



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

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020 @ 8:00 AM**

ONLINE: [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/82665486201?pwd=V2VSSGG1VG1DDZHJTTL3BKZK](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82665486201?pwd=V2VSSGG1VG1DDZHJTTL3BKZK)  
MMLSUT09

PASSWORD: FERNDALÉ

PHONE: 929 205 6099 (TOLL FREE)

MEETING ID: 826 6548 6201

## 1. ROLL CALL

**CALL TO ORDER:** 8:03 am

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lena Stevens, Executive Director; Sommer Realy, Engagement Manager; Reilly Coleman, DDA Administrative Assistant

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

- Joseph Gacloch, City Manager
- Dan Antosik, DPW Director
- Stacey Tobar, Giffels Webster Engineering Services

## 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Motion by Mayor Melanie Piana seconded by Member Nathan Martin to approve the agenda.  
All ayes, motion carries.*

## 3. PRESENTATIONS

### a. DDA Executive Director Updates

Executive Director Lena Stevens provided an update on events occurring in the next two months. A message to board members will be written regarding summary of most recent meeting as an overview with an updated approval tracker. Questions or concerns can be addressed during call to council.

Foundational work is in development, including budget updates, TIF plan, and more. Budget analysis for next fiscal year will occur. COVID-19 business resources will still be implemented but scaled back.

Engagement Manager Sommer Realy provided an update regarding the PPE Marketplace. The registration platform has been open for two weeks with 75 businesses participating. It's offering a great form of engagement and networking for the DDA and businesses. The schedule remains flexible and offers private time if requested. Additional products include face masks attached to lanyards for hands-free contact, fanny packs to store equipment, and more. It is a great resource for Ferndale businesses.

Chair Jacki Smith asked if this resource is available to city-wide businesses.

Director Stevens answered it is available city-wide due to additional funding services. Manager Realy cited Jim Schaffer and Associates for their funding in this matter.

Director Stevens provided an overview of additional events occurring in the next few months, including the grand opening of Schiffer Park, the Halloween decorating contest, the pending approval of the Downtown Maintenance Contract, the placemaking plan from Ideation Orange, the expiration of the license for the popup park, the annual report, the budget amendment, the holiday event, and board recruitment. All of these topics will be discussed in additional conversations.

**b. Downtown Maintenance Contract Progress Presentation**

Executive Director Lena Stevens provided an overview of the landscaping and maintenance project with DPW. The contract will expire on December 1. The overview of their work includes the maintenance, purchasing, and installation of plant material for different seasons, including flower beds, tree pruning that occurs twice a year, mulching, litter removal, holiday décor, minor snow removal, general cleanliness, ancillary services, and additional hazardous matters as needed.

DPW Director Dan Antosik stated there were many areas around the Downtown that previously did not have plants and were overgrown, infested with weeds, and nutrient deficient. The intersection of 9 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue is a good example of both maintaining the landscaping but also changing it regularly. In front of the Lofts on 9, the DPW collaborated with the property owner to ensure consistent design with the rest of the Downtown. A lot of life has been added to the Downtown.

Director Stevens stated DPW has been supportive of any ideas. The instance with the Lofts on 9 was an excellent example of engaging with business owners, as it gives the DDA a note of professionalism. Additional projects with assistance from DPW have included the popup park festive decorations, the social distancing song lyric signs, the furniture at Schiffer Park, and the rainbow lights that line the pedestrian alley. Though they may seem small, they make a huge impact and should be celebrated.

Director Antosik summarized a few areas the DPW would like to focus on if their contract is renewed. They would like to continue improving the flower beds, enhancing the litter pickup, increase the size of hanging baskets, additional capital items like trash receptacles and benches, power washing the sidewalks, enhance cleaning of compact areas, and find a new sanitation bin that offers trash and recycling. The team takes pride in the accomplishments for the DDA and hopes to continue on.

Members Janice Semma, Chris Johnston, PJ Jacokes, and Nathan Martin all provided positive feedback for DPW's efforts.

Member Martin asked what areas the new contract will cover. Chair Jacki Smith answered it is within the TIF boundary. Member Sarah Brown stated it may be beneficial

to extend their contract under additional funding to carry their services throughout the remainder of Downtown.

Members Blake Scheer and Jerome Raska also expressed their positive feedback.

Mayor Melanie Piana expressed her previous request to explore other providers. A big concern is panhandling in the Downtown, as it has become and increased concern. There are additional issues the current contract does not address, such as snow removal and banner services. When you work on enhancing a public space, it is hard to estimate the service costs until it is needed. The landscaping is great, but DPW may not be the right partner for every service that the Downtown needs. It may be beneficial to explore another partnership with a budget that does not increase with the rate of demand for services.

Chair Smith stated her support for the current contract and renewing the project. DPW is thinking things through in great detail, which takes the burden away from the DDA. The landscaping is a great benefit because that's one of the primary purposes of the contract. The snow removal is better than ever before. Panhandling is a next topic of conversation.

Mayor Piana referenced the recent waste improvement plan passed by council and asked if there will be shared costs by elevating services within the City through DPW.

