



VIRTUAL Monthly Meeting of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)  
Board of Directors Downtown Development Authority Meeting

**THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 @ 8:00 AM**

ONLINE: [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/86296848936?PWD=OGVWTOU4TDDYEFJSTHH](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86296848936?pwd=OGVWTOU4TDDYEFJSTHH)

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PASSWORD: FERNDALE

PHONE: 888 788 0099 (TOLL FREE)

MEETING ID: 862 9684 8936

**1. ROLL CALL**

**CALL TO ORDER: 8:04 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jacki Smith, PJ Jacokes, Nathan Martin, Sarah Brown, Jerome Raska, Chris Johnston, Janice Semma, Blake Scheer, Mayor Piana

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

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

GUESTS PRESENT:

- 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
- Jennifer Marr, Ferndale Area District Library Director

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Motion by member Jerome Raska to approve agenda with minor changes to order of presentations seconded by member PJ Jacokes to approve the amended agenda. **All ayes, motion carries.***

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

**a. DDA Executive Director Updates**

Executive Director Lena Stevens provided updates on previous month's activities and programs. Stevens recapped Michigan Executive Order 2020-77. Oakland County public health order 2020-10 is effective until rescinded which requires daily staff screening, face masks mandatory for all face to face staff interactions. The MI Safe Start Plan provided by the Governor shows that county is currently in stage 3.

Executive Director Stevens mentioned that round two of stabilization grants from Oakland County have been selected. Board Chair Jacki Smith inquired if businesses have been notified. Executive Director Stevens stated the county handles all notifications.

Construction will resume on Schiffer Park, The dot and repaving sections of city streets surrounding downtown.

A Discovery Working Group has been created for The dot Placemaking Project to generate ideas and give feedback on how to incorporate art into the site. This group is made up of 2 representatives of the Ferndale Arts and Cultural Commission, 1 representative from the DDA Board of Directors, 2 City of Ferndale staff, and 2 DDA staff.

City Manager, Joseph Gacioch provided an update on The dot resuming construction. Less than 50% of the construction workforce reported for work. Many construction workers have left the state to work on projects. Discussions continue for development options between the city and developer.

The EverythingHR contract approved at last board meeting provides free HR services to downtown businesses has received positive feedback. A report will be provided via email to the board outlining the number of businesses that used this service and hours associated.

Executive Director Stevens mentioned that marketing efforts are moving towards the positives of what is possible and available in Ferndale. The website [www.ferndalemothersday.com](http://www.ferndalemothersday.com) launched in less than 24 hours highlighting boss moms in Ferndale and listed businesses offering curbside, delivery and virtual options for Mother's Day gifts.

Social distancing lyrical yard signs placed in flower beds around downtown Ferndale were produced by City of Ferndale's Communications Specialist Lindsay Gunsorek and printed at the DPW sign shop. Channel 94.7 will be opening phone lines on Friday after short interview with Executive Director Stevens requesting the public to suggest more lyrics for signs.

Social media is a critical tool needed during this social distancing period and after. Insights show that 70% of Downtown Ferndale followers are female. Great engagement from the approximate 40 posts per week across all social media platforms. Posts created by social media specialist are easy for businesses mentioned to share. Sadie Quagliotto the contacted social media, specialist will continue service until September 2020.

Engagement Manager, Sommer Realy announced the #openinferndale campaign on Patronicity will be launching on Friday May 15. The #openinferndale campaign is a crowdfunding project on Patronicity that has been made possible with the partnership between Main Street Oakland County, Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Ferndale and the DDA. This crowdfunding campaign project is designed to support small businesses in Ferndale with financial assistance for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other operational modifications needed to reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finance Director, Sheryl Stubblefield requested an outline of the financial structure for the campaign be provided.

Executive Director Stevens mentioned parking, outdoor vending and parklets as a few of the ideas that are currently under consideration for downtown landuse in as a COVID-19 recovery response. Other ideas under consideration include reduced parking permit

fees for business employees, designated spaces for free curbside order pickup for twelve months, expand areas for outdoor seating, potentially within existing lots, alleys, and streets. The potential leasing of parking spaces to businesses for cafes may be available once impact of revenue loss has been assessed. Outdoor vending considerations included allowing more flexibility for sidewalk sales, expanding areas for food trucks, and expanding hours for vending carts in the downtown. Consideration and concept on Parklets are to solicit quotes from local builders/artisans using specifications from Giffels Webster to ensure safety. Parklets create more outdoor seating, possible pilot to be from the DDA in front of Affirmations and if successful could be replicated throughout the city.

Member Sarah Brown inquired if these items fit within design guidelines outlined in the CIP. Executive Director Stevens noted that this is an underlying issue with the incomplete CIP as well as the lack of Streetscape Guidelines. However, these are both priorities for the near future so that more comprehensive design standards can be in place for projects such as these.

