

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
WITH
THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Tuesday, December 7, 2004, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 8:06 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Bush, Campbell, Knol, McShane, Mitchell.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: Clerk/Treasurer Cantrell, City Manager Pastue.

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA) MEMBERS AND STAFF
PRESENT:**

L. Batzloff, D. Beamer, F. Clappison, G. Cowley, C. Grace, D. Vargovick and Director B. Morgan.

City Manager Pastue provide topics for discussion including: community event planning; outreach efforts to Downtown business owners; efforts to recruit more volunteers; and work plans for Main Street Committees.

Mayor Campbell opened with a request for discussion on promotions and community event planning.

Board Member Beamer stated that the Main Street Promotions Committee continues to evolve. He stated that the challenge is the marriage between ideas and implementation. He noted that there is no shortage of ideas, however, financial and labor resources are limited. He advised that long term growth would require greater committee progress and more specific direction from the DDA Board.

Responding to a question, Beamer stated that ideas are always welcome, however, all may not be acted upon. He further stated that there will always be a certain level of frustration and disappointment from constituents, but the Board is open to comments and welcomes the opportunity for improvement.

Board Member Cowley asked if there had been an historic promotional event in which the Board had not participated. He stated his belief that the Promotions Committee had done a very good job funding annual promotional events. He advised that priorities need to be established in allocating funds. He noted that 15% of the budget or \$50,000 was spent last year on promotions, stating evaluation should be done to determine if this was the best use of those funds. He advised that press releases for events should include "selling" Farmington.

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In response to a question from Mayor Campbell, Beamer stated that Council must move forward with construction of the pavilion. Mayor Campbell responded that Council is working on making that happen.

Councilmember Mitchell stated that he would like to see the DDA Board take over the funding of the summer concert series. Beamer responded that the Board would take it under consideration, however, the availability of the pavilion would be a factor in making that decision.

Board Member Clappison stated that all of the Board's activities relate to promoting the downtown. He advised that the Pavilion Committee is active and in January will present to the Board their mission statement and organization structure. He recommended that the pavilion activities be administered through the Promotions Committee. Discussion continued regarding management of the pavilion.

Councilmember Knol congratulated the DDA Board on the success of its Winter Holiday Weekend and on coordinating events with the Mansion and Civic Theatre. She asked about recruiting a staff person who would manage promotions, seek additional sponsorships and possibly plan additional events.

Beamer responded that the DDA Board would explore the possibility of a promotions staff person, however, it may be difficult to find someone with limited budget dollars available. Discussion followed regarding what other "Main Street" communities are doing with regard to staffing. Cowley expressed the need to set priorities and goals before addressing the issue of adding to staff.

Clappison noted that farmers' markets in other communities have generated surpluses and a well-managed pavilion could produce enough revenue to pay for a promotions and "market master" person.

Councilmember McShane noted that the recent DDA Winter Holiday event received excellent publicity. She further noted that the Funny Film Festival should have been promoted earlier and partnerships with other committees should have been established. Beamer noted that Director Morgan had secured the publicity for the Winter Holiday event.

Beamer asked about Council's expectations of the DDA Board. Mayor Campbell responded that quality of promotions is more important than quantity. He stated that it is important to try different activities and provide ample time and opportunity for them to succeed.

Knol asked for clarification of the DDA Director's role as it relates to Main Street committees, merchants and the DDA. Beamer responded that the DDA Board needs to develop and provide clearer expectations for the Director. He stated that the DDA has backed into the Main Street process and roles have not been defined. Knol stated that clearly defining the process and roles would provide better direction going forward.

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Pastue observed that Main Street program is an evolving process that has reached a point where the program's structure and direction need to be defined and resources committed. Discussion followed regarding assistance from Oakland County and input from other communities. Cowley noted that Royal Oak has a program in which a third party, i.e. bank, acts as a conduit between the merchants and the market place, providing seminars on business plans and marketing and organizing cooperative advertising. He noted that the DDA Board's challenge is to "sell" Farmington and that can only be done with a defined, unified approach. He questioned whether promotion funds could be spent more wisely. He stated that in order for the Downtown to grow, it would need to attract new consumers, not just maintain status quo.

McShane stated that she learned from Main Street training that local banks have community development funds available. She noted that there are other "tools" provided in the Main Street program that should be revisited and utilized. She further noted the need to form partnerships in event planning.

Board Member Vargovick stated that several broad issues have been identified, but in order to further define and act upon these issues, study groups need to be established to achieve results. Beamer suggested planning a January retreat.

Discussion followed regarding the challenge of recruiting volunteers.

Mayor Campbell suggested that during the DDA Board's offsite retreat they might consider expanding the DDA district. Discussion followed as to how an expansion would be handled.

Mitchell concurred that expansion of the DDA district should be considered as well as expanding the size of the Board. He also recommended that the DDA Board look at other communities for ideas in recruiting volunteers.

Pastue advised that the Sign Committee would be ready soon with their recommendations. He further advised that the issue of parking as part of the Master Plan would be addressed early in 2005.

McShane noted the need to reach out to merchants and develop a partnership. She stressed the importance of establishing a "spirit of harmony" in the Downtown community.

Mayor Campbell thanked the DDA Board for meeting with Council.

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 a.m.

ARNOLD T. CAMPBELL, Mayor

PATSY K. CANTRELL, City Clerk/Treasurer