



FARMINGTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 9, 2019
Farmington City Hall

The January 9, 2019 meeting was called to order by Todd Craft at 6:09 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Tom Buck, Todd Craft, Sean Murphy, Steve Schneemann, Kathy Griswold, Rachel Gallagher and Micki Skrzycki

ABSENT: Stephanie Clement, Tom Pascaris

OTHERS PRESENT: Kate Knight, DDA Executive Director
David Murphy, City Manager

2. APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Skrzycki, seconded by Griswold to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- a. Financial Report
- b. Minutes: December 5, 2018 Meeting
- c. Minutes: December 11, 2018 Meeting

Motion carried 7-0-2.

3. APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA

Motion by Gallagher seconded by Murphy to approve the January 9, 2019 agenda as presented.

Motion carried 7-0-2.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Call to the Public at 6:11 p.m.
Call to the Public closed at 6:11 p.m.

5. FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Schneemann inquired whether the full financial report needs to be presented in hard copy at meetings. Buck suggested that the full financials might be included at the end of the packet, except that they are part of the consent agenda.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Communications

DDA is in the home stretch of contract with Metromode for communications. Knight explained that there is an upcoming event planned featuring the Future of Farmington with a panel discussion. Knight explained that the event would serve as community outreach and publicity, and an invite to community corporate partners to join in the sustained effort to create content about Downtown Farmington. Date is pending in February; DDA will require participation by Metromode founder Brian Boyle as part of the panel. Additional panelists will be identified in the coming weeks with support from Metromode. The venue will be Farmington Civic Theater. There was a dead stretch of coverage through the holidays (two weeks), through which no content was published. Knight confirmed that there would be additional/supplementary content to reach beyond the end of January contract ending terms. Knight stated that she and President Todd Craft had met with Metromode CEO Boyle in December, at which time Boyle pledged that IMG/Metromode would continue coverage of the Farmington community even after the highly concentrated On the Ground contract had finished. Knight commented on the high quality of the content; the DDA has negotiated to retain rights to use the professional photography for promotion and communication efforts. Gallagher stated that she has reached out to press corp veterans to gauge their interest in supporting the effort. Schneemann shared that he had recently discussed local history with Metromode's Farmington On the Ground writer, local resident Jenn McKee, and that the topic of architectural significance may be a future focus.

Events

Knight shared that she had been interviewed for an article written by Sharon Dargay, published in the Detroit Free Press, HometownLife.com and the Observer Eccentric, published December 27, regarding community reaction to Founders Festival moving from downtown to Shiawassee Park for 2019. Knight offered to email the link to any Board members who still had not read it. Hard copies were available at the meeting as well. Knight shared that the article had varying views from merchants. The Board will address the topic in discussion within the agenda later during this meeting.

Capital Improvement and Work Planning for 2019-2020

Knight reminded the Board that they had appointed her to represent DDA interests on the City's Capital Improvement Plan. A link was provided to the Board in addition to the packet via email on January 8, with the exhaustive Capital Improvement Plan as publicly shared on the city website. Additionally, last year's work plan is included in this packet, for Board planning and consideration. Any comments and feedback may be provided prior to the Board's discussion at the February 6 meeting. Knight stated that she will reach out individually to Board members to confirm their feedback prior to the next meeting. Knight will bring notes compiled from individual Board comments to the next meeting. On February 6, the Board will collaborate to prioritize DDA projects and efforts. This will inform the DDA budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Public Art

The DDA's first mural project was installed the first week of December. Public response has been very positive. According to Knight, "People like it." Social media engagement indicates that more than 9,000 people have engaged on two posts on the project.

The Public Art Committee has additional plans. They will meet on January 16 to develop planning for the year. This will include hosting an evening with muralist John Martin at MI.Mosa on Feb 3 at 5:30pm. Other programs in development include partnering merchant windows with artist installations. Knight indicated that DDA Board representation is strong with Public Art (Buck, Skryzcki, Gallagher). Craft asked whether there was a plan to have someone from the Public Art Committee report back directly to the Board "once in a while", other than within the Director's Report update, since there are so many Board members on that committee. Knight said that she had looked into exactly that organizational question in recent weeks, pertaining to how volunteer committees were formed and approved. The DDA By-Laws indicate that volunteers would be approved to join committees by the DDA President, and that any volunteer could be removed by majority vote of that committee. Knight stated that the DDA, as an accredited Main Street Committee, subscribes to the Main Street format for Committees, which are traditionally, Design, Organization, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring. These subcommittees convene on an as-needed basis.

