



Monthly Meeting of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2023 @ 8:00 AM  
Council Chambers  
300 E Nine Mile, Ferndale, MI 48220

**1. CALL TO ORDER: 8:09 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Pj Jacokes, Omar George, Sarah Brown, and Mayor Melanie Piana, Metari Harris, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jerome Raska, Jess Minnick,

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

AUDIENCE: John Shuell, owner of Culantro; John Bry, Program Director of Main Street Oakland County

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*AYES* – Chair Pj Jacokes, Omar George, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Mayor Melanie Piana, Metari Harris, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges

*NAYS- None*

*All ayes, motion carries.*

**3. COMMUNITY REPORTS**

Ferndale Area District Library, Jenny Marr provided the following email, read by Executive Director Lena Stevens:

Thursday, January 12, 5 - 8 pm - Art Reception Local artist Mike Ross has his artwork on display from January 3 - February 26. The reception marks the 10-year anniversary since his first art reception at the library. At that time, he took a painting and separated it into 60 pieces and handed them out with instructions to bring them back 10 years later. We're hoping to get back most of the pieces so he can reassemble his original painting! Thursday, January 26, 5:30 pm - Meet the Authors. Join us for an entertaining drag performance and reading from the local authors of *Serial Showgirl*, a vigilante justice crime thriller. Books will be available for purchase and signing after the reading. Monday, January 30, 5-7 pm - Early Learning Fair. Open house for families to looking for information on preschool enrollment, parent resources, and more. Saturday, February 4, 2:00 pm - Boblo Boats Film Screening. Free screening of the new documentary Boblo Boats: A Detroit Ferry Tale. After watching the film there will be a Q&A with the film's director. Brought to you by the Ferndale Library Film Club. Please visit the library website for registration information. The next Library Board Meeting is Thursday, January 19 at 6:30 pm.

#### 4. CALL TO AUDIENCE:

a. John Bry, Program Director of Main Street Oakland County

John Bry provided updates and overview of the following: Ferndale DDA hosted National Mainstreet for the annual accreditation process, mentioned downtown Ferndale is accredited and is available to present to City Council. Main Street Oakland County provides two free seats and reimburse up to \$500 in travel expenses for the Main Street Now conference in Boston this March. Yearly \$10,000 Tech funding application is open, in addition to Flagstar & Genesis grants in amount of \$1,500, discussion of 8 to 10 million AARP dollars is taking place at the county & state level to support Placemaking.

b. John Shuell, co-owner of Culantro

John Shuell provided an insight on the business he and his wife opened in 2018. Culantro is a Peruvian cuisine carry out and with sit down seating, his wife Betty is from Peru and it is her menu and vision. In 2020, during the COVID shut down, their carry out business saved them, and they continue to grow a solid customer base.

#### 5. PRESENTATIONS

a. Highlights of 2022: A Report of Key Statistics and Trends

Presented by Engagement Manager, Sommer Realy. The Ferndale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) gathers data each quarter and reports that information to Main Street Oakland County and the national Main Street America program. Soon, data may also be gathered on other topics such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This template will be used to report those statistics, along with staff insight to the DDA Board of Directors each quarter. A final annual report will be completed using the same template each year. Reviewing statistics for business retention, gain, and loss helps the DDA can make informed decisions. By understanding current trends, we can identify areas of opportunity and develop strategies to capitalize on them. This will help create a vibrant and thriving downtown that will attract businesses, residents, and visitors alike. Summary of Calendar Year 2022 It is bitter-sweet to say goodbye to long-standing neighbors such as Rose Frame Shop and Foley & Mansfield, but it has been exciting to welcome new energy this year. The interconnectivity between downtown and other areas of the City of Ferndale has been strengthened with businesses opening second locations, expanding, and renovating.

