

**Downtown Development Authority  
Meeting Minutes**

5:30 PM, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rick DeSana, Bryan Kozinski, Anne Majlinger, Scott Jordan, Patt Slack, Norm Walker

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Mayor Rob DeSana, John Jarjosa, Leo Stevenson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Joe Gruber, DDA Director, several members of the Downtown Development Area Citizen's Advisory Council, and several members of the general public

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Jim Lange, 20 Chestnut Street, and member of the Downtown Development Area Citizen's Advisory Council. Mr. Lange reported on his landscaping efforts at Bishop Park and invited the Board to come visit. Chairwoman Slack and Director Gruber complimented Mr. Lange on his efforts and thanked him for his volunteerism and dedication. Mr. Lange commented that the promenade and Memorial walkway looks very nice, like a Paris or Charleston setting, and that there are more improvements in the works.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES & AGENDA:**

Minutes from June 2022 Meeting and Agenda for August 2022 Meeting

**Motion by A. Majlinger, Supported by B. Kozinski, to approve the Minutes from the June 2022 DDA meeting and the agenda for the August 2022 DDA meeting. All in favor, Motion carried.**

**MONTHLY REVENUE/EXPENDITURE REPORT:**

**Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Reports:** Periods Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022

**Motion by S. Jordan, Supported by B. Kozinski, to accept and approve the Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Reports for the Periods Ending June 30th, 2022 and July 31st, 2022. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried.**

**INFORMATION TO RECEIVE & PLACE ON FILE:** None

**ONGOING PROJECTS & BUSINESS:**

**Downtown Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Infrastructure Project: City Council Information Session to be held at 6:00 PM, Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022:** Director Gruber

shared public notice of an upcoming Information Session to be held at 6:00 PM on Monday, August 29th, 2022 in City Council Chambers. He explained that the meeting is intended to provide a detailed overview of the scope of work, the cost estimates, the sources of funding, and to develop a consensus as to how the City Council would like to proceed. He noted that this informational session would not end with all the final project details determined, nor all the answers resolved, but that it would help provide further direction. Director Gruber provided a brief recap of the DDA CIP and Infrastructure Project including \$12.2 million worth of improvements, focusing on approximately \$5.6 million of high priority projects and \$6.6 million of low-medium priority projects. He reviewed several potential funding sources including grants from private and public sources, public financing through DDA revenue bonds, a DDA 2-mil levy, special assessment districts, brownfield TIF through the redevelopment of the former City Hall.

## **NEW PROJECTS & BUSINESS**

- 1) **DDA Grant Committee: Joseph R. Peterson: Downtown Grant Application: Federal Building: 3131 Biddle, LLC.:** Item tabled until the next DDA Meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
  
- 2) **DDA Grant Committee: Downriver Council for the Arts (DCA): National Endowment for the Arts (NEA): Our Town Grant Request:** The DCA is pursuing a \$50,000 grant from the NEA through the Our Town Grant program to support the Chestnut Art Park for which they have presented a letter requesting \$10,000 match from the DDA. The Chestnut Art Park will take the vacant lot (82 Chestnut Street) located across the street from the Art Center Building (81 Chestnut Street) and revitalize and reactivated the space as a mixed-use, mixed-media, public art demonstration and community space.

Ayana King, DCA Board Member addressed the board, stating she believed the project would be a significant regional draw from artists, residents and visitors from across the region. Chairwoman Slack asked what activities would take place. Ms. King explained that the outdoor space would be used for live performances from local artists, outdoor plein air painting, outdoor art classes, public gathering, seating areas and various installations from local artists including fixtures, and permanent structures, as well as mobile/moveable art that can travel to different communities, raising awareness for the DCA. B. Kozinski asked if there were any renderings or drawings that would show the kind of art that would be there. Ms. King explained that the committee is actively working with Architect Tom Roberts to design and develop renderings for the space, and further explained that a requirement of the grant application is to submit other samples of work and a clear demonstration as to how the funds would be used. Mr. Kozinski stated that he'd like to see a more concrete vision of the space if the DDA were to provide

monetary support for the project. Ms. King explained that there are good conceptual ideas and other samples they would include in the application, but because artists have not been engaged directly for this project, they do not have specific renderings or work samples demonstrating exactly what would be onsite. Mr. Kozinski restated his strong support of this project and more art in our community. Director Gruber also restated the NEA Our Town guidelines for municipalities and nonprofits, stating he has been engaged with the DCA on building the application and compiling information for the grant, noting that the Part 1 application was submitted in the previous week, and that Part 2 application would be submitted in the following week, which will include compiled images and samples of work to be included, showing existing projects and work that has already been done, and work that DCA artists have done.