The Public Art Committee, while non-traditional, was formed as a result of the Public Art Blueprint, published in 2017, which was developed through a Main Street Oakland County Technical Assistance grant. The current chair of this committee is not on the DDA Board. Knight has fielded increased volunteer interest in serving on the Public Art Committee. By-laws indicate that new committee volunteers need to be approved by the Board and appointed by the DDA president.

The Design Committee, which has recently formalized a standing monthly meeting date on the fourth Thursday at 7:30am, has seen a few resignations and a few new members. Schneemann stated that there hasn't been an official process for onboarding volunteers, saying, "Basically if you're willing to show up and volunteer at 7:30 in the morning, we'll take you." Skrycki: "We have volunteer committees, and we're going to impose conditions?" Craft stated that it would be beneficial to have committees report directly to the Board. Gallagher said that there had been this reporting in the past. Knight agreed that this could be incorporated into each meeting, particularly since a few committees are now meeting regularly. Skryzcki suggested that this could be incorporated in the February agenda. Buck suggested that the Board could expect a short report from the committee itself. Craft suggested that this could be at some interval, maybe quarterly. The Parking Committee, Craft gave as an example, could present more frequently. Skryzcki pointed out that the Parking Committee is a city group, not part of the DDA. Craft agreed, but stated that the DDA does interact with them (PC). Board consensus was that committee reports would be beneficial directly from each chair DDA Board liaison.

If activating Main Street Committees to form and report on an as-needed basis, Knight suggested that a DDA Board liaison be identified for any groups meeting to advise the Board. Murphy volunteered to represent the Promotions Committee, as Knight stated that she would be calling upon some creative industry volunteers to assist in development of print and creative content focus.

Main Street Oakland County

Knight advised the DDA Board that the annual Main Street evaluation would be February 13 with the same officiant as 2018, Ray Scriber, from Louisiana Main Street. The format would be the same as previous years, with an open house for merchants, volunteers and Board members. Individual meetings are required with DDA officers and the mayor. The Board consented to make time for meeting that day. Knight concluded that there would be an evening report presentation that same date, at City Hall.

Knight shared the theme for MSOC Main Event Awards in May: Radio Hour. Knight will distribute the award catalog to the Board to begin planning efforts for application. Skyrzcki noted that last year's representation from Farmington was the strongest attendance ever.

7. Riley Park Lighting Installation

Knight presented slides of the Harry Potter skating event at Riley Park ice rink, featuring the new lighting installation. Skyrzcki noted that the lighting "is the new centerpiece". Schneemann described the process of design and installation, pointing out that to get someone like Willson (contractor) to say yes to such a tiny, yet time-consuming, complicated project is rare. Schneemann praised the contractor. The Board thanked Schneemann for the design. Skyrzcki noted that rink usage has increased. Knight advised that the Board needed to ratify the spend for this project, as previously discussed, using proceeds from the Harvest Moon Celebration, through a formal motion.

MOTION by Buck, SECONDED by Schneemann, RESOLVED that the Board shall ratify the expenditure of \$14,646.32, paid to Willson-Swykert, QSC Jeffery Krappitz and Costco for Riley Park Festival Lighting, allocating funds from the Harvest Moon Celebrations proceeds 2017, 2018.

Motion carried 7-0-2

Buck inquired whether there was a way to increase attendance at the ice rink. Skyrzcki described the volunteer effort involved with the Ice Rink committee, which programs themed events and sells dasher board ads.

8. Founders Festival Discussion

Knight shared an aforementioned article regarding local merchant discussion of Founders, as well as a letter from merchant Greg Cowley, proclaiming disappointment with the Chamber's decision to move the event to Shiawassee Park, out of downtown. Knight commented that there are merchants who support the

decision to move the event out of downtown as well. This is anecdotal, she shared, as no official survey has been conducted. It is important for the DDA to make a decision regarding the status of the Founders event which is supportive of the entire downtown business community, Knight maintained. The most vocal dissent has been from a couple of bar/restaurant owners whose business will be negatively impacted, they believe by the event leaving downtown. Said business owner has described the loss of 200,000 visitors to the event downtown. Schneemann stated that DPS numbers for the event last year indicated 35,000 attendees. Craft suggested that those merchants who are interested in developing private efforts to support lost business should go ahead and do it. Sckyrzcki reminded the Board that the DDA had recently managed the event for a number of years, and decided to pass the responsibility to the Chamber, due to the impact of event planning on the balance of other DDA work. Buck reminded the Board that at the time Founders had been acquired by the DDA to produce, there "wasn't a lot going on downtown". Much of Downtown Farmington's current programming originated from Founders, such as Art on the Grand.