Members identified the following missing locations and provided suggestions on other information we could collect in the future: Hothouse located on Woodward is in development, MaryBella's Southern Cache on Woodward opened just outside the TIF district. Suggested additions: demographic racial diversity, minority that will support the entrepreneur story.

b. New Board of Directors Policy Review

Lena Stevens provided three new policies for review and discussion. These policies were drafted by the Executive Director based on the DDA bylaws as well as best practices in the industry. Policies included: a. Orientation and Pledge, signed at time of appointment b. Conflict of Interest Agreement, signed annually in January c. Training Agreement, signed annually in January. Requested board members review, add edits and sent back for finalization.

c. 2023 Conference Attendance Planning

The following conferences were identified for 2023: a) Michigan Downtown Association Spring Workshop & Lansing Advocacy Day March 8 & 9, 2023 in East Lansing, Michigan \*virtual options will be available b) Main Street Now Conference March 28-29, 2023 Boston, Massachusetts c) International Downtown Association (IDA) Annual Conference October 4-6, 2023 Chicago, Illinois. The current budget for DDA Staff and Board of Director Training is \$15,000. To date only \$38 of that funding has been utilized since July 1, 2022. Average cost per attendee varies largely depending on travel, but an estimate per conference of \$2000-\$3000 is reasonable if air travel is required. Subject to budget availability, the DDA covers all travel and conference registration costs and provides a per diem for food for staff and board members.

Training and education have been underprioritized due to the pandemic, it is the recommendation of the Executive Director that conference attendance be prioritized for any interested board members and encouraged discussion.

Interest shared from board members:

Sarah Brown - yes, to anyone that fits schedule

Pj Jacokes – have attended the Main Street ones, would like to attend the IDA

JeDonna Dinges – yes, to anyone that fits schedule

Omar George – yes, to Main Street in Boston.

Metari Harris – yes, to IDA in Chicago

## 6. CONSENT AGENDA

a. ***Approval of Minutes from December 8, 2022***

*AYES* – Chair Pj Jacokes, Omar George, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Mayor Melanie Piana, Metari Harris, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges

*NAYS- None*

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

## 7. Regular Agenda

a. Presentation of Draft Budget from DDA Executive Director Lena Stevens

Executive Director Lena Stevens explained that the presentation during the last meeting was the visual overview of the workplan and budget for FY 22-23. Board members received a printed draft of the fiscal year workplan with a report included. At the next meeting the board will vote to adopt the workplan that includes the budget and calendar of events. City council will review it in March.

b. Nomination of Board Officers

Every two years, the DDA Board of Directors must nominate individuals to serve in four roles: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. Currently, the roles of Vice-Chairperson and Secretary are unfilled. Pj Jacokes serves as Chairperson and Sarah Brown serves as Treasurer. Candidates for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson must have

served on the board for one full year. Secretary and Treasurer can be filled by newer board members. As nominations for the Offices of the Ferndale DDA Board of Directors shall be recommended in at least one meeting prior to the meeting in which the nominations will be considered, the DDA Board of Directors will vote on these nominations in February 2023.

The following individuals were nominated to serve in four roles: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Pj Jacokes – nominated for chairperson by Sarah Brown and Mayor Piana, accepted nomination

Sarah Brown – nominated for vice-chairperson by Pj Jacokes, Omar George, Metari Harris, Mayor Piana, accepted nomination

JeDonna Dinges – nominated for secretary by Pj Jacokes and Metari Harris, accepted nomination

Omar George – nominated for treasurer by Metari Harris and Sarah Brown, accepted nomination

#### **8. Call to Board Members**

Board member, George Omar spoke about his concern with safety and the email letter he sent to council members regarding the implementation of security cameras in parking lots. Email generated one on one meetings with Chief Emmi and Mayor Piana.

Board members shared their experiences and thoughts on racial profiling and the concerns they have had with security.

#### **9. Information Items from Executive Director**

In response to the call to board member discussion, Executive Director Lena Stevens stated that this complicated issue is a personal matter from a private property owner at this time. The board will have to decide on if they would like to take a stance on the implementation of cameras in the parking lots. It is a lengthy process that will start with a presentation from the Chief of Police, Dennis Emmi and the City Manager, Joe Gacioch.

#### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Metari Harris seconded by Omar George to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 AM

*AYES* – Chair Pj Jacokes, Omar George, Treasurer Sarah Brown, Mayor Melanie Piana, Metari Harris, Toly Ashkenazi, JeDonna Dinges

*NAYS* – None

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