



**Ferndale Downtown Development Authority
Virtual Board of Directors Meeting
THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020 @ 8:00 AM**
ZOOM MEETING ONLINE: [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/J/766956112](https://zoom.us/j/766956112)
PHONE: 877 853 5247 (TOLL FREE)
MEETING ID: 766 956 112

Minutes

1. ROLL CALL

CALL TO ORDER: 8:04 am

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jacki Smith, PJ Jacokes, Nathan Martin, Sarah Brown, Jerome Raska, Mayor Piana

MEMBERS ABSENT: Blake Scheer, Chris Johnson, Janice Semma

STAFF PRESENT: Lena Stevens, Executive Director; Sommer Realy, Engagement Manager

GUESTS PRESENT:

- Matthew Naud, Associate Senior Consultant - RRS
- Kyle Pollet, Assistant City Manager (Zoom meeting moderator)
- Joseph Gacioch, City Manager
- Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director
- Dan Antosik, DPW Manager
- Sheryl Stubblefield, Finance Director
- Joy Wells, Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce
- Justin Lyons, Community and Economic Development (CED) Planning Manager
- Vincent Palazzolo, Police Chief
- Steve Dumont, owner of Grasshopper and DesignStruct
- John McCann, owner of Grasshopper and DesignStruct
- Scott Galloway, Galloway and Collens legal representative for Grasshopper and DesignStruct
- Phylicia Harris, Everything HR.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Motion by member Jerome Raska seconded by member Nathan Martin to approve the amended agenda. **All ayes, motion carries.***

3. EMERGENCY MEETING PROCEDURES

- a. Update from Executive Director regarding virtual meeting structure and protocol
Governor's Executive Order 2020-15 provided temporary authorization of remote, electronic meetings for public bodies. On March 25, 2020 the Ferndale City Council made a motion to authorize electronic meetings for the City Council and all other public bodies.
Executive Director Stevens provided guidance on protocols for electronic meetings and public comments with guidance received from City Attorney Dan Christ.
Audio and video available to members and participants, use discretion on when you turn them on. Board members are automatically on. Suggested to mute when not

speaking. Meetings will operate the same as they do normally. Kyle Pollet, Assistant City Manager monitored meeting. Public comment is available. All phone lines will be unmuted during call to audience to allow for public comment. Board Chair, Jacki Smith acknowledges and appreciates the ability to fulfill duties.

4. COMMUNITY REPORTS

Joy Wells, Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce; no comment.

Jennifer Mar, Ferndale Area District Library Director; absent

5. CALL TO AUDIENCE

Zoom moderator Kyle Pollet, Assistant City Manager stated no raised hands and one phone call. Presenter, Steve Dumont called in due to computer not having a mic.

6. PRESENTATIONS

a. COVID-19 Business Response Team Update

Executive Director Stevens reported the City of Ferndale, DDA and Chamber have adapted and joined efforts. Changes have happened drastically and quickly. Stay Home, Stay Safe is currently set for April 13, but it is reasonable to assume it may be extended.

Vincent Palazzolo, Police Chief discussed the impact of COVID19 on the department and community. About a dozen calls questioning what essential is have been received. No uptick in business community of break ins. Positive downtown environment, no one is out and so you are seen easily. Chief Palazzolo asked for questions, concerns or comments.

Member Sarah Brown asked if the state of emergency also modified the Stay Home, Stay Safe order. As of now, Executive Director Stevens stated it has not officially been extended, but it is reasonable to expect an extension.

Board Chair, Jacki Smith asked how the DDA is doing wellness checks. Executive Director Stevens mentioned staff, Sommer Realy has been doing wellness checks with phone calls and emails.

Joe Gacioch, City Manager mentioned Parks and Recreation outreach protocol for seniors and wellness checks. Board Chair, Jacki Smith appreciates all the forward thinking.

Executive Director Stevens expressed the impressive level of innovation seen within the business community. Within a week, businesses were proactively offering curbside pickup, creating new safety protocols, or pivoting to making Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Discussion was then opened to Board Members to share personal business stories.

Board Member Jerome Raska sold large building and relocated to a smaller facility at 522 E. Nine Mile. Member Raska mentioned that the Great lakes Floral Association (GLFA) is working with Governor Whitmer and discussing the need of comfort provided

by florists during this pandemic. Mother's Day is coming up and it is a holiday that allows retail businesses to sustain.

Member PJ Jacokes states he is being a parent during this shut down. No success to date with Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan. Not sure how his business will survive this.