Ms. King explained that this stage of the project is early, and that once more materials are available they would be shared. Jane Rasmussen, DCA Member addressed the board, stating she has been involved in the project, and shared a brief history of how the concept evolved from an art student and DCA interns' vision and conceptual rendering to the current proposed Art Park which will be taken to the next level and incorporate more local artists. Ms. Rasmussen noted that the grant fund is not only for implementation but also for design, which will help produce the images and renderings of work samples to be included in the park. Director Gruber noted that the DCA request letter states that the DDA's funding is contingent on the NEA Our Town Grant award being successfully secured, which would occur in the upcoming 2022-2023 fiscal year. Chairwoman Slack noted that this project aligns with the DDA Strategic Plan for activating vacant underutilized spaces with community assets and beautification projects. Director Gruber stated that the DDA Grant Committee met to review the project and request letter and was supportive of the project and the request.

**Motion by P. Slack, Supported by N. Walker, to accept and approve the \$10,000 request of the Downriver Council for the Arts (DCA) for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA): Our Town Grant Request. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried.**

Director Gruber ended by stating the DDA Design Committee and public would be more involved in the next phases of the Chestnut Art Park. He also mentioned that the DDA is currently (2021-2022 fiscal year) funding the DCA in a \$15,000 for their master planning process while working with Tom Roberts Architects in exploring building renovations and facility upgrades, to create a more optimized facility for the DCA, and that this capital improvements, building preservation and improvement project goes hand-in-hand with conducting more activities and more programs between the City, DDA and the DCA organization.

**3) Wyandotte Street Art Fair Recap 2022:** Director Gruber stated that while he was not present at the Wyandotte Street Art Fair he reported very strong and positive remarks about the Street Art Fair, and the work of the Wyandotte Special Events. He welcomed comments from the Board.

B. Kozinski stated that it was an overwhelming success, utilizing an outdoor bar helped with more direct interaction with customers and fair-goers, and that there were very large crowds. He stated he would have liked to see more music from local talent on corners.

Chairwoman Slack stated that she and A. Majlinger, both members of the Wyandotte Street Art Fair committee, that the artists did very well, had a very good fair, and that the quality of artists was very high. A. Majlinger concurred. Chairwoman Slack stated that the Special Events Office did a wonderful job in pulling the event together, especially considering many of the event concepts were new. She stated she had one of the best fairs ever, and that the owners of the Willow Tree and Chelseas Menswear had one of their best fairs ever. She stated that the bar owners do not want to change a thing from this Art Fair.

S. Jordan stated that he too had a good Wyandotte Street Art Fair. B Kozinski inquired as to how the foot traffic is monitored, stating that it seemed way. S. Jordan shared his perspective that foot traffic appeared lower than years past, but that sales volume for his business was higher. A. Majlinger stated that many years ago the Street Fair would typically draw 250,000 visitors. She also explained that this years Wyandotte Street Art Fair did not overlap with Plymouths, which resulted in an abundance of high-quality artists participating in the Wyandotte Street Art Fair, specifically citing the Wyandotte Center for Art and Glass.

S. Jordan shared that there were complaints about a lack of a beer tent and bands. He stated that he agreed more music would be good, and that the fair was overall very good for restaurants, retailers and businesses. Chairwoman Slack noted that the publicity and press was wonderful, citing the arrangement with the promotions company. She cited no incidents from the Police Department, to which S. Jordan concurred was a helped by not having a beer tent, and that there was a polite crowd. The Board discussed that parking was better and that there should be an area for entertainment and congregating in the grassy theatre lot.

R. DeSana commented that the last two years have totally flipped in a positive way, citing slow hours during the fair met with an overwhelming crowds known as the “Wyandotte wave” after 11:00 PM beer tents closing, and that his business was steady and good all fair long, without any trouble from crowds, and that it’s 100% in the right

direction. Director Gruber also concurred, and shared that he received a report of an incident free Street Fair from a Wyandotte Police Officer. Chairwoman Slack stated that the Art Fair has a very strong base and that it can always be enhanced more, and that this year was a roaring success.

Director Gruber highlighted a recent article published in the Detroit Free Press that covered almost \$50 million in real estate investment and development projects in the District. Director Gruber praised the people in the room, the people who own property and businesses, who live in Wyandotte, work and invest in Wyandotte that make all this possible. He stated this is an important story that the metro region is paying notice, and the DDA will continue to tell this story. Chairwoman Slack commended Director Gruber for helping to procure the attention, and stated there is even more to this story, and that the DDA Promotions Committee meeting will continue to build more publicity to support more shoppers, new businesses, grants, and attention from across the State.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** 5:30 PM, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Motion by S. Jordan, supported by B. Kozinski, to adjourn the meeting. All in Favor.  
Motion Carries.**

**ADJOURNMENT:** 6:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Gruber, DDA Director