

**Downtown Development Authority
Special Meeting Minutes**

5:30 PM, Tuesday, November 23rd, 2021
HYBRID MEETING

Held in-person at Wyandotte City Hall: 3200 Biddle Ave., and Virtually via Zoom

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rick DeSana, John Jarjosa, Norm Walker

OTHERS PRESENT: Joe Gruber, DDA Director and Six members of the Development Area Citizen's Advisory Council (DACAC): five in-person: Rose DeSana, Charlie Mix, Sal Noto, Jane Rasmussen, and Joe Tarris: and one virtually: Andy Morsello.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES & AGENDA:

Minutes from November 9th, 2021 DDA Meeting and Agenda for November 23rd, 2021 Special DDA Meeting.

Motion by P. Slack, Supported by A. Majlinger, to approve the Minutes from November 9th, 2021 DDA Meeting and Agenda for November 23rd, 2021 Special DDA Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

INFORMATION TO RECEIVE & PLACE ON FILE: None

MONTHLY REVENUE/EXPENDITURE REPORT

Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Reports: None

ONGOING PROJECTS & BUSINESS

1. America In Bloom: EcoConnexions Grant Application: Eureka Road Viaduct: Downtown Gateway Phase 2 Planting Project: Director Gruber provided an overview of the DDA's activities since the prior meeting of November 9th, as well as an overview of the Eureka Road Viaduct current budget of \$18,500 for annual maintenance, and the grant application requested increase of another \$12,315 for a total budget of \$30,815 to match the \$25,000 being offered from America In Bloom grant.

Jane Rasmussen approached the board in favor of the Phase 2 planting project. She requested the board approve the funding for the project, while also suggesting the Board investigate low maintenance plantings, impact of dead leaves and foliage obstructing drainage that may cause problems, and future funding for maintenance so the plantings can be sustained into the future. She suggested that beyond landscaping, additional consideration be given to signage, art and other fixtures to enhance and improve the viaduct.

Chairwoman Slack reiterated the importance of the DDA's increased contribution amount to the project, specifically so that the project can qualify for the \$25,000 matching funds. L. Stevenson questioned Director Gruber on the previous Phase 1 project budget. Director Gruber responded that the project budget was \$155,000 and mainly addressed the 8 planter beds. L. Stevenson suggested this would be phase two and theorized there may be another 17 or 18 phases of replanting. He walked by the Viaduct, stating Phase 1 was done very nicely, and that most of the complaints coming from the Viaduct are regarding the weeds on the street, between the street and the curb, and the chipping concrete on the railroad viaducts. He stated that the \$155,000 worth of plantings look very good. He supports the phase 2 planting project and additional expenditure for the grant, but it goes against his grain in considering what can be done elsewhere throughout Downtown with these funds. He recounted his experience in Royal Oak, stating they're the most vibrant Downtown in Southeast Michigan and their Viaduct looks like Wyandotte's, maybe even worse than Wyandotte's. L. Stevenson stated that he would not necessarily support a phase 3 if there were one, but that he supports this phase 2 because of the grant. He supported Jane Rasmussen's idea for more art at the Viaduct, because Michigan's seasons and gray and mucky winters make landscaping difficult. He questioned if the grant has restrictions or if it could be used for art or other installations.

Motion by L. Stevenson, Supported by P. Slack, to concur with the recommendation of the DDA Design Committee to appropriate \$12,315 from the DDA Fund Balance and amend the Eureka Road Viaduct Budget, and to approve the America In Bloom: EcoConnexions Grant Application for the Downtown Gateway Phase 2 Planting Project. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

Director Gruber reiterated that the reason for this special meeting was to allocate the necessary funding and get the proper approvals prior to the December 1st grant deadline.

L. Stevenson excused himself from the meeting. Director Gruber noted that the DDA Board still had five members present and still had quorum. Chairwoman Slack and the Board elected to proceed with the remaining items of the DDA special meeting agenda.

2. Wyandotte Social District

- **Amendments to Local Maintenance and Operations Plan:** Director Gruber provided background of the Social District operations in 2021, stating that he held several meetings with the Wyandotte Police Department and the Chief of Police discussing the hours of operation. It was mutually agreed that the City and DDA would let the summer months of busy activities and events, namely the Wyandotte Street Art Fair, conclude prior to considering an extension of the hours of operation for the Wyandotte Social District. Director Gruber shared a letter from the Chief of Police from November 15, 2021 stating that there were no major incidents or reports from the Social District throughout the year, and that he was supportive of extending the Wyandotte Social District hours of operation from 8pm to 11pm daily. Chairwoman Slack and A. Majlinger supported the extension also. Director Gruber stated that the Local Maintenance and Operations Plan still gives power to the Chief of Police and City Council to amend any part of the Plan, and that the Mayor could also be granted this authority. Mayor DeSana shared that it was his idea for the sake of public safety and security of Downtown Wyandotte and to ensure this change could happen quickly if needed.

