

**Downtown Development Authority  
Meeting Minutes**

5:30 PM, Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**REGULAR MEETING**

Held In-Person at City Council Chambers, 3200 Biddle Avenue and Virtually via Zoom

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Rob DeSana, Rick DeSana, Scott Jordan, Bryan Kozinski, Anne Majlinger, Leo Stevenson (virtually)

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** John Jarjosa, Patt Slack, Norm Walker

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Joe Gruber, DDA Director

**Members of the DDA Development Area Citizen Advisory Council:** Sal Noto, Sandy Skaisgir, James Lange, Jane Rasmussen were all present. Director Gruber welcomed the four members and again shared plans for the upcoming DDA Plan Amendment to be reviewed, proposed and voted on for approval in December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES & AGENDA:**

Minutes from October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 DDA Special Meeting and Agenda for November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 DDA Meeting

**Motion by A. Majlinger, Supported by B. Kozinski, to approve the minutes from October 29th, 2021 DDA Special Meeting and the Agenda for November 9th, 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 October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by S. Jordan, to accept and approve the Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Reports for the periods ending October 31st, 2021. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried.**

**ONGOING PROJECTS & BUSINESS:**

**Wyandotte Street Art Fair and Social District 2022:** Director Gruber offered a brief update regarding the Wyandotte Social District and 2022 Wyandotte Street Art Fair discussions and approved decisions from the DDA's Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting and the subsequent City Council Meeting held on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The resolution is to have both the Social District operational for all four days of the WSAF and to have another small portion of the

Downtown designated for WSAF City-sponsored alcohol sales at the former Theatre Lot for all four days also.

**Downtown Capital Improvements and Infrastructure Plan:** Director Gruber provided an update regarding the two grants received for the planning of this effort. The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM) Ralph Wilson Jr. Legacy Fund awarded \$50,000 to the DDA for Design & Access Funding and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments awarded another \$26,192 worth of Federal Funding through the Transportation Equity Planning Assistance Program to be matched locally with an additional \$5,808 for a total of \$32,000. Together, the DDA has \$82,000 for planning assistance now dedicated to the Downtown Capital Improvements and Infrastructure Plan. Director Gruber explained that the City Council approved a contract award for \$45,000 with Wade Trim and their Client Funding Director, Wayne Hofmann. He noted that the DDA Board had not had an opportunity to review the contract due to a series of meetings that were not held and other pressing issues that had to be addressed, and that the DDA Finance Committee subsequently reviewed several contracts received by the DDA and then formally made a recommendation to approve the Wade Trim Contract. L. Stevenson offered additional comments regarding the contract, suggesting that the DDA Board and Planners consider incorporating Bishop Park, Museum District and BASF Park/Wyandotte Shores Golf Course all be incorporated into the Wade Trim planning contract. L. Stevenson also requested that Director Gruber seek the capability of the DDA to hire and contract the support of governmental consultants to help in the fundraising efforts.

**Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by A. Majlinger to approve the Downtown Capital Improvements and Infrastructure Master Plan Contract with Wade Trim. Roll Call. All in Favor. Motion carried.**

Director Gruber provided additional insight to the members of the DDA Development Area Citizen's Advisory Council, highlighting the fact that the efforts of the DDA to amend the DDA Plan and to establish the Citizen's Advisory Council is rooted in the effort to conduct long-term major infrastructure improvements and capital improvements throughout the District.

#### **NEW PROJECTS & BUSINESS:**

**Eureka Road Viaduct Maintenance 2022:** Director Gruber provided a background on the 2021 maintenance issues and challenges at the Eureka Road Viaduct, citing an emergency maintenance contract with WH Canon commercial landscape firm. He expressed a need to re-bid and solicit new proposals from other landscape firms and further suggested a desire to return to an annual agreement with a multiyear renewal option to be approved by City Council.

B. Kozinski questioned if the current state of the Viaduct is the final vision for the site, citing many proposed plans that never occurred. He suggested the site is just rocks and that he visits the site frequently, that there is no 'wow factor' and that the site is underwhelming.

Director Gruber expressed thanks for Mr. Kozinski's comments and noted that the next agenda item would be of importance to that discussion. Director Gruber suggested that the item of annual maintenance will be addressed in the coming weeks as the City re-bids the maintenance contract for long-term and ongoing maintenance, but that the item of immediate improvements should be addressed in the next agenda item.

**America In Bloom: EcoConnexions Grant:** Director Gruber provided an overview of the Canadian National Railway America In Bloom: EcoConnexions Grant Program that would allow up to \$25,000 to be matched another \$25,000 locally for landscaping, maintenance and improvements that, to Director Gruber, would help deliver that 'wow factor'. Mr. Kozinski mentioned that he wanted to bring up his concerns because he loves the city and often sees the site, and recounted several proposed improvement projects that never took place at the Viaduct. Director Gruber noted that the site is extremely challenging and that the conditions onsite and around the site make it very difficult to conduct some of the projects discussed in the past. He suggested that the best actions are to focus on what the DDA can control with the resources the DDA has within the budget that the DDA sets, which is why the grant comes into play.

