use the program to help business create creative site improvements, parking lots, and so forth. DDA staff is currently in conversations regarding three such projects with local business owners. Ms. Lynch-Wilson suggested that the grant program be revisited, for multiple reasons, to possible expanded it to include other things. This is something that the design committee can discuss, and that it may be a good idea to change the program name. The Design Committee will also discuss moving forward with outdoor seating, and how the committee can help with that process. They will also develop some design ideas for outdoor seating. Ms. Lynch-Wilson added that there are inexpensive ways to create sidewalk cafés. The Director suggested that the Design Committee meet very soon to discuss changes to the program and report back at the next meeting. Ms. Lynch-Wilson agreed that the committee would meet.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director gave an oral report with updates on the DDA/EDC Work Program, FY2020-2021 Priority Project List. The list, available in the Meeting Packet, was updated on June 8, 2021. He stated that the DDA and EDC Work Programs were combined into one document.

CALL'S TO AUDIENCE

There were no public comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Wright stated that he really likes the alley activation ideas, especially the "Find Abe" concept. He stated that the Director had suggested that he bring up the City Hall sign during the meeting. The Director stated that there are a lot of issues with signage in the downtown. He added that he is in conversations with John Kozuh, DPS Director, but he is not sure what the outcome of those conversations will be as DPS is very busy right now.

Mr. Fox commented that the staff did a good job on the reports.

Mr. Steele commented that the area at Fort Park and Southfield Road looks bad, especially when turning onto Fort Park from Southfield, and that the design committee should consider looking into this. He also pointed out that when turning on Lafayette from Eastbound Southfield, a tree makes it hard to see

oncoming traffic. He suggested that the tree be relocated or eliminated. The Director stated that when the recently installed trees were sited on Fort Street, they made sure there would be sight clearance. He will find out if there is any way to relocate the tree, since it makes it difficult to make a left turn on red. Mr. Steele also commented on the acquisition of properties in the 2200 block of eastbound Fort St, stating that he is not sure what to do regarding the possibility of underground tanks. He expressed concern that it could end up costing a lot of money. The Director responded that while we want to move forward, we do not want to incur an exuberant cost. Finally, Mr. Steele inquired whether or not the city will be doing anything for the upcoming cruise event on Fort Street. Councilwoman Tobin stated that stuff will be happening at the bandshell and added that it would be nice if the DDA set up a booth at the park during the event.

Ms. McLain commented that an incident recently occurred where a Building Department staff member wrongfully told one of her tenants that they could not do something that they inquired with the department about. She stated that she was disappointed that they did not know and gave them the wrong information.

Ms. Lynch-Wilson said that she forgot to mention during the Farmer's Market Report that they received veggie brushes free through a grant with a promotional company, 4Imprint. The brushes will be handed out to customers using the EBT/SNAP program while shopping at the Market. She also commented on weeds at the corner of Fort St. and Park. Regarding the tree referenced by Mr. Steele, she suggested that cutting the lower branches may solve the issue, and that this should be tried prior to considering relocation or elimination.

Mr. Eckman stated that he thinks the staff is doing a good job.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Edge, seconded by Mr. Eggesfield. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Next Meeting: July 8, 2021

Meeting minutes prepared by Director Carl Malysz and Assistant Director Timarie Szwed.