



**Monthly Meeting of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022 @ 8:00 AM**  
**Council Chambers**  
**300 E Nine Mile, Ferndale, MI 48220**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair PJ Jacokes, Vice Chair Chris Johnston, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Members Nathan Martin, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges, Jerome Raska, and Mayor Melanie Piana

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

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

GUESTS:

Joe Gacioch, City Manager of Ferndale, MI  
Jenny Marr, Executive Director of the Ferndale Area District Library  
Tina Kozak, CEO of FRANCO Communications  
Emily Herbert, Integrated Communications Specialist with FRANCO Communications  
Sherry A Wells, Resident of the City of Ferndale

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Mayor Piana, seconded by Ashkenazi to approve the agenda with 9.a removed from the regular agenda and made a policy discussion

*AYES* – Chair PJ Jacokes, Vice Chair Chris Johnston, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Members Nathan Martin, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges, Jerome Raska, and Mayor Melanie Piana

*NAYS- None*

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

**3. COMMUNITY REPORTS**

Jenny Marr, Executive Director of the Ferndale Area District Library, mentioned that the seasonal mailer is effective but has not reached all houses, also available online. Library is open to the public and has good foot traffic, new signups every month from new residents. Programming is hybrid, virtual and in person. First Stop Friday concert series is back. Library Board held their strategic planning, focus is to reset keep agile for the next years. New addition called Library of things, requested anyone can send ideas and or requests.

**4. CALL TO AUDIENCE**

a. None.

## 5. INFORMATION ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### a. Board Membership Update

Metari Harris, owner of Bags & Beads will be joining the board soon, along with a possible another individual. Member Janice Semma has stepped down to resigned, stated the reasoning was due to the council approval on the Vester development. Chris Johnston is over term and is staying on until more recruitment fills seat.

### b. Tentative 2022 Events Schedule

Special event calendar hand out provided to members. The DDA will be hosting Nine on Nine again this year and bringing back outdoor movies downtown by collaborating with the Parks & Recreation called Movies in the Parks. Broadway in the Burbs appears to be growing outside the downtown and becoming Ticket event at Ferndale High School.

### c. Changes to Social District Legislation

Social district legislation changes to bill 5090 include an extension to the sunset by eliminating the 2025 expiration and they are allowed to remain open during special events. This change provides the option for event to delineate the space of their footprint, if implemented and request to close should still be available. Patio Zone updates will be provided to council to include combining zones to allow for public to cross Woodward Ave. in addition to extension of days and times to include seven days from 10 to 10.

### d. Development Update

Vester flats has been approved by council for development at the Territory parking lot in 14 months from approval. Owner of Ferndale Collision is looking at building a mixed-use development with parking lot, currently working with the planning commission on this private development, with guidance from the CED. City of Ferndale has issued an RFP for some of the surface parking lots for concepts and design ideas. City Manager Joe Gaciouch announced that CED Director, Jordan Twardy is outgoing, and they are near the end of the recruitment process with interviews starting next week and filled by early May. Woodward Moves, MDOT is working through final design to be supplied in June. Woodward Moves resurfacing road diet project will take place in two phases starting after August 2022. The condition of the cross walk at Nine Mile and Woodward is in bad shape and will be temporarily fixed using \$60 -\$90,000 of the local road active fund. Temporary fix will be done with asphalt and will create street closures at time of repair. The dot residential designs will be at planning commission in May/June with construction to start in spring of 2023.

## 6. PRESENTATIONS

### a. Budget Workshop #2

Changes have been made to the DDA budget presented at the first workshop in January 2022. The Executive Director reviewed these updates and addressed questions. The primary updates are Capital Improvement for Withington Alley, upgrades are not ready to move forward currently. Instead DDA will fund the design at \$30,000, which will enable the City of Ferndale to seek grants that could assist with stormwater management. Funding removed for Vester streetscapes as it is not a planned project in the City's Capital Improvement Plan. Update to staffing, is the City of Ferndale and the

DDA are proposed the creation of a Downtown Liaison position within the Police Department. This proposal was developed over the course of two years of discussion between the City Manager and Executive Director. Each organization will agree to contribute \$60,000 per year for a trial period of 3 years to fund a position dedicated to the safety and engagement of our downtown area. The line item for communication has been updated to reflect the Woodward Moves Communication Liaison contract to \$80,000 from the estimated amount of \$50,000 over the course of 3 fiscal years. The DDA is not currently contributing to the capital cost of this project and supporting strong engagement will benefit the DDA now and help encourage business support for future capital improvement projects.