Mayor Piana shared her grief process over the regression the pandemic will cause the business community. She noted that she is hopeful and optimistic with the innovation from the business community, how well the Business Response Team has worked together.

Member Nathan Martin has been unable to operate Ink Addict. Gift cards are available, and their plan to assist community businesses with branded material was not feasible following the Stay Home, Stay Safe order.

Sarah Brown mentioned hosting online CrossFit classes for the first time, worked well but not a lot of traction. Most members are from Ferndale area and they have been able to continue offering virtual support to clients. They distributed equipment to members to use at home and provide daily online live workouts, games, etc. Trying to balance fitness and social interaction.

Executive Director Stevens offered insight on the COVID19 Business Response Team. Made up of Joy Wells (Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce), Jordan Twardy (Community and Economics Department) and Executive Director Stevens (DDA). Having this team in place provides a huge benefit to organizing and navigating the details surrounding the resources available to businesses during COVID19. Business emails provide easy to understand and follow information, and that contact list has grown in recent weeks.

Executive Director Stevens provided details on the activities of the team. Wellness check calls from DDA staff have not all been successful with a lot of hang ups and messages not returned so focus has been shifted back to email and social media outreach. Business resource website has been updated continually. Collaboration has begun with Oakland County regarding the Small Business Stabilization Grant program for District 12: Hazel Park, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Oakland Township and Ferndale. Unemployment benefits have been expanded, but the state system is bogged down.

Executive Director Stevens provided updates on marketing and promotion efforts. Initiatives have included curbside pickup and social distancing bingo. Downtown Ferndale website has been revised so that tabs are easier to navigate. Sadie Quagliotto has been hired as the social media manager which has been increasing engagement with the public as well as with business owners. Hubspot is being developed as a central business database that is intended to be shared with other departments. DDA is monitoring COVID-19 business email and phone line.

Member PJ Jacokes asked for explanation on the Hubspot process. Executive Director Stevens explained that Engagement Manager Sommer Realy contacts businesses and inputs notes and creates tickets to help address business needs.

b. Downtown Maintenance Update

Dan Antosik, DPW Manager offered a quick update. Small crew has been in operation since March 14. Focus is on sanitation, developed small groups. A lot of the power washing done. Prepared flower beds and started of Schiffer park construction, relocated a lot of the trees and bushes around downtown. Reduced staff, half on and half off. Schedule until end of April. An update on flowers status from nursery will be provided to Director Stevens this week. Assumed everything is being tended to, unsure of COVID impact at nursery. Would like to do more but need to be diligent on social distancing. Difficult with tasks at hand and staying 6ft away. West Troy water main was completed during the first week of stay at home order. Project went well. Schiffer park has fence and contractor will begin working once Governor removes executive order.

Member Jerome Raska suggested adding some additional waste cans at locations where plastic gloves are being disposed incorrectly. Western Market and or Ferndale foods are most impacted, private property. Mayor Piana stated Western Market is doing well, Ferndale foods may need some help.

c. Downtown Waste Management Presentation

Executive Director Stevens introduced Matthew Naud from Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) to share current findings and possible solutions and recommendations. Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) selected through competitive RFP to provide downtown waste management.

Matthew Naud offered a detailed presentation with the following. Project Scope: Waste Characterization, Regional Facilities Analysis, Emerging Technologies and Management practices, Projected Waste Streams, Gap Analysis and Recommendations, and Final Report Master Plan

RRS interviewed with 5 business locations. Results are positive yet offer room for improvement. Material streams flow chart shared. Hard to get an accurate number of waste volume from downtown due to all residential combined. 14% diversion rate in DDA. Budget city wide is \$3 million for sanitation with millage of \$1.2 mil, difference made up with special assessments. In 2018-2019, \$2 million paid to SOCRRA. Staff contract and equipment costs, \$1 million. Ferndale pays, \$4-5000 a month to SOCRRA for special pickups in downtown waste collection including extra solid waste pickups. DDA funds DPW for public receptacle management cost could be reduced if maintained. Recommends that Ferndale set goals to reduce waste, make infrastructure investments such as four enclosed collection areas, new landfill compactors with sensors, new combined single-stream recycling compactors, public containers with recycling. Recommends designating a dedicated sanitation staff person, implement a green business recognition program and develop new policies and ordinances. In addition, partner with SOCRRA or another business on an organic waste pilot program. Suggests looking into possible new funding and incentives for improving city sanitation. Presentation included photo examples of new sensor technology, green roof on top

compactor enclosure. SOCRRA might assist with collection bin style. Currently 60 recycling bins in use downtown. New money from the state, \$14 million for recycling programs and waste management. The recommended dedicated sanitation staff person would manage the green business program, policies and ordinances. Utilize SOCRRA composting services or partner with another recycler for organic waste management. Suggested that investing in education and training costs will reduce overall cost and expenses in future sanitation practice. Opportunities mentioned were leverage partnerships, collection area improvement, compactor equipment street containers, strong diversion program – 40% is being thrown out rather than recycled, remove food waste. 14 % to 40%. Stretch diversion. Most waste is from preparation of food in restaurants. DDA TIF capture 30,000 from sanitation millage.