Buck commented that the relocation of the event results in the loss of revenue for downtown businesses. Schneemann reiterated that the DDA must decide as a Board whether there would be a decision regarding the Founders event. Gallagher reminded that it was a Chamber, not DDA event. Griswold suggested that there might be an opportunity for downtown restaurants to create their own programming at Riley Park. Griswold emphasized that this would not be DDA-produced. Gallagher detailed the history of sidewalk sales by merchants as part of Founders. This could be recharged in the absence of Founders programming on downtown sidewalks. Craft asked, what is the Board willing to do to support downtown during the event as currently located out-of-downtown. Griswold suggested a shuttle from downtown to the park venue. Griswold suggested merchant coupons. Murphy commented that we may be surprised at the positive effect of event relocation. Schneemann said he would prefer to host the festival downtown due to tradition and brand. Buck listed several ideas, including expanding Farmers Market the weekend of Founders, progressive dinner programming from restaurant to restaurant, fun run. Gallagher stated that Legato owner Diane Cassidy would be willing to revive the Alley Regally tent from previous Founders events. It was a quieter alternative to the beer tent at the festival. Schneemann observed that Board discussion at this meeting is yielding many ideas which require organization and execution. City Manager David Murphy interjected to inquire whether the DDA would be condoning programming to compete and conflict directly with the Chamber's production of Founders, which would result in dilution of success on both sides (DDA and Chamber). Buck stated that he thinks the Chamber made a non-business oriented decision in relocating the event. Murphy suggested that the Chamber should be engaged in any discussion of downtown programming during the Founders event. Buck: who will pull this together on behalf of the DDA? Schneemann suggested that the ambassador to the Chamber should be the DDA president (Craft) or the DDA Director (Knight). Knight agreed to initiate a meeting immediately with the Chamber, with representation by DDA Director and President Craft. Knight observed that the Board would have to decide what portion of the DDA work plan should move or adjust to accommodate staff time inherent in administering Founders-related tasks. Buck stated that we must find merchants willing to take on responsibility for events.

Buck described this as “creating the sandbox for others to play in”. Schneemann inquired who would be charged with creating the opportunity, and are we asking the director to go out and pound the pavement to organize merchants? Skyrzcki volunteered to work on it. Buck volunteered as well. Knight stated that, even with Board involvement, there would be “sandbox maintenance” required. Craft summarized: We need an ad hoc Board Committee to work with merchants. Skyrzcki volunteered to spearhead the effort. Knight: Should the Board appoint a chair? Buck agreed to help. Chairs identified: Skyrzcki and Buck. Buck appreciated the collaborative spirit of Board discussion tonight.

9. Capital Improvement and Work Planning for 2019-2020

Knight reiterated materials have been provided to the Board in this packet and that she will reach out individually to Board members to confirm their feedback prior to the next meeting. On February 6, the Board will collaborate to prioritize DDA projects and efforts.

