



**Ferndale Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, March 12, 2020

8:00 A.M.

Ferndale City Hall
300 E. 9 Mile
Ferndale, Mi 48220

Minutes

1. ROLL CALL

CALL TO ORDER: 8:07 am

MEMBERS PRESENT: Blake Scheer, Jacki Smith, Sarah Brown, PJ Jacokes, Mayor Piana, Nathan Martin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jerome Raska, Chris Johnson, Janice Semma

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

GUESTS PRESENTERS:

- Jenny Mar, Ferndale Area District Library Director
- Jack Pesha, City of Ferndale Fire Chief
- Dan Antosik, DPW Manager
- Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director
- LaReina Wheeler, Ferndale Parks and Recreation Director
- 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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Motion by member PJ Jacokes seconded by member Blake Scheer to approve the agenda.
All ayes, motion carries.*

3. COMMUNITY REPORTS

Jenny Mar, Ferndale Area District Library Director

Provided a COVID-19 virus update. Library is taking recommended precautions. No events have been cancelled at this time. Area library directors are communicating over approach.

Upcoming events like guitar peddle on March 22 may be pushed to May. Battle of Books will take place again this year, adults and kids are assigned 6 books and can sign up as a team or be assigned to one is scheduled for March 29th. Director Mar mentioned that they will have commemorative mugs in November celebrating the library's 90th anniversary on 9 Mile. They would also like to dig up the time capsule in courtyard this summer. On March 6 about 125 people attended the 90th Anniversary Dance Party where Detroit Marching Band provided music. Video programming is an option and public can watch from home, virtual story time. Library will adapt as things change. Member Blake Scheer requested a copy of the library events calendar, Director Mar mentioned that they are listed online and Facebook is most up to date. Member Blake Scheer mentioned Level One Bank staff appreciated the printed calendar that used to be provided.

Executive Director Stevens

Provided update on behalf of the the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce. The Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the South Oakland County Kiwanis is hosting a unicorn derby. Businesses have an opportunity to sponsor a unicorn, decorate it and participate in a derby that takes place on April 24 at Incubizo. Event includes a race, raffle, awards for most spirited jockey, potential for lots of fun. The DDA is assisting with the poster and graphic design. Member Blake Scheer mentioned that the Royal Oak Chamber will be attending the Business after 5, at the end of month taking place at Urbanrest in Ferndale.

4. CALL TO AUDIENCE

Ferndale Area District Library Director, Mar announced the Library will be closed on March 20 for drinking fountain replacement.

5. PRESENTATIONS

a. COVID-19 Coronavirus Preparedness and Communications Update

City of Ferndale Fire Chief, Jack Pesha stated he is the main point of contact for COVID-19 information and has accepted a new role with Oakland County last night when Oakland County activated the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) in Waterford. Meetings are held remotely. Information is unfolding rapidly. COVID-19 information presentations have been taking place around town and will be provided at the Business Meet Up on March 31, 2020.

Message is not to cause panic in approaching public. Aspects change every moment and come March 31 the presentation may be different. Recommendations are: If you or your employee are sick, they should be encouraged to stay home. Public health is not a punishment. Simply wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Those who are elderly and or have an immune deficiency are most susceptible.

No events have been canceled. Information and recommendations from the state's health department will be followed.

International travel and domestic interaction are not recommended at this time. There are two cases in Oakland County and Wayne County. Practice social distancing and keep 6 ft apart from people. Referring to document from Oakland County, recommendation to postpone social gatherings of 150 people.

Board Chair Jacki Smith states that it is a reiteration of what she has heard, nervous how it will affect business.

Board Member PJ Jacokes asked for recommendation on where to find hand sanitizer. Board Chair Smith mentioned Grainger, Uline, Amazon, any box supply company. Fire Chief Pesha warned that if hand sanitizer stations are installed, it is flammable and placement of them will be inspected.

Member Blake Scheer asked if there has been any discussion about cash as a method for the virus is being transferred. Fire Chief Pesha stated that from what they know at this time, the virus can stay alive for 12 hours on metal and 6 hours on fabric. Fire Chief Pesha mentioned flu strains do cause death and numbers are greater but that virus is known. This COVID-19 is new. A 15-minute COVID-19 informational presentation is offered to any individual business.

