

**Downtown Development Authority
Meeting Minutes**

5:30 PM, April 13th, 2021

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE DDA

Hybrid Meeting Held In-Person at City Council Chambers, 3200 Biddle Avenue and
Via the Zoom Audio-only Virtual Platform

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Jarjosa, Scott Jordan, Anne Majlinger, Patt Slack, Leo Stevenson, Rick DeSana, Norm Walker

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mayor Pro Tempore Rob DeSana, Bryan Kozinski

OTHERS PRESENT: Joe Gruber, DDA Director

PUBLIC COMMENT: None present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES & AGENDA:

Minutes from March 2021 Meeting and Agenda for April 2021 Meeting

Motion by Norm Walker, Supported by John Jarjosa, to approve the Minutes from the March 2021 DDA meeting and the agenda for the April 2021 DDA meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

INFORMATION TO RECEIVE & PLACE ON FILE: None

MONTHLY REVENUE/EXPENDITURE REPORT

Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Reports: Period Ending March 31st, 2021

Motion by Leo Stevenson, supported by Scott Jordan, to accept and approve the Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Report for March 31st, 2021. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried.

ONGOING PROJECTS & BUSINESS:

W Suites & Lofts: Joseph R. Peterson Downtown Grant Award: Director Gruber read the letter from Jason D’Herin of W Suites & Lofts clarifying his recent grant reimbursement extension request that was awarded during the previous DDA meeting on March 9th, 2021 and outlining a new phased reimbursement request, to be issued upon successful opening of each new commercial space. Mr. Stevenson noted that he was not overly concerned with the Phased reimbursement, but there was only one other time the DDA reimbursed a grant in phases. Chairwoman Slack also noted that she was not opposed to the phased reimbursement, but wants more information regarding the status of the project. Mr. Jordan questioned what their current timeline is, which was not included in the letter. The DDA Board discussed and agreed to table

further discussion until a revised letter offering more clarity and outlining a specific timeline of each retail/commercial opening could be delivered by the Developer and reviewed at the next DDA Meeting.

Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by J. Jarjosa, to extend the Downtown Grant Reimbursement for W Suites & Lofts until the next DDA Meeting on Tuesday, May 11th during which a new phased reimbursement request should be submitted alongside an accurate timeline that offers more clarity on the future openings of the commercial storefronts. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS:

Social District Moratorium Applications – WOW 360: Director Gruber provided an overview of the process and background of Social District Moratoriums and the relationship between the Social District Moratoriums and special events hosted in Downtown Wyandotte. He continued to provide an overview of each event and each moratorium being proposed. Mr. Walker inquired about the nature of moratorium requests and whether the bars were aware of the potential and possibility of moratoriums when the Social District was created and when they applied for their permits. Director Gruber confirmed that the Local Maintenance and Operations Plan approved by Council in August 2020 has always included the City's ability to grant moratoriums, extensions and amendments. Director Gruber also shared some insight into the redevelopment of District 142 located at 142 Maple Street which will create a large concert venue and event center owned and operated by WOW 360. This inherently affects the design, layout and components of the special events that will occur on this location.

Mr. Stevenson questioned if whether or not an event taking place in a specific portion of the social district that also involves a special license and the private sale of alcohol mandates a Moratorium the entire district. Director Gruber stated that it did. Mr. Stevenson continued to question other existing licensee's uses of City Property and how the Social District was impacted. Mr. DeSana suggested that only new special licenses that encroach on the social district require a Moratorium. Director Gruber confirmed, stating that existing licenses with extended outdoor service areas like Whiskeys on the Water, Bobcat Bonnies and Belicoso do not impact or impede Social District Operations.

Jeremy Sladovnik from Joe's Hamburgers was present to share insight and ask questions regarding Events, the Social District and Moratoriums. Mr. Sladovnik stated his displeasure with the New Year's Eve event when it was held along Biddle Avenue, stating it hurts his business sales during that evening. He recommended the City implement setback requirements for the tent so that it is further away from the front door of his business. Mr. Sladovnik further stated that because the newly proposed event along 1st and Maple Street is far removed and blocked off from his business, that it does not make sense for a Moratorium to be issued to stop his business from selling alcohol in the Social District. Chairwoman Slack asked Mr. Sladovnik if he wanted

the NYE Ball Drop event to take place in Downtown Wyandotte or if he preferred the Social District for that day. Mr. Sladovnik stated that he likes the Ball Drop Event and suggested the it doesn't matter whose ball it is, as long as Wyandotte is dropping a ball, it's amazing.