## **7. CONSENT AGENDA**

Moved by Treasurer Brown seconded by Raska to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

*AYES* – Chair PJ Jacokes, Vice Chair Chris Johnston, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Members Nathan Martin, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges, Jerome Raska, and Mayor Melanie Piana

*NAYS- None*

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

## **8. REGULAR AGENDA**

### **a. Approve FYE23 Budget**

Moved by Treasurer Brown seconded by Johnston to approve the recommendation of FYE23 DDA Budget to the Ferndale City Council for approval.

*AYES* – Chair PJ Jacokes, Vice Chair Chris Johnston, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Members Nathan Martin, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges, Jerome Raska, and Mayor Melanie Piana

*NAYS- None*

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

### **b. Approve Contract for Woodward Moves Communication Support with FRANCO Communications**

The City of Ferndale issued an RFP for Woodward Moves Project Communications Support in January of 2022. Four proposals were received and reviewed by City and DDA staff. A final interview was conducted with Franco in early March, and their selection for this project was jointly supported. The DDA is not contributing to the capital cost of the Woodward Moves project. Ensuring thorough engagement will benefit current operations and pave the way for future capital projects to be more successful. As a part of our ongoing efforts to collaborate with the City of Ferndale, the DDA Executive

Director will serve as the point of contact for this contract. Updates will be provided to the City Manager and other staff at regular intervals. The selected firm will be tasked with the following: Develop, implement, and maintain a communications plan which fosters a sense of optimism - Develop and implement a process for one-on-one business engagement which includes a mix of in-person visits, phone calls, and meetings - Maintain an issues log and document follow up communication on each issue - Provide regular updates on the status of the communications plan to the project team and engagement.

Tina Kozak, CEO and Emily Herbert, Integrated Communications Specialist with FRANCO Communications came to podium and introduced themselves along with an overview of how they approach this type of communication need.

Moved by Treasurer Brown seconded by Johnston to authorize the Executive Director to enter a contract for Woodward Moves Communication Support with FRANCO Communications with contingency to not exceed \$87,000 in FTE 22, 23, and 24.

AYES – Chair PJ Jacokes, Vice Chair Chris Johnston, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Members Nathan Martin, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges, Jerome Raska, and Mayor Melanie Piana

NAYS- None

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

## **9. CALL TO BOARD MEMBERS**

### **a. DDA Event Sponsorship Request**

A discussion about special events sponsorship has been requested by Member Chris Johnston. Executive Director, Stevens advised that Member Johnston should not speak to this do to a conflict of interest. Executive Director, Stevens requested an open forum discussion amongst board members to provide their wishes so that a recommendation of a draft policy can be presented. Consideration of smaller events and budget comparison between cities with clarification of what, how or when to provide support. History of events generated foot traffic, the function of DDA was responsible for increasing of foot traffic to businesses. Focus has shifted into park activation and public use of space rather than the large events. Sponsorship policy could focus on DDA hosted events or fund the events. Benefits to DDA supporting events is the importance of brand expose for public to understand who and what the DDA provides. Overall goal to align with City on how we support events while supporting the community and mission to diversify the style. Executive Director, Stevens will present a plan to be presented in May board and volunteer in a working group.

Member Johnston, states that he is impartial and feels his opinion is valuable. Asks board to weigh in on whether or not board would like him to speak. Member Raska feels as though everyone on board is in control of their own decisions and deserves their voice to be heard. Member Brown stated she would like his view and opinion. Member

Martin stated that whatever member Johnson says will not sway the opinions of the board. Overall, board weighed in with support of all members being heard during discussion is beneficial.

City manager, Joe Gacioch provides clarity that the board decides who can speak and can't, it is their job to make board aware of possible conflict of interest.

#### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

***Motion by Member Treasurer Brown, seconded by Raska to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 AM***

*AYES* – Chair PJ Jacokes, Vice Chair Chris Johnston, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Members Nathan Martin, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges, Jerome Raska, and Mayor Melanie Piana

*NAYS* – None

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