Executive Director Stevens appreciated the detailed presentation. Called on member Sarah Brown to add input. Member Brown expressed enclosed compactors are number one and is curious what five businesses offered feedback. Mentioned a key fob would help to locate who needs education on operations. Member Brown shared her view of cigarette butts and smell are most concerning at the location behind her business, CrossFit. Member Brown is excited to see what can be approved; it is time for a clean over hall in all areas with opening of the dot. Member Brown also agreed is it beneficial to incorporate the art and cultural commission.

Executive Director Stevens pointed out that sidewalk flower planters are being used as ashtrays. Board Chair Jacki Smith mentioned seeing in other downtowns, signs in planters discouraging cigarette butt waste.

Board Chair Jacki Smith stated for businesses that are out of the downtown area, waste management is on their own. Businesses in downtown do not have to pay to have trash removed like those outside the downtown area. Those who do not dispose correctly is concerning. Key fob is a great idea.

Member Jerome Raska commented that businesses in downtown pay higher rent that may off set cost of waste disposal. Member Raska wondered if there is an opportunity or incentive to hire same carrier and get better prices. Matthew Naud from Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) offered example of the City of Ann Arbor has franchised it all to one vendor for discount. Executive Director Stevens clarified the commercial franchise is for the DDA area but could be expanded to include all of City.

Member Jerome Raska stated his flower shop uses SOCRRA and cardboard consumes most of the waste. Location does not have receptacle and SOCCRA picks it up. Organic greens go into normal trash. Cardboard is a great weed barrier. Ferndale is a great community to use this cardboard and offers it to anyone who would like to use it.

Mayor Piana stated this is a great path forward and it shows the unfairness of the system and the inconsistent service. Consistently and fairness is what is being expressed. The DDA will bump into more issues of fairness as the DDA continues the enhancement. Many downtowns have put a ban on smoking downtown for public health and cleanness. Wellness as a focus.

Dan Antosik, DPW Manager stated SOCRRA is good with working with businesses in and around downtown. SOCRRA has cardboard bins and 95-gallon bins for those who need it. DPW is eager to get these recommendations underway. Both DPW and DDA are in process of taking the RRS recommendation and preparing budget for coming fiscal year for implementation.

Member Jerome Raska shared he has been in business with SOCRRA for 14 years and cardboard bins are not large enough and the new location limits space.

Member Nathan Martin uses the larger bin for his cardboard and is happy with service. Executive Director Stevens is impressed with discussion, agreed with DPW on revising budget to support the recommendations.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meetings held March 12, 2020
*Motion by member Jerome Raska seconded by member PJ Jacokes to approve the consent agenda as presented. **All Ayes, motion carries.***

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Payment in Lieu of Parking Request Approval for 22757 Woodward Ave.
Details and introduction explained by Executive Director Stevens. Board does not have to take any action only offer recommendations.

Board chair Jacki Smith shared thoughts over previous approvals that have taken place. She stated it is hard to recommend without boundaries in place so that what is recommended is met. DDA Boards job is to manage growth of downtown, recommendations continue to come in that are outside of the vision determined. Board chair Smith is unable to offer a recommendation.

Member Sarah Brown questioned whether not it will it come back to us on the designs or is this the last time.

Justin Lyons, CED Planning Manager explained the process. Process begins with DDA Board offering their recommendations on project submitted and then CED department presents to the DDA Board what is next from city side and what is the next step. This project submitted a site plan of 85,000 square feet with parking in lieu and are bound to the plan that has been submitted. If city council has recommendations to conditions of approval can be put in place. Redesign to an existing rooftop is what was proposed. DDA board is advisory only, no approval process.

Member Sarah Brown asked if the design changed and effected parking would board see it again. Justin Lyons stated city staff would review any changes moving forward, if needed could come back to board.

Only project since 2016 to go through this parking in lieu recommendation process was Brooks Brewing.