Chairwoman Slack explained that a professional event and promotions company owns a ball and is already in place doing this event in the District. Chairwoman Slack encouraged Mr. Sladovnik to think about the benefits of the events with or without the Social District moratorium. Mr. Sladovnik shared his thought that every event is great, but also explained his displeasure with certain events not sharing revenue of ticket sales with participating businesses and that the proposed moratoriums would further impact his revenues on those days. Mr. DeSana explained that a partial moratorium would be possible for certain parties while pub crawls and other special events will not require a moratorium.

Mr. Stevenson suggested the DDA be creative and explore the restrictions of the Social District, and recommended bars pay a nominal fee and participate in the Private WOW 360 Special Events if it meant the businesses could become a part of the event regulations and thus maintain use of the Social District. Mr. Walker asked why businesses should pay into something they've already paid into. Director Gruber explained that according to existing liquor laws, existing licensed establishments are not permitted to service another licensed area and that no two licensed areas can overlap or encroach one another. Mr. DeSana asked if the DDA hires WOW 360 Events. Director Gruber explained that WOW 360 is not a hired contractor of the DDA, but rather the DDA sponsors their events. Chairwoman Slack added that WOW 360 has an event hosting contract directly with the City Council. Mr. DeSana asked if WOW 360 would cancel these particular events if the moratorium is not awarded. Chairwoman Slack shared her opinion that they could. Director Gruber also shared his opinion that WOW 360 may choose to relocate or remove the events.

Chairwoman Slack stated that the Rockin' NYE Ball Drop and Wine Crawl are two very large productions that involve lots of planning and organization. These events have often brought large crowds that fill the bars, restaurants and downtown businesses before, during and after the events. Mr. DeSana recommended that any private event company that wants to do an event within the City of Wyandotte must work around the parameters of the Social District in order to support the local businesses. Chairwoman Slack asked Mr. DeSana if the Rockin' NYE Ball Drop event alcohol sales impact his alcohol sales. Mr. DeSana stated that the Rockin' NYE is fantastic and that it always brings a large volume of people. He continued that he believed the Social District was created to support the bars and restaurant's ability to participate in events like this. Mr. DeSana recommends to the City Council and to the DDA is that the DDA Promotions Committee work with WOW 360 to explore new locations, new strategies, and new processes to host the large events while operating the Social District without moratoriums or restrictions on the bars and restaurants.

Chairwoman Slack and Mr. DeSana discussed the City Council's approval of the moratorium requests, suggesting that the DDA may make a recommendation to City Council and that the

discussion is still up to them. Mr. Stevenson again suggested each event and moratorium request must be considered individually. Director Gruber made the professional recommendation to award the Wine Crawl 2021 Moratorium, to deny the Saint Patrick's Day Moratorium Requests and to table both the Cinco Block Party Moratorium Request and the Rockin' NYE Moratorium Request.

Mr. Stevenson again suggested that the large events, like Wine Crawl, are high volume, high-impact days that support bars and restaurants. Mr. Sladovnik stated that not everyone like wine, nor wants to wait in lines and participate in the events. Mr. Sladovnik suggested the Social District should never be paused and that it exists to support the brick & mortar retailers and shops Downtown to promote walking the district. Mr. Sladovnik stated that the Wine Crawl on Biddle Avenue is far more successful than any of the events that take place in Parking Lot #1.