Executive Director Stevens shared the current impact to DDA office. Sommer Realy is officially a full time employee. The DDA department is going to test teleworking and use when feasible. Unsure how it will impact operations. Limit work related gathering. Executive Director Stevens expressed support for cancelling member attendance at The National Main Street Conference scheduled for May. Recommended course of action for upcoming Spring Fever, approved at last meeting, it is not best time encourage gatherings. Important to protect public and business health. Looking at how to implement various tools and assistance. Board declared leaving it in Executive Director Stevens hands to make the decision.

b. Meeting Kickoff Updates from Executive Director

Executive Director Stevens announced the new full-time staff member, Sommer Realy as the Engagement Manager. Margo and Max opened in the Boston Tea Room space; NovaCare opened inside of the Urgent Care.

Last Monday, Affirmations basement experienced damage due to a sewer back up in Withington ally, along with several businesses along West Nine Mile. DPW was on sight right away. Took one week to get water flowing at 100%. Looking into how to avoid this in the future.

New water main will be replaced on West Troy, all lead or galvanized supply lines will be replaced in compliance with state standards. Outreach to businesses done by DDA and DPW.

Schiffer Park construction has begun. DPW is finishing up and then WCI will be put up fences. Pedestrian walkway is in place and ADA compliant, sidewalk is remaining open. Outreach to residents and businesses by email and mailed letters. Ferndale Haus received a special letter providing redirection of access to parking while the Planavan access is closed. Overall positive interaction with adjacent properties.

Executive Director Stevens and DDA staff member Sommer Realy met with the Downtown Detroit Partnership last week to learn about the success, growth, what they offer. Provided insight and collaboration on how other Cities are handling the current pandemic. COVID-19 plan, in 24 hours went from step 1 to step 4.

Executive Director Stevens introduced Parks and Recreation Director, LaRenina Wheeler. Director Wheeler took a moment to gratefully thank the DDA board for their approval of funds for the Schiffer Park project. Expressed the good in the DDA board and staff share

the same vision with Parks and Recreation. Letter of gratitude and a gift given to each member.

c. Downtown Maintenance Updates

DPW Manager, Dan Antosik provided a report. It has been a slow weird winter, early start on spring cleaning, street cleaners are out. Focus is on planting season; green house has plants growing. West Troy water main project is underway. It is going smoothly, arrived to point of reconnect and disconnect. Continuing communications with business to setup disconnect and reconnect. Winter is about gone, spring is underway.

Cardboard pickup would be more effective if businesses break down cardboard, so it fits into bins provided. Additional costs are involved with additional pick up day on Saturday so any measure to assist is helpful.

The RRS sanitation study is complete. A presentation to the DDA board is being scheduled for April 9.

d. Payment in Lieu of Parking Request from the Grasshopper Underground

Executive Director Stevens explained there is no decision to be made today. The CED requested the DDA board discusses and shares perspectives on the project. Payment in lieu zoning ordinance allows onetime fee in lieu of onsite parking. Ordinance pertains to the Central Business District and those who serve alcohol. One spot per 100 square feet. Payment in lieu of \$81,000 is requested and could change one space is finalized. Justin Lyons and Jordan Twardy with the CED department are available to help with any questions.

Galloway and Collens legal representative for Grasshopper and DesignStruct, Scott Galloway is joined by John McCann and Steve Dumont, owners of Grasshopper and DesignStruct addressed the board. The project was originally approved in 2016. Since then ownership has changed. The dot is now under construction and will add additional parking. The only other roof top space is located at Affirmations. Presentation board and supporting information is explained by Steve Dumont, owner of Grasshopper and DesignStruct. Mr. Dumont purchased the property in 1993. In 2016, the old owner brought the roof top project before the planning commission. Funds were unable to be obtained by previous owner. New ownership Chris, John McCann and Steve Dumont. Rooftop patio is designed to offer consumers a new space to enjoy conversation and cocktails. Designed to provide a calmer atmosphere, generating a new demographic by enhancing existing space. Seasonal business. Twelve-foot-thick planter boxes 3ft from the edge creates a barrier. Billboard acts as a sound barrier wall.

