



FINAL

JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND DDA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A joint meeting of the Farmington City Council and Downtown Development Authority Board was held on Monday, February 22, 2016, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, MI. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor William Galvin.

I. CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Sara Bowman	Council Member	Present	
Greg Cowley	Councilmember	Present	
William Galvin	Mayor	Present	
Steve Schneemann	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Jeff Scott	Councilmember	Present	

DDA Board Members Present:

Tom Buck
Rachel Gallagher
Sean Murphy
Agnes Skrzycki

DDA Board Members Absent:

Les Key
Dan Higgins
Valerie Greer
Kathleen Platzke

Others Present:

Director Christiansen
City Clerk Halberstadt
Assistant to the City Manager Knowles
City Manager Murphy
Attorney Schultz

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**1. Motion to Approve the Agenda as Presented.**

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Greg Cowley, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Steve Schneemann, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Bowman, Cowley, Galvin, Schneemann, Scott

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was heard.

IV. MAIN STREET APPROACH REFRESH

Knowles reported that she, Councilmember Bowman and DDA Boardmember Skrzycki attended a recent session sponsored by Main Street Oakland County regarding forthcoming changes. She indicated Main Street is focusing more on project based rather than committee based applications. She noted Farmington is already operating under a project based application, but work continues to implement the way Main Street is changing the way to do business.

Knowles stated with the proposed changes Main Street is placing more focus on economic development through transformational strategies. Their hope is that communities will develop an economic positioning statement based on either a demographic genre or a product niche. The communities can then develop their work plans based on projects or programs that will help fulfill that economic positioning strategy. She said more details will be forthcoming at the Main Street Conference in Milwaukee in May. Hopefully she will be able to share a more clear direction and instruction on what the expectations are from Main Street going forward.

Schneemann asked if things will remain status quo with Main Street until more information is provided and Knowles responded in the affirmative. She stated they are currently conducting pilot programs with select communities in developing strategies for implementation. She advised the final roll out on the project will be next year, but Main Street is hoping that communities will begin thinking more strategically now so that at the time of the full roll out all participants will be in a better position to assimilate the new way of doing business.

Schneemann then asked if the Design Committee will continue to operate in the same way. Knowles responded they will likely retain much of the structure of the Design Committee, but that it may evolve over time.

Schneemann asked if Farmington's continued participation in Main Street will be premised on adopting the proposed changes. Knowles responded in the affirmative.

Cowley questioned whether Knowles had reviewed the four standing committees and their expected results. She responded that the DDA is already transitioning away from the committee concept and developing work plans for the coming year. The plans will be presented to Council at their March meeting and will specify projects including parking.

Cowley asked her to identify other projects for the coming year. Knowles responded that they have project teams for various promotions such as: Ladies Night Out, Business Locator Map, Harvest Moon, public communication including the Main Street Messenger, and final closure on The Orchards.

Buck stated the change is consistent with the direction that the DDA has been taking towards more focus on economic development. Knowles indicated that the term economic development will be renamed so as not to interfere with out of state nonprofits.

Buck stated the goals, objectives and actions are clear and consistent with the plans for 2016-2017 and they seem like a good fit.

Galvin inquired about the mission statement and work plans, stating there is already a Vision Plan, a Downtown Area Plan, and a new Downtown Master Plan in the works. He asked whether a new statement will be developed or can an existing one be put in place. Knowles responded they could modify one currently in place to insure it fits with the changes.

Responding to a question from Bowman, Knowles stated the program will be renamed Main Street America with all new logos.

Cowley asked Knowles where the legislature stands on the Tax Increment Financing (TIF). She responded legislation was introduced once again that if passed would negatively impact the longevity of the DDA's utilization of TIF. She stated it won't eliminate TIF but will restrict the length of time it can last which may affect a community's ability to issue bonds for improvements. She noted when the Corridor Improvement Authority was created last year a legal agreement with Oakland County was created to capture county taxes regardless of what happens with the TIF legislation.

Cowley then asked whether TIF revenue could be counted on when considering the budget for upcoming years. Knowles responded if there are sufficient revenues to support it.

Cowley then questioned whether Farmington would be at risk if a bond is issued and TIF disappears. Knowles advised that the existing TIF would remain in place, but no extensions would be given.

Galvin asked if that was part of the Main Street Refresh program and Knowles responded in the negative. She stated the Refresh program is strictly an approach encouraged by the National Main Street Center, but is not in any way linked to TIF.

Buck stated he read the summary and believed that the revenue required to pay off bonds would be protected in some fashion.

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Parking – City/DDA and Downtown Parking Advisory Committee

Murphy described the history of the Parking Advisory Committee and the role of the liaison to the DDA.

Buck advised that City Manager Murphy would like concerns or viewpoints expressed by business owners, residents, etc. conveyed to the liaison to pass on to the Parking Committee.

Buck stated it is the mission of the DDA to support business success and growth. He expressed concern over putting one of their board members in a position to pass on information to the Parking Advisory Committee that has not necessarily been heard by Council. He would like there to be direct dialogue with Council and the Committee about concerns presented to the DDA.

Knowles advised that not all changes implemented by recommendation of the Parking Committee and approved by Council have been favorably received. She recommended adopted a standardized protocol so if an issue arises it can be addressed appropriately and through the proper channels.

Christiansen concurred with Knowles and stated that all of the boards and commissions as well as City Council are trying to effectuate open and consistent communication of issues and actions and status. He stated it is important to make sure that information is shared.

Responding to a question from Murphy, Buck indicated that the DDA has made efforts to obtain feedback from businesses in town and then provide that information to the appropriate body, be it City Council, the community or the Parking Committee. He stated the DDA is attempting to do the best job they in representing their customers who are essentially the downtown. He stated the goal of the DDA is different from that of Council or the Parking Committee and is pretty well defined by statute.

Buck discussed DDA funding and how those dollars are used towards economic development and increasing the vibrancy of the downtown to promote business growth. He stated the issue of parking has been on the agenda for many years and will likely continue going forward. The DDA will continue to share with Council and the Parking Committee information provided by the businesses.

Cowley pointed out that the DDA has refused to take up the issue of parking and develop a strategy. He was on the DDA for years and nobody wanted to address the issue, but now that the Parking Committee has developed a positive strategy that they disagree with, they are up in arms. He noted that many of the DDA Board members disagree with the strategy and discussed a need for better communication with Council. He stated after Fresh Thyme opens the business community will have plenty of time to discuss it's positive or negative impact on their business. He further stated he would encourage the DDA to bring metrics, statistics, etc. regarding the parking issue.

Gallagher advised the DDA Board has not taken an official position on parking, but several of its members feel that the businesses are not being represented in the changes that are being made.

Responding to a question from Schneemann, Gallagher stated the DDA has never taken a vote on the 3-hour parking limit so she is unaware of how each board member feels.

Buck indicated that dialogue on the 3-hour parking limit began in February to get to a board position that would be in response to what they were hearing from businesses. He confirmed no majority statement or consensus statement has been adopted by the DDA on the parking issue.

Bowman asked background questions on the Parking Advisory Committee and further discussion was held on the role of the liaison. She doesn't believe the DDA and Council have different visions