**b. Update from Chief of Police, Vincent Palazzolo**

Chief Palazzolo reported Ferndale is supportive of the executive orders. Overall criminal activity is down, and it is quiet in the downtown business district.

Executive Director Stevens inquired and confirmed critical staff is not required to carry identification to and from home.

Board Chair Jacki Smith mentioned the new fear of customers causing a scene over COVID-19 protocols. Staff is concerned and scared of being assaulted. Curious if there is something the police department can create for the businesses to post reminding customers of the policies in place to help with the spread of COVID-19.

Chief Palazzolo reminded business owners that they are in control of protocol. He mentioned that this is a trying time for many and may feel like their liberties are being taken away. The police department is available to help and are in full support of any creativity in reopening safely. Recommended the best customer service practices should be encouraged amongst staff.

Member Jerome Raska provided a recap of his experience on Mother's Day at Blumz...by JR Designs. He held a staff meeting and provided guidelines in how to deal with various scenarios. Customers overall were cooperative; rebels were engaged with positive communication and provided a face mask needed.

City Manager Joseph Gacioch stated that City Hall has a policy defined by the CDC in reopening and offered to business owners to share with employees. Board Chair Jacki Smith appreciated the offer and ability to share this documentation, information that is endorsed has more weight.

Member PJ Jacokes proposed the idea of window decals with icons associated with clean practices and approved operating policies.

**c. Downtown Maintenance Report**

Deputy Director, Dan Antosik addressed board with goals, accomplishments, challenges, and upcoming projects. The main goal for this month is to maintain an acceptable level of service during the Governor's Executive Order to Shelter in Place while operating with reduced staffing levels.

Crew is excited for the upcoming planting season and will be working with plant supplier when the weather reaches an acceptable point to begin planting. DPW continues to provide sanitation related services throughout the downtown and beyond.

Accomplishments in the month of April were largely from sanitation related activities and maintaining cleanliness with the DDA. The biggest challenge the DPW faces is continuing to provide an acceptable level of service during this period while keeping the crew members safe. Crew members have been and will continue to get their temperature checked in and out of work each day, practice social distancing with a decreased crew size, be provided PPE, and increase the level of cleaning of vehicles and equipment as required by the Oakland County executive order.

Upcoming, the DPW will be preparing flowers beds for spring planting, keeping up with the spring cleaning, and daily operations. Mulch has been ordered and will be used to touch up the beds throughout the DDA.

Parking lot repairs and resurfacing projects on Withington and Vester will begin soon.

Member Janice Semma requested service in replacing the metal bin that was once blocking cars from entering the ally be returned to its proper location. J's Penalty Box will be power washing the alley behind their business this weekend.

Mayor Piana asked how to go about the littering of gloves and masks on grassy areas near high traffic areas. DPW Deputy Director Antosik stated he is in communications with code enforcement on best way to address this issue in areas where it is private property.

Member Jerome Raska commented on the excessive debris from the development at the corner of E. Nine Mile and Paxton that continues to end up on his property, both business and residential. DPW Deputy Director Antosik stated he would relay over member Raskas concern. Debris from this development is an ongoing issue and the building official and code enforcer are in communications with site manager and superintendent. Community and Economic Development Director, Jordan Twardy is available to assist and offer back up if needed.

**d. COVID-19 Recovery Planning: Business Support Ideas Discussion**

The CED Department has been working with the DDA and Ferndale Area Chamber staff as a unified Business Response Team to coordinate the distribution of information and resources to the business community. Jordan Twardy, CED Director provided an update regarding the planning initiatives underway for business support services related to COVID-19 recovery. The Ferndale City Council at its April 27, 2020 meeting approved a budget for the upcoming fiscal year that included \$100,000 for business support. Of that sum, \$65K is allocated directly for business support programming, \$20,000 is proposed for dedicated personnel to directly oversee the deployment of these efforts and provide direct business liaison services possibly contracted to the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce, \$10,000 provides a contingency for unforeseen needs/opportunities, and \$5,000 is proposed for demand-based specialized technical assistance consultation services. Formal launch of a new website “Open in Ferndale” which will offer all resources under one umbrella will take place in June.

Jordan Twardy, CED Director requested DDA board members to present their ideas for consideration related to the types of services and support the City of Ferndale could be successful in allocation of these funds.

Executive Director Stevens started discussion by asking if the board felt as though people are over surveyed. Member Jerome Raska commented that if you do not ask, then you do not know. Do not worry about fatigue. Member Raska is concerned over the focus of donation request and feels as though the campaign is sponsorship driven. Patronicity campaign is over and beyond the \$65,000 allocated by the City and is subject to legal issues with distribution of funds. CED Director, Jordan Twardy clarified and explained the process identifying the direct use of funds associated with both projects.