Stairwell and bathrooms are located on the ally side of the rooftop creating another sound barrier. Hired sound engineer to give recommendations. The number of people and the sound of voices carrying are being factored into the design. Rooftop will use wicker patio furniture, subdued lighting LED festoon lights, street capes on roof tip, 6 or 7 light posts creating an ambience. Impact 2300 square ft requires 23 spots, The dot will have excess 250 additional spots. Business hours are evening hours. No food, cocktails

only. Entrance is through existing door on Woodward Ave.. A sound mitigation system self-actuating microphones on street level are being implemented where the sound on patio is automatically adjusted. The new space will be called Fern Top using same liquor license as Grasshopper.

Member Sarah Brown asked if the furniture is permanently affixed. DesignStruct confirmed the bar is the only permanently affixed structure.

Member PJ Jackoes asked if the second-floor tenants of the building are being considered. Steve Dumont expressed all tenants, including Grasshopper generates income and everyone must be in support. Sky lights are remaining intact for the second-floor tenants' benefit.

John McCann and Steve Dumont of DesignStruct have designed and assisted in building enhancements for many of the business in Ferndale, such as Rosie O'Grady's. DesignStruct has been in business for 33 years and opened in Ferndale in 1987. Steve Dumont expressed the fact DesignStruct is very vested in the success for the downtown and are proud of the success. Excited to be a part of the future success.

Member Sarah Brown inquired about a possible design question. No portion of this space will be covered except for the bathrooms and stairwell.

Board Chair Jacki Smith asked the board for questions and discussion.

Member PJ Jackoes stated that the project looks great.

Mayor Piana stressed her concern over the noise and the sound the public chatter may impact surrounding cafés. West Troy has a lot of cafes. Orchid receives complaints from surrounding residents. Unsure of the impact it has on the future of the downtown with new residential being added in that area. Mayor Piana questioned the downtown as an entertainment district and the use ride share.

Board Chair Jacki Smith mentioned the implementation of the noise ordinance. The construction of The dot and increase to parking space capacity is due to the already increased demand of parking.

Executive Director Stevens clarified that the West Troy parking lot had 138 parking spaces. The dot will offer 400 parking spaces. Of these 100 office / 50 retail / 25 residential. She noted that spaces for office and retail would likely be available in the evening.

Board Chair Jacki Smith stated it is worthy to discuss adding new entertainment square footage and how it effects our vision established in previous years.

Community and Economic Development (CED) Director, Jordan Twardy reviewed questions and concerns expressed to ensure they were captured; sound ordinance,

furniture being secured, impact to second floor tenants, noise ordinance. Member Nathan Martin confirmed the roof top patio will be ADA complaint.

Board Chair Jacki Smith requested the focus be on a diverse collection of business for balance and drive to all the downtown.

Master plan from 2016 will be amended next year. Retail was a larger component. Strategic vision is important.

e. Budget Workshop #2 – Fiscal Year 2020 Midyear + 5 Years

The draft budget was presented during the regular meeting on February 13, 2020. Executive Director Stevens asked the members of the board where they find value.

Member Blake Scheer stated that this is an impressive budget, appreciated the detailed break out. Expressed that the DDA staff is important and hopes the budget has income to support high quality staff. Executive Director Stevens asked him to state the total budgeted for staff. Member Blake Scheer guessed \$170,000; Director Stevens provided the actual number \$148,000.

Member Sarah Brown stated she is most interested in how to handle contracts and focus on contracting out to experienced individuals or companies. Referenced DPW and keeping things clean where public walks and public art installation. Executive Director Stevens asked her to state the total budgeted for DPW and public art. Member Sarah Brown guessed \$165,000 for DPW contract, Executive Director Stevens confirmed. \$3000 for public art, Executive Director Stevens confirmed this amount budgeted for public art. Downtown maintenance supply line item is new and helps the DPW plan the downtown maintenance.