Mr. DeSana suggested that the DDA could support an event that is serviced exclusively by the local bars and restaurants with Social District permits, and that any limitations of private alcohol sales that negatively affect a private event host license. Mr. Stevenson asked Mr. Sladovnik how many Social District beverages he is selling to-go on an average Friday Night. Mr. Sladovnik estimated 75-100 Social District beverages. Mr. Stevenson suggested also subsidizing the bars and restaurants to make up for lost Social District revenue during moratoriums. Mr. DeSana stated that moratoriums should never be placed on the Social District and that bars should not be restricted from selling in the Social District. Chairwoman Slack shared that an estimated subsidy for a private event company restricted from alcohol sales would be approximately \$20,000.

Mr. Sladovnik stated that the issue at hand is bigger than being subsidized during a Moratorium. He again shared his opinion that the Social District is about encouraging foot traffic, retail, marketing businesses and promoting economic development downtown. Chairwoman Slack stated that there is no full solution to these challenges. She stated that next year would bring a different solution that more people can agree with. She stated that the Social District is new, and that it is creating changing issues and a changing dynamic downtown for all the businesses, including the future District 142.

Mr. Sladovnik stated that he is not interested in money, but that he is interested in being able to operate the Social District. Mr. Sladovnik stated that he believes the Social District should also operate during Street Fair. He questioned Director Gruber on whether the Art Fair would have a moratorium, which it has not yet, only because it has not yet been decided. He went on to explain that a traditional Street Fair, if hosted, would absolutely call for a moratorium.

Mr. Sladovnik shared a final comment that the Wyandotte Street Fair is so large that no one single business can service the hundreds of thousands of guests that come in, citing long lines for all restaurants, and that the Social District could greatly help the bars and restaurants during Street Fair. Chairwoman Slack stated that there is a positive future with the Social District and she does not want to do anything to harm it.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Social District included the roadway or just sidewalks. Director Gruber explained that it does, but that drinking is not permitted in roadways. Mr. Jordan then asked if it were feasible to grant a moratorium for the roadway while leaving the sidewalks open. Director Gruber concurred that it may, but that it would require the entire roadway and designated drinking area to be barricaded and fenced in, which may be a burden to everyone.

The Board continued to discuss the nature of Downtown Events. Mr. Stevenson reiterated Directed Gruber's recommendation to award the Wine Crawl 2021 Moratorium, to deny the Saint Patrick's Day Moratorium Requests and to table both the Cinco Block Party Moratorium Request and the Rockin' NYE Moratorium Request. Mr. Stevenson further recommended that the Social District subcommittee meet to identify better opportunities and to address the dilemmas discussed in today's meeting.

Mr. Sladovnik shared an idea for a new event to be hosted on 1st Street from Maple Street to Elm Street that would be serviced exclusively by the adjoining licensed establishments within the Social District. Chairwoman Slack echoed Mr. Sladovnik's excitement for new event potential through the Social District.

Hisam Elawad from Grand Dad's Pub presented to the DDA, offering insight into other area Social Districts that operate similarly and differently from Wyandotte. He offered strong support for the events and WOW 360 Event company, but reiterated his overall opinion that the Social District should remain open and that bars and restaurants should be included in the events and allowed to sell during the events. Mr. Elawad highlighted his opinion that the intent of WOW 360 to place a moratorium on the 1st and Maple is tied directly to their new facility. Mr. Elawad stated that he doesn't understand why a moratorium would be implemented, and does not agree with the moratoriums, and that being new in town he felt there were many questions that needed to be answered. Mr. Stevenson offered more background and insight into the development of events over time. The Board discussed a vision of having the Downtown Bars and Restaurants servicing the Downtown Events. Mr. Elawad believes 3rd Fridays can be brought back and that the events can be simple and effective without being overly complicated.

Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by P. Slack, to approve the Moratorium Request for the Downtown Wine Crawl to be held Friday, August 20th, 2021; to table the all-other Moratorium dates, times and requests and FURTHERMORE to form a subcommittee to develop a solution for the other requests moving forward. Roll Call. YAYS: Jarjosa, Jordan, Majlinger, Slack, Stevenson. NAYS: DeSana, Walker. Five Yays, Two Nays, Motion carried.