Motion by P. Slack, Supported by A. Majlinger, to recommend to the City Council an amendment of the Wyandotte Social District Local Maintenance and Operations Plan to extend the hours of operation from 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM daily, and to authorize the Mayor and Chief of Police to roll back the hours of the Wyandotte Social District as deemed necessary for the sake of public safety and security. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried

- **Governmental Support Letters:** Director Gruber provided an update regarding new State legislation currently under review in the House and Senate that would lift the sunset of the original Social District Law that carried an expiration date of 12/31/2024, and that if passed, would permanently establish Social Districts in the State of Michigan. Director Gruber drafted a letter of request for Wyandotte's elected officials to support the passing of House Bill 5090. If approved by the DDA, the letter would be sent to the City Council for final approval before being sent to the elected officials.

Motion by B. Kozinski, Supported by A. Majlinger, to recommend to the City Council a letter of request for support to approve House Bill 5090 to be sent to Wyandotte's elected State Representative and State Senator. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried

NEW PROJECTS & BUSINESS

3. Legal Assistance: DDA Plan Amendment Process: Engagement Letter: Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C.: Director Gruber provided a brief over of the DDA Plan amendment process and shared a letter of engagement from the City's bond counsel at Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone to provide legal assistance to facilitate that Plan Amendment process and to ensure that the plan was in compliance with State and Local law.

Jane Rasmussen noted that the engagement letter does not outline the cost of services or payments to be made and requested that Director Gruber share those figures. Director Gruber confirmed that Jane was correct, stating that the firm will operate on an hourly basis utilizing a payment structure for three different levels of attorneys: Partners charge \$320/hour, Associates charge \$250/hour, Paralegals Charge \$200/hour. The firm typically charges \$2,500-\$5,000 per plan on average. Director Gruber stated that the DDA and TIFA would each have an up-to-and-not-to-exceed budget of \$5,000 each, for a total of \$10,000. He stated that doing two plans together should result in cost savings, and that he has continued to do most of the heavy lifting and planning upfront, and he would like to think it should be more cost effective. But his recommendation was for \$5,000 budget from the DDA for Legal Assistance for the Plan update process.

Charlie Mix approached the Board and shared that he is currently the Chairman of the TIFA/BRA Board for over 25 years and has utilized Miller Canfield many, many times for all things dealing with municipalities and bonds and that they were absolutely excellent. He stated that they know what they're doing. Mr. Mix applauded Mayor DeSana for pursuing an extension to the DDA and TIFA lifetime. He stated that the TIFA was well-funded and would likely not have a problem with the \$5,000 cost, but that he could not speak for the Board. Mayor DeSana thanked Mr. Mix for his efforts and contributions to the City and asked if the same proposal will go before the TIFA Board, which Mr. Mix confirmed that it would.

Mayor DeSana asked if Mr. Mix had been on the TIFA Board since its conception. He responded that it was close. Mr. Mix provided a detailed overview of the history of the City, the original founding of the TIFA and their early work. He stated these bodies were so critical and helpful to the post-industrial redevelopment of the City of Wyandotte and have really paved the way for making Wyandotte a great town. Mayor DeSana expressed his hopes that the TIFA and DDA can continue their great work through an extension and amendment of the Plans.

Director Gruber stated that a thriving downtown and thriving residential neighborhoods go hand in hand. He continued to say that the DDA does not have any money budget in the DDA Attorney's Fees and that he recommended the appropriation of \$5,000 into that budget and to approve the letter of engagement with Miller Canfield.

Motion by A. Majlinger, Supported by B. Kozinski to appropriate \$5,000 from the DDA Fund Balance and to amend the DDA Attorney Fees budget and to approve the Letter of Engagement with Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone P.L.C. for the legal support with the DDA Plan Update. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried

4. DDA Meeting Schedule 2022: Director Gruber shared a proposed schedule with the Board outlining that the DDA would still meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM in City Hall Council Chambers; that the DACAC and Public information meetings would be in June and December; and that the DDA would continue offering a virtual option for participation as long as State and County governments allowed.

Motion by P. Slack, Supported by B. Kozinski to approve the proposed DDA Meeting Schedule for 2022. All in favor, motion carried.

Chairwoman Slack offered thanks and gratitude to all the Board Members who take the time to make the meetings as well as for the DACAC Members for their participation.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: 5:30 PM, December 14th, 2021

ADJOURNMENT: 6:03 PM

Motion by B. Kozinski, supported by to S. Jordan. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Gruber, DDA Director