Board Chair Jacki Smith suggested the board members take 15 minutes to brainstorm and share their thoughts, if more time is needed, a special meeting can be scheduled. Member Blake Scheer inquired about the \$20,000, the role of the chamber and if the DDA is being asked to contribute. Requested measurables and expectations of those contracted to be clearly stated and concerned over how information will be communicated. CED Director, Jordan Twardy explained the benefits of a city-wide business list is compiled by the chamber of commerce and their role of cultivating relationships remains the same and will act as a liaison for the City of Ferndale. Executive Director Stevens explained the DDA has already been offering support to this initiative by the creation and maintenance of a full business list in Hubspot, social media promotions and staff time delineating the information.

Board Chair Jacki Smith states this discussion is the big picture, post COVID-19 and current situation.

Member PJ Jacokes, in his opinion believes a centralized hand washing station does not make much sense in a no touch world. Curious if there is a no touch face mask vending system available.

Member Jerome Raska confirmed with member Nathan Martin that Woodward Movement is creating branded face masks for a few businesses.

Board Chair Jacki Smith addressed question about closing Nine Mile for café's. If Nine Mile could be paved and then remain closed to offer open dining, it may work. As a retail business owner, it is hard to come out of doors and offer service like restaurants.

Mayor Piana commented that residents are asking about road closures, so they feel safer in downtown. Mayor mentioned that Pleasant Ridge received a grant for bike lanes on Woodward. If closing Nine Mile is an option, then why not lanes of Woodward. One of the issues with road closures is the interference of pick up and carry out infrastructure.

Member Chris Johnston agreed with Mayors comments stating as a business owner of three locations on Woodward he has always felt narrowing Woodward would be a benefit to customer safety.

Board Chair Jacki Smith mentioned she is all for a walking outdoor mall from Planavon to Bermuda however we need to be mindful of timing, closing Nine Mile while The dot construction is underway would be impossible.

Parklet placement on Nine could be used to begin the process of outdoor dining. Member Chris Johnston advised the term care is better than safe. We are redesigning how we do things to provide safety because Ferndale cares.

Member Blake Scheer commented on the importance of cleanliness and inquired about robbery training now that all customers are required to wear face masks. Board Chair Jacki Smith states they will open when they want and not until they have security and further training in place.

Executive Director Stevens ended discussion by stating a bulleted list of all conversation points will be provided to the board to review and offer more insight.

#### **4. COMMUNITY REPORTS**

*Reports from community organization representatives in attendance, including but not limited to Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce, Ferndale Area District Library, 8 Mile Boulevard Association, etc.*

Ferndale Area District Library Director, Jenny Marr announced the library is closed to the public in coordination of the Governors executive order. She is currently working with legal advisors on best practices for reopening to the public. All library programming is online only. She has purchased local gift certificates as awards for those participating in online events. Library building maintenance is taking place, such as painting exterior benches and flower beds. Director Jenny Marr looks forward to continuing conversations with DDA about adding seating and tables in courtyard. Next week Library meets to review budget.

Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce Director, Joy Wells announced the development of business roundtables consisting of 5 to 10 people max, allowing for a purposeful use of time.

## **5. CALL TO AUDIENCE**

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **a. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meetings held April 9, 2020**

*Motion by Mayor Piana seconded by member Jerome Raska to approve the consent agenda as presented. **All Ayes, motion carries.***

## **7. REGULAR AGENDA**

### **a. Approval of Updated Ferndale Downtown Development Authority By-Laws**

The by-laws of the Ferndale DDA were last updated in 2016. The Act governing DDAs in Michigan has been modified, and changes have been made in the operational context of the Ferndale DDA which should be reflected in the by-laws in an expedient manner. Executive Director Stevens, in collaboration with Steven Mann, Attorney and Counselor at Law and Miller Canfield, recommends that these minor updates be approved now, and a more in-depth analysis be planned for Fall 2020 to review sections such as Standing Committees and Advisory Committees.

Both a final version as well as a fully notated version were provided. Highlights of the changes include but are not limited to, an update to current law governing DDAs in Michigan (Act 57 of the Public Acts of 2018) and replacement of the list of powers with a reference to that Act, membership updated to reflect that the board is made up of the Chief Executive Officer (Mayor or City Manager) AND 8-12 members, Ex-officio (by virtue of office) membership was removed, offer clarity if members shall not vote in matters involving a direct personal interest, provide allowance that officers can be elected at either a regular or specially called meeting, as opposed to solely during a Strategic Planning Meeting, provide the chairperson the ability to cancel a meeting and or a special meeting can only be called by 2 voting members, change the Strategic Planning Meetings and appointment of officers to biennially (once every 2 years) and give authority to City Manager to act in the place of the Executive Director or appoint a designee to do so in the event of the Director's inability or refusal to act.

*Motion by member Jerome Raska seconded by member Blake Scheer to approve suggested updates to the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority By-Laws as presented, with more comprehensive review planned for Fall 2020.*

***All ayes, motion carries.***

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

No comments

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by member Jerome Raska seconded by member Sarah Brown to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 A.M. **All ayes, motion carries.***