Director Stevens replied there will be more asks within the DDA, and though it is interrelated, it will be separate. The DDA will work with DPW to make sure there is a map of the areas that will be covered under the contract. It is a concern to have multiple contracts and more than one group responsible for various services. A more in-depth conversation with the City Manager will be planned.

Chair Smith stated there have been previous instances where businesses close and the property owner fails to remove snow and asked if a policy could be implemented. Director Stevens stated this was a previous topic of discussion with Assistant Building Official Adam Loomis and will be revisited.

Chair Smith asked if businesses could pay for snow removal services. Director Stevens suggested discussing that topic with DPW for a cost analysis. It's important to keep in mind the difference between snow removal and ice, as both services may be too expensive.

Member Scheer asked who will be responsible for maintaining The dot upon opening. City Manager Joseph Gacioch answered The dot maintenance will be handled with parking-related funds and operate separately. There will be a policy implemented with DPW and Republic Parking.

Director Stevens stated it would be beneficial to discuss panhandling at another time.

#### 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.*

- a. No community reports

#### 5. CALL TO AUDIENCE

- a. Stacey Tobar of Giffels Webster Engineering Services stated she is concerned about the size of the hanging flower baskets. The size and weight should be taken into consideration.

#### 6. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of August and September Minutes  
*Motion by Member PJ Jacokes, seconded by Member Sarah Brown. **All ayes, motion carries.***

#### 7. REGULAR AGENDA

- a. Affirmations Bench Design and Updated Budget Approval  
Executive Director Lena Stevens provided an update of the Affirmations Bench Design. Stacey Tobar of Giffels Webster Engineering Services has been working with the DDA to develop a design. Tobar suggested keeping the design similar to Schiffer Park for consistency. The structure needs to be strong enough to stop a moving car. Concrete bollards will be incorporated to provide invisible safety measures. Two benches will be installed facing away from Nine Mile. DPW will install and Giffels-Webster will confirm the process. The project budget will not increase \$33,970.

All board members expressed positivity toward update.

Member Jerome Raska asked how the adjusted budget compared to the original. Director Stevens stated the approved budget is \$15,000 plus \$2,000 from the community foundation with additional funding from Main Street Oakland County. The budget increased because engineering wasn't previously taken into consideration.

Member Raska stated he is in support of the project but is concerned with the price based on the anticipated community response. Member Chris Johnston agreed, but stated the City is in need of more gathering spots.

Member Sarah Brown asked if the plant beds will be maintained by DPW. Director Stevens confirmed and added that additional consideration will be given for types of soil for longevity and sustainability purposes. Member Brown expressed concerns for long-term maintenance and pricing.

*Motion by Member PJ Jacokes, seconded by Member Sarah Brown. **Majority ayes. One opposed. Motion carries.***

- b. Temporary Changes to Outdoor Seating, Patio, and Mobile Vending Policies

Executive Director Lena Stevens stated City Council passed four resolutions in June allowing businesses to expand service to public sidewalks, private property, and parking lots, in addition to the loosening of restrictions with the vending ordinance. As a result, eleven business expanded their patios. The deadline should be extended through November as to provide businesses flexibility on how to operate their space. Responsibilities of maintenance will need to be communicated. Tents may be allowed outside if safety requirements are met.

*Motion by Member PJ Jacokes, seconded by Member Black Scheer. **All ayes, motion carries.***

**c. Unbox the Holidays – 2020 Shop Local Campaign Proposal**

Executive Director Lena Stevens provided an update on the seasonal holiday event, Unbox the Holidays, a campaign that supports shopping locally. The previously approved budget of \$15,000 for Frosty Ferndale will be moved to this initiative and will involve paid advertisements. Communication will occur with businesses to assess what they will like to feature in advertisements. Graphics are currently in the design stages and will be provided to share on DDA and business social media channels for individual and general support.

*Motion by Member PJ Jacokes, seconded by Member Jerome Raska. **All ayes, motion carries.***

**d. Recruitment for DDA Board of Directors**

Executive Director Lena Stevens stated the current law allows for eight to twelve DDA board members. The board currently holds a minimum level of a mayor plus eight members. The bylaws do not completely restrict membership details. Majority of members need to be businesses owners in the Downtown district, with one resident in the Downtown district. A conversation about what will be valuable to the board should be held prior to recruitment.

Chair Jacki Smith asked if residents outside the City of Ferndale can be considered. Director Stevens confirmed and stated the best outcome would be the agreement to recruit a minimum of four members.

Member Jerome Raska stated it is necessary to keep the diversity within the DDA boundary, so each community feels they are represented. It is important to have a resident to offer additional perspective.

Member Nathan Martin instructed to seek out potential candidates based on level of volunteer activity within the City, as those who are more vocal and engaged will enjoy the opportunity. A marketing campaign would be valuable.

Chair Jacki Smith reminded the group she will be stepping down as Chair in December and a vote for executive positions will occur at that time.

*Motion by Member Jerome Raska, seconded by Blake Scheer. **All ayes, motion carries.***

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

- a. No comments

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Member Chris Johnston, seconded by Member Sarah Brown to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 A.M.*

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