Mayor Piana asked Board chair to explain where approval was granted but did not stay within recommendation. Board chair Jacki Smith stated Rustbelt went a mile when

given an inch. DDA did not approve Rustbelt. Curious what happens if the demand of need changes and then business adapts to the needs?

Member Jerome Raska added support to Board chair Jacki Smith concerns, it is more of a frustration. What is the logic in the recommendation if they are not honored? Presented one way and in the end, it is the other. Simply a city situation the DDA has no authority.

Executive Director Stevens asked Planning Manager Justin Lyons to clarify on Rustbelt request and recommendation. His understanding was they were the last of new liquor license. Hours of operation are dictated by liquor license. Board chair Jacki Smith expressed extreme support of Rust Belt and only mentioned this because of confusion in the role the DDA board plays. Board chair commented that this project checks all boxes, legally tight, presented well but still do not feel qualified to recommend. Trust is with CED department and Planning Manager Justin Lyons in protecting the visions of the DDA Board.

Mayor Piana reinstates that the DDA questions their role and influence in forcing a recommendation and offers insight. Traditionally city leverages the DDA on key growth changes on downtown. It may not have teeth but recognizes the approval amid the business model. The DDA acting as a gate keeper is a slippery slope. Businesses are going to want to adapt and evolve their business models. Mayor cautions of the future and to recognize the growth pressure on the parking and surrounding community. Pros and cons are being weighed on parking, is unhealthy when thinking about growth of downtown. Further discussions between City and DDA should take place. Post COVID19 recovery process may have many businesses adapt to the new ways.

Board chair Jacki Smith expressed it is not that we approve, we do not have any objections. The word approve is not accurate. Objection or not, may be a little bit clearer.

Member PJ Jackoes shared this insight on DesignStruct; they have designed much of this city and put a lot of pride into the growth of downtown. Trust is in the source and ordinance are in place to control the concerns.

Executive Director Stevens suggested a new motion to recommend with objection or no objection. Motion to support the application moving forward and outlined areas would be noted. Request city council pay attention to these perspectives.

Member Nathan Martin agreed with discussion and questions why board spends time on this matter. Planning Manager Justin Lyons stated city council does take DDA recommendations into consideration. Board in partnership with Council to recommend approval.

Mayor Piana mentioned it sounds like this it is time to discuss the payment in lieu of parking needs to be addressed, time to review policy. Meeting time and energy should be focused on productive matters.

Scott Galloway, Galloway and Collens legal representative for Grasshopper and DesignStruct raised hand. Addressed board and thanked members for the opportunity to be heard and consideration of project. Requests the board provide a recommendation. Galloway stated they appreciate the concerns and would like to work in a collaborative fashion. Concerned over technical recommendations. The minutes reflect the not recommended and it changed.

Steve Dumont, owner of Grasshopper and DesignStruct addressed the board stating the vested interest with every effort and care with all wishes. Work harmonically with the DDA and community. His business will be run as it normally does and act as an asset for the business community.

Board chair Jacki Smith stated the DDA Board has no opposition in the roof top going in. Executive Director Stevens confirmed this is not time to change language. Viable partnership and we need to have open dialogues. Not the place to change process.

*Motion by member Jerome Raska, seconded by member PJ Jackoes to recommend that the Ferndale City Council approves the applicant's payment in lieu of parking request at 22757 Woodward Avenue in accordance with Ordinance No. 1087, Section 24-223 (k).
All ayes, motion carries.*

b. Update on COVID-19 Budget Impacts to DDA

Executive Director Stevens explained changes and status to budget. At the March meeting the Board voted to send budget to council for approval. It will go forward as it is. To timely to change it. This is more of a working document. Where things are on hold and where to build in space to what we do not know. Build trust between board and Executive Director. Flexibility is in place. Council and DDA will be gathering again maybe in July to review aspects to support the impact of COVID. Conceptual, \$55,000 paused or reduced FY 19-20 and took \$20,000 towards business support. July/august to be determined time to revise budget. Nothing removed, items on hold.

Member Jerome Raska thanked Executive Director Stevens for doing a wonderful job, appreciates the insight and sharing for all to understand. Board Chair Jacki Smith expressed appreciation of forward thinking and the collaboration with other departments.

Executive Director Stevens asked Board if the idea of blocking off cash services to support the unknown is understood. Member Sarah Brown stated since no one knows what it is going to happen, it may have to be determined be week by week. Board chair Jacki Smith gives authority to Executive Director Stevens to pivot as needed.

Member Nathan Martin asked if there is insight on businesses who are closing and the effect of revenue. Executive Director Stevens stated there is no way of knowing. The larger economic figure will change things locally.