Member Nathan Martin stated that by working with the City and utilizing resources it creates cost savings. Executive Director Stevens provided example of working together with the Chamber of Commerce on the redesign of the poster.

Mayor Piana inquired about the flexibility in maintenance contract with DPW for Schiffer Park and various other areas of growth including, The dot. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is important and may need more funding. City Manager, Joe is in conversation over Woodward capital improvement widening project and how it will impact transit. Transportation strategy is high topic and the CIP will be addressed. Possible funds may be needed while working together with City. Executive Director Stevens explained the downtown maintenance fee set with DPW was \$180,000 and it is confident in lowering the amount to \$165,000. This year the maintenance amount is shifting from cleaning out flower beds to Schiffer Park. Mayor Piana mentioned cleanliness of chairs, pan handling and dog waste is of high concern. Executive Director Stevens stated the worst-case scenario for CIP has been budgeted with \$10,000 to \$15,000 extra providing \$30,000 to get it in proper shape. Woodward widening project is not listed as specific budget line item, it is of high concern for the downtown and can be changed.

Member Blake Scheer questioned what line item the newest current affair concerning business support and emergency preparedness would fall under. Executive Director Stevens stated it is possible to pull from line items that are already in there. Generating a specific line time in not recommenced. Member Blake Scheer stated confidence that Executive Director Stevens has authority to make decision in the event of need.

Member PJ Jackoes stated arts and parks are his main passion. Executive Director Stevens mentioned the importance of street scape and the grand opening of the Dot. There are many green spaces that could be activated in the Withington alley. As the projects wrap up, Executive Director Stevens requested to start thinking about the future.

Board Chair Jacki Smith stressed the importance of business development; existing business and attraction to new business, how presentable and attractive downtown needs to be.

Member Sarah Brown asked if the board celebrated longevity and success by presenting awards to businesses. Executive Director Stevens stated up until now Main Street Oakland County has provided the awards and mentioned this may change to local internal recognition.

Mayor Piana mentioned interest in combining efforts, State of the downtown report and business report annually. DDA and City could award those who need to be acknowledged.

Executive Director Stevens summarized the conceptual review with ideas mentioned today. Next step is to vote that budget is approved and ready to go to council. There is a quorum, but members are missing this discussion. Member Jerome Raska and Executive Director Stevens had a one on one meeting to review the draft presentation. Member Chris Johnston and Member Janice Semma are not in attendance, have not weighed in.

Motion by member Blake Scheer seconded by member PJ Jackoes to amend agenda adding item 7b; recommend that the city council approves the DDA budget fiscal year 2020. All ayes, motion carries.

Member PJ Jackoes asked if it is an option to teleconference and still meet requirements of quorum. Mayor Piana stated that the City Manager is looking into it and to direct any questions to him.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meetings held February 13, 2020
Motion by member PJ Jackoes seconded by member Blake Scheer to approve the consent agenda as presented. All Ayes, motion carries.

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Selection of Board Member for the dot Experience Planning Committee

Executive Director Stevens requests the DDA Board appoint one member to be the point of contact and representative of DDA for Ideation. Ideation is contracted to create the image and experience aspect of The dot. Member PJ Jackoes volunteered.

Motion by member Nathan Martin seconded by member Blake Scheer to appointment member PJ Jackoes to serve as the representative on The dot Experience Planning Committee. All Ayes, motion carries.

b. Fiscal Year 2020 Midyear + 5 years – Budget

Motion by member PJ Jackoes seconded by member Sarah Brown to approve the DDA Fiscal Year 2020 Budget is provided to city council for approval. All Ayes, motion carries.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Mayor Piana announced that the State of the City address date has been changed to May 5 due to scheduling conflict with Passover. Tentative in leu of COVID-19 information.

Executive Director Stevens stated that the DDA will share all notifications from Fire Chief Pasha and Communications Director Kara Sokol regarding COVID-19 on all platforms. Communication efforts currently include county recommendations and strategies. Staff will create a list of local business who provide online services.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by member Blake Scheer, seconded by member Sarah Brown to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 A.M. All ayes, motion carries.