



DDA Board Meeting
8:00 am Wednesday, March 11, 2026
City Hall Conference Room
23600 Liberty St
Farmington, MI 48336

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at **8:05 AM by Todd Craft.**

1. Roll Call

Present: Todd Craft, Donovan Singleton, Claire Perko, Sean Murphy, James McLaughlan, Shawn Kavanagh, Karlyn Cassidy

Absent: Tom Pascaris, Joe LaRussa

Others Present: Jess Westendorf, Jenny Gray

2. Approval of Consent Agenda

a. Minutes: February 4, 2026 - DDA Board Regular Meeting

b. Minutes: February 5, 2026 DDA Business Development Committee Meeting

Motion by Murphy, seconded by McLaughlan to approve items on the consent agenda.

Motion passes unanimously.

3. Approval of Regular Agenda

Motion by Singleton, seconded by Cassidy, to approve items on the regular agenda.

Motion passes unanimously.

4. Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Election of 2026 Officers

Todd Craft was nominated by Singleton and seconded by Cassidy. Craft accepted the nomination. James McLaughlan was nominated by Perko and seconded by Murphy. The Board unanimously voted Craft for President.

James McLaughlan was nominated for Vice President by Murphy and seconded by Singleton. McLaughlan accepted the nomination. The motion passes unanimously.

Karlyn Cassidy was nominated for Secretary by Craft and seconded by McLaughlan. Cassidy accepted the nomination. The motion passes unanimously.



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Claire Perko was appointed Design Committee Chair and Public Art Committee Chair.

Shawn Kavanagh was appointed Promotions Committee Chair.

Sean Murphy and Karlyn Cassidy were appointed to collaboratively chair the Organization Committee.

Donovan Singleton and James McLaughlin were appointed to collaboratively chair the Business Development Committee.

6. Executive Director Update

Executive Director Jess Westendorf provided an update on recent activities and initiatives.

Staff participated in a regional Main Street workshop in St. Louis and the Michigan Downtown Association's spring workshop and advocacy meetings in Lansing, focusing on economic development, housing, and continued support for downtown funding tools such as TIF.

Downtown programming is ramping up for the spring season, including Ladies Night Out, Rhythms in Riley Park, and Lunch Beats. A new resident welcome packet is being distributed to introduce new residents to downtown businesses and events.

Westendorf reported strong business activity, with several new businesses expected to open in the coming months, including retail, experiential, and restaurant concepts. Demand for downtown space remains high.

Construction on the Art Park Promenade is scheduled to start back up in mid-March, with a goal of completion by Memorial Day to support summer activation.

7. Consideration of FY 2026–2027 Draft DDA Budget

Westendorf presented the draft budget for Fiscal Year 2026–2027, covering July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. The DDA remains in a stable financial position, supported by consistent TIF revenue.

Potential future development projects could increase TIF revenue; however, it was noted that the DDA will likely continue to incentivize priority projects, which may moderate overall revenue gains. It also reflects ongoing reimbursement commitments for prior projects, including Hillside Towns and GLP. Strong property values and demand will accelerate repayment timelines, allowing the DDA to capture full tax increment revenues sooner.



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The Art Park Promenade remains a major capital project within the budget. Site furnishings and public art are being funded through the Make a Wave initiative, proceeds from Harvest Moon, and potentially additional grant opportunities.

Board members were encouraged to review the draft budget and provide feedback ahead of formal approval at the April meeting.

8. PSD Study Group

The Board discussed the upcoming expiration of the Principal Shopping District (PSD) Special Assessment in 2027. The PSD represents approximately 20% of the DDA's budget and funds maintenance and promotional activities.

To prepare for renewal, the Board reviewed the need to establish a study group, similar to the 2021 group, consisting of the City Manager, DDA Executive Director, City Treasurer, DDA Board Chair, and members of the Business Development Committee, including downtown property owners. DDA Attorney Beth Saarela has prepared a timeline to guide the process and ensure compliance with public notification requirements.

A motion by Singleton, seconded by Cassidy, to establish a PSD Study Group to evaluate the current Special Assessment and develop a plan for renewal. Motion passes unanimously.

9. Committee Updates

a. Promotions Committee

The Promotions Committee reported progress on the development of the downtown welcome mailer, including updated materials and sample inserts. The mailer is intended to introduce new residents to downtown businesses, events, and seasonal programming.

b. Business Development Committee

The Business Development Committee provided an update on ongoing efforts related to the "Farmington After Dark" initiative focusing on evening activity and vibrancy in the downtown. Discussions have centered on identifying opportunities to support businesses operating later hours, improve nighttime foot traffic, and explore programming or partnerships that encourage visitors to remain downtown beyond traditional business hours.



DDA Board Meeting
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c. Design Committee

The Design Committee reported consulting for the City on items related to the corridor improvement project, since it is just outside the downtown district to ensure cohesive implementation. They will be meeting soon to discuss some upcoming projects.

d. Organization Committee

The Organization Committee discussed its coordination role for major downtown initiatives and events, including Harvest Moon and volunteer engagement.

10. Other Business

Westendorf introduced a motion to explore the development of a first-floor use ordinance for new businesses in the downtown district. The proposed ordinance would aim to encourage active, public-facing uses at street level, supporting continued vibrancy, walkability, and retail activity throughout the district.

The Board discussed the importance of maintaining an engaging streetscape and ensuring that ground-floor spaces contribute to pedestrian activity and overall downtown vitality.

A motion was introduced by Perko, seconded by Singleton, to explore a first-floor use ordinance for new businesses. The motion passes unanimously.

11. Board Comment

Board members expressed enthusiasm about the number of new businesses entering downtown and appreciation for the volunteers and staff supporting downtown programming and development initiatives.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 on a motion by Singleton, seconded by Perko. Motion passes unanimously.