Director Gruber provided some recent history and overview of the Eureka Road Viaduct maintenance and landscaping efforts, noting the 2019 planting program and overhaul of the eight large planter beds that would take several years to establish and cost the DDA \$155,000 total. Since then, the DDA's annual maintenance contract is around \$18,000 which has been awarded to low bidders, which helped maintain the planter beds, but failed to address the large slopes and embankments, which have become progressively overgrown and unkempt. The grant application in question would provide a total project budget of \$50,000 to address the areas not addressed in the 2019 program.

Director Gruber explained that the City of Wyandotte's certified arborist, Brian Martin would be assisting the DDA Director in identifying specific types of tree species that would thrive onsite. In addition, the Director is identifying the flowering ground cover species that would look nice and work well in the sloped alpine setting of the Viaduct. He explained that the Grant Application was not completed yet, and that he would like to see an allocation of funding made by the DDA for Phase 2 replanting of the Viaduct. A. Majlinger suggested several things that the 2019 planting program did not take into a consideration and that the entire site should be removed and replanted, because it never turned out the way it was supposed to, and it never reached its glory. Director Gruber again suggested that the glory of these native perennials will come in years 3, 4 and 5. A. Majlinger suggested that the original plan needs to be done better. Director Gruber suggested that both Ms. Majlinger and Mr. Kozinski bring up important points and that the Viaduct is the gateway to the community. They further discussed that the physical structures of the Viaduct are a huge area of concern for the community.

L. Stevenson cited Christmas Lighting and other installations placed onsite that he thought were very nice and lively. He suggested that the Michigan planting seasons include six months of

downtime and bleakness and that alternatives should consider art installations to offset these down times. Director Gruber cited Mr. Kozinski's comments that alternative plans have been discussed but never enacted, which largely has to do with funding and the lack of resources put towards the Viaduct. The Board also discussed the Roosevelt High School Program that maintained the Viaduct.

Director Gruber suggested delegating the Grant Application to the DDA Design Committee for further discussions and designing. Director Gruber then questioned the Board asking if they felt it appealing to allocate the funding needed to earn the match through this Grant Program. L. Stevenson questioned pricing quotes on the draft application presented to the Board. Director Gruber explained that those prices were examples based on averages pulled from the internet and that Brian Martin would be able to help more accurately quote those numbers. Director Gruber noted that these three agenda items regarding Viaduct Maintenance, Downtown Maintenance and the Viaduct Grant all go hand-in-hand. He suggested that these three plans could be

Rick DeSana questioned how the WH Canon contract was paid, and if there was a special allocation. Director Gruber explained yes and that they were also paid using the leftover balance from the annual maintenance contract that was never paid to the previous contractor. S. Jordan questioned if the Viaduct Maintenance Contract could be used as a supplemental matching fund to the grant application, which Director Gruber confirmed that it could be used as an eligible match. L. Stevenson suggested it go to the Design Committee and questioned to confirm what the DDA paid in the 2019 replanting. Director Gruber confirmed that it was \$155,000. L. Stevenson hoped that there would be a better solution that didn't keep requiring more and more funding. He concurred with B. Kozinski that this is an ongoing point of discussion that seems to continually be addressed without action.

**Downtown Maintenance Staff Person:** Director Gruber shared a position listing for another Downtown Maintenance Staff Person to support Maggie Molnar with landscaping and maintenance Downtown. He noted that the DDA has additional part time staff funds budgeted for 2022, and if come spring the position is not filled, that those funds can be reallocated to hire a professional contractor, which could liaise with the Viaduct Maintenance Contract.

Holidays Downtown Wyandotte 2021: Director Gruber shared a list of updates regarding Downtown Wyandotte Holiday Events including a Downtown Food Drive for the Waynewright Community Meals aka Wyandotte Soup Kitchen supported by 30 businesses; the Downtown Tree Lighting, Cookie Walk and 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Parade; Visits With Santa; Santa Pub Crawl; Winter Beer and Holiday Cocktail Festival; and the NYE Ball Drop

Mayor DeSana requested Director Gruber share these notifications with the Wyandotte Warrior.

L. Stevenson explained that there is active legislation at the State of Michigan House of Representatives discussing the permanent establishment of the Social District Law. He recommended that the DDA Board and City of Wyandotte go on record with supporting the

Social District Laws. Mayor DeSana suggested L. Stevenson make a motion to pass a DDA resolution recommending that to the City Council.

**Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by S. Jordan to recommend to City Council and Mayor to draft a letter of support to Wyandotte's Elected Officials and governmental representatives in support of the permanent establishment of the Social District Law. All in Favor. Motion carried.**

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** 5:30 PM, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 which will coincide with the second annual DDA Public Information Meeting and the DDA Development Area Citizen Advisory Council

**ADJOURNMENT:** 6:11 PM

**Motion by Mayor DeSana, supported by S. Jordan to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Gruber, DDA Director