Sheryl Stubblefield, Finance Director explained revenue for DDA property tax is determined December 31, tax revenue and capture will stay level, stating the impact will

be next year. December 31 of 2021 revenues will be revisited. Business loss may happen, but the impact will not be felt, property owners still pay taxes.

Executive Director Stevens explained and confirmed any amount above \$5,000 would be brought to board for approval. No action needed. Member Jerome Raska added caution moving forward, budget is diversified in spending and supports all businesses.

c. HR Services Agreement for local businesses with Everything HR

Executive Director Stevens explained the origin of this service and discussion amongst the business resource team. Detroit through DTE received a grant that is funding a Everything HR campaign. Everything HR works with businesses from 300 to 3 employees. They offer business support in how to manage staff during the current crisis. Resource for understanding laws like the CARESact. A contract from Everything HR was provided in board packet outlining the resources that are available. Contract lists a rate of \$60 per hour. Executive Director Stevens suggests the total spending should be stopped at \$15,000. Contract can change and it can be cancelled at any time. No demand, no requirement to pay.

Executive Director Stevens shared member Blake Scheer's concern - is this too late, should we put our money in help other areas, would like to use a local business to keep money in Ferndale.

Member Jerome Raska questioned how the businesses understand what services are available. Stated a survey possibly will be needed.

Mayor Piana offered context where the idea of implementing EverythingHR stemmed from. Agreed with concern about timing and states maybe two weeks ago was better but this is a rapid response service. Mentions that a range of rapid response services should be and are available. Mayor believes accounting and tax help is needed as well. Suggested the DDA maybe should revisit offering legal support and do a survey of when leases are up to assist those who cannot afford lease negotiations. EveryThingHR is a start.

Member Nathan Martin said he personally would not use service but it is nice resource for others. Agrees with Member Raska's concern over implantation and how to get message to masses.

Member PJ Jacokes agreed with Member Martin and stated COVID response is better than it has ever been. Member Jacokes finds comfort in people using service if needed and communicated correctly. Confirmed if it is being used, we pay; if not used, we do not pay.

Member Nathan Martin suggested keeping it at 5 hours and capped at \$5,000. Executive Director Stevens would have approval to raise to \$10,000 if needed.

Board Chair Jacki Smith agreed this is a starting point of rapid response. Asked if City is looking at this service for non-downtown businesses? Executive Director Stevens stated that the DDA would test waters and if needed can collaborate for city wide.

Motion by member PJ Jacokes, seconded by member Sarah Brown to authorize the Executive Director to enter a contract with Everything HR starting with \$10,000. All ayes, motion carries.

8. CALL TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS, BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF (note more than 3 minutes)

Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director announced that on Monday's council meeting you will hear about how the City is making similar investments, support services, designating liaisons and preparations to pivot due to COVID19. Impressed and grateful for the level on efforts the DDA Board and Executive Director Stevens has provided.

Joe Gacioch, City Manager raised hand. He complemented leadership and feels strong about it all, very impressed. (Audio glitch) Provided update on The dot, like other businesses construction was forced to stop following executive order. The office development component is not being pursued this year, consequence of COVID caused investors to back out. Finishing West Troy and the parking deck is highest priority. If construction can start in May, hopeful it can open in August. City will pursue negotiation with Versa as they navigate through financial changes. Completing this project and opening West Troy Street is critical. Yearly budget will be discussed at Monday's council meeting and there are no changes to sanitation. Waste management and over all cleanliness is unchanged.

Member PJ Jackoes inquired on value in supporting business that close or offer legal help, for those who must close how to help.

Member Nathan Martin asked about volunteer opportunities available? For students, elderly to participate. Joe Gacioch, City Manager said not at this time due to shelter in place. Gleaners and YMCA are working out of Kulick community center. Not recruiting volunteers. Member Martin offered resource for masks, \$4.90 each and has 100 on order.

Member Jerome Raska announced his business; Blumz by JR Designs has relocated across the street to 522 E. Nine Mile Road. Building located at 503 E. Nine Mile is back for sale due to buyers not showing at closing. Asked for leads and opportunities. Mentioned building is available for nonprofits to utilize to fulfil needs for COVID19 support.

Joy Wells, Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce announced effort and anticipation in launching gift card sales for local business on website, hopefully in 7 to 10 days. Set up fee is waived. Public is encouraged to buy for future purchase.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by member Jerome Raska, seconded by member Nathan Martin to adjourn the meeting at 11:24 A.M. All ayes, motion carries.