Director Gruber finished by stating that this recommendation would be going to the City Council on Monday, April 26th and at that time he will present to the City Council what was discussed at this DDA Meeting. Director Gruber stated that if more information became available and if the event company, DDA promotions committee and Social District subcommittee could meet to

determine a better solution, that all the moratorium requests may be presented to council. He reiterated that the DDA has been extremely supportive of downtown businesses, merchants, bars, restaurants and retailers through grant programs and event promotions. He also stated that the DDA has been very supportive of the events community, welcoming an event production company who hosts big, exciting and complex events in the community, and that he believes that the DDA has done a good job of not choosing either, but supporting both, and that the Social District is just one component that could enhance the existing actions of the DDA, and not degrade them.

Fort Eureka Welcome Sign Landscaping Quotes: Director Gruber provided an overview of the annual Fort Eureka Welcome Sign Landscaping contracts, scope of service and the quotes that were collected to provide this year's landscaping service. Based on the size of the contract and in accordance with the City of Wyandotte's procurement standards, Director Gruber collected three quotes.

Director Gruber suggested that Allen Park Lawn & Snow was the lowest bid and best value proposal, to which Mr. Stevenson countered suggesting Grosse Ile. Lawn and Sprinkler was the best value based on the cost per site visit.

Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by J. Jarjosa, to approve the proposal submitted by Grosse Ile. Lan and Sprinkler for the annual landscaping and maintenance of the Fort Street Eureka Road Welcome Sign in the amount of \$2,880.00 AND FURTHERMORE, to recommend the contract for signing by Mayor and Council. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried.

Downtown Public Art Project: DIA Partners in Public Art: Director Gruber shared an update regarding the Detroit Institute of Arts commitment to host a Partners in Public Art Project in Wyandotte. He shared the recently approved City Council resolution approving the DIA's Memorandum of Understanding to approve the program and to move forward with the project. There has not been a final location selected, an artist selected, nor any designs confirmed.

Downtown Public Art Project: Wyandotte Industries Sculpture: Director Gruber shared an update regarding the Szpondowski family's donation for a permanent public art installation in Downtown Wyandotte. He cited that the selected artist Keith Coleman has two other works in Wyandotte, including the bear and the bull. Director Gruber shared that the Design-Review Board has approved the sculpture design during last weeks meeting and that the Planning Commission would be reviewing and approving the sculpture design, location and features that following Thursday, April 15th, and ultimately before the City Council. Chairwoman Slack noted that the placement location of Biddle Avenue and Elm Street was always meant to house a sculpture like this, so it is fitting. Director Gruber added that the original designs reviewed by the

Engineering Department required stamped drawings from a structural engineering firm which were provided by Thomas Roberts & Associates.

Friends of Detroit River: Ralph Wilson Foundation Grant: Iron Belle Trail Grants: Director Gruber shared an update regarding the Downriver Linked Greenways and the Iron Belle Trail Gap Analysis and improvement funds in the amount of \$1,900,000 granted by the Ralph Wilson Foundation to the Friends of the Detroit River. He shared the recently approved City Council resolution approving the Friends of Detroit River Memorandum of Agreement to approve the use of funds and to further contribute to and participate in the Iron Belle Trail Gap analysis and improvement projects.

Restaurant and Retail Week: Director Gruber shared notice that the Annual Restaurant and Retail week begins Saturday April 17th and runs through Saturday April 24th. He mentioned that the Restaurant Week was expanded and combined to include Retail Week, which will be a celebration of local brick and mortar businesses and in the advent of the Social District which is likely to enhance it.

Ladies Night Out: Director Gruber shared notice that the Ladies Night Out will be organized by several local businesses to be held on April 30th. He noted that the event was often very popular but has not been held since the Wyandotte Business Association stopped. Sweet Arrangements, Cheryl Zemke Boutique and WOW 360 are all contributing parties to this event which will take place in conjunction with the Social District.

Director Gruber concluded the meeting by stating that events can be held and executed by large event production companies to deliver large events we want to see in the Downtown. And that events may also occur through a small group of dedicated individuals, businesses and the City to host events that can be small and simple too.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: 5:30 PM, May 11th, 2021

Regular Meeting

ADJOURNMENT: 7:12 PM

Motion by L. Stevenson, supported by S. Jordan, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Gruber, DDA Director