10. Oakland Street Project

Knight summarized previous discussion of the project as it concluded at the DDA Special Meeting. All material from the OHM presentation has been included again in this Board packet. The topic was tabled with the agreement to revisit the decision at the January 2018 Board meeting. Buck stated that the DDA cost represented 52% of the total proposed project. Griswold stated that in detailed discussion with Clement (not present), she and Clement has evaluated past initiatives this fiscal year involving property acquisition which equaled the investment proposed by the Oakland Street project. Griswold stated that the value of the Oakland Street project surpassed the value of previous projects considered. Gallagher: Love it. Let's do it (Oakland project). Buck stated his concern that the project cost increased dramatically over the time it developed with design and engineering. Buck is not entirely convinced that there are not other opportunities that might be targeted instead. Buck stated that doing the project does make sense, but personally believes that the cost is too high. Schneemann: This is a great project and this is why we have the DDA, to support and make happen projects that improve and support the downtown. Schneemann agrees with Buck in that it would be ideal to have some funds in reserve, which the DDA will. Schneemann is not concerned that the DDA will miss out on other opportunities that may come along. If the “opportunity of a lifetime” comes along, there are other ways to obtain financing. A big part of going forward with Oakland Street has to do with the statement voters made last fall in supporting a millage to execute capital improvements in the city, including downtown. Murphy stated that he is supportive of the Oakland Street project. He is mindful of the importance of the Farmington Road Streetscape, which he feels would be the most important capital project target. Knight confirmed that the DDA would not have enough capitol, regardless of investing in Oakland, to accommodate debt service for Farmington Road, and that DDA contribution to that effort would be structured differently. Schneemann stated that DDA support of Oakland Street sends a strong message to City Council that the DDA is committed. Murphy reiterated that the project in total is a good value not only in parking, but as a gateway into downtown, a pedestrian connection that serves to expand the business

district and connect neighborhoods into downtown. Skyrzcki agrees with Buck that she thinks that it dips into the fund balance too much, but she also thinks we need to do this. It's a statement of commitment to the downtown community and the public that we are making decisions to improve the quality of downtown. Buck recommended that the motion language include a "not to exceed" clause. Schneemann reminded that the project would need to be approved by City Council after DDA approval, to move forward. Craft agreed with Murphy that the project is a strong gateway into downtown and it improves perception of the community as a whole. Parking and streetscape improvements on Oakland will support the introduction of a long term lease at the Masonic Lodge. Craft is also concerned about dipping into fund balance, citing other development opportunity currently under confidential exploratory status. The DDA should be aware that there might be other opportunities arising. Schneemann commented that any significant development project downtown wouldn't necessarily be impacted by the small amount (comparatively) available from the DDA fund balance. Knight stated that there would be other mechanisms for funding development downtown. Craft observes that the project is costly, but believes that the impact and benefit of the project as proposed, create maximum value for the downtown.

ACTION:

MOTION by Gallagher, SECONDED by Skyrzcki, RESOLVED, that the Board approve the DDA's participation in the Oakland Street Project. The DDA's participation includes all landscaping and electrical components, as well as a contribution to road reconstruction to accommodate parking, of \$80,000, already allocated. The project includes the following elements and estimated costs:

Project total: \$646,000

DDA Landscape and Electrical: \$258,000 (plus \$80,000, allocated from 2018-19 budget)

Motion to fund DDA portion of project, not to exceed \$338,000 or 52% of project cost, whichever is less, is contingent upon City Council's agreement to share project costs.

Motion carried 7-0-2

11. Other Business

Knight shared that DDA staffer Lydia Macklin-Camel has departed to accept a full-time position with the Nature Conservancy. Knight stated that she is proud and happy for Macklin-Camel, and grateful for the work she completed for the DDA. Macklin-Camel has agreed to stay on as a volunteer with the Public Art Committee. Knight will be posting the position as a part-time opportunity with the description Promotions Coordinator. The Board commented that Macklin-Camel had been a great employee.

Knight offered that there is an opportunity to attend the National Main Street Conference. It's in the DDA budget, there is scholarship available from MSOC.

Main Street evaluation recommends participation. Craft said that he would strongly consider it.

Schneemann thanked the Board for their consideration and commitment to the Oakland Street project. It has been a long time since the DDA took on such a capital project, and, particularly on the heels of the millage, it's a valuable demonstration of executing the will of the community.

Knight shared that the Masons are seeking a long term lease, and were eagerly anticipating the potential addition of parking on Oakland Street. They see it as beneficial in supporting business, and are looking carefully at their existing agreement with the city, which allows long term employee parking in their lot. An incoming tenant may pursue parking lot use terms which support their own business. Thus, additional parking on the west end of downtown, both for employees and visitors, becomes more necessary.

12. Board Comment

Craft thanked the Board for their thought and time regarding the Oakland Street decision, which will enhance a very key area downtown.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Schneemann, seconded by Buck to adjourn at 8:24 p.m.

Motion carried 7-0-2.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Knight
Executive Director,
Farmington DDA

The next regular meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 6, 2019, in the conference room at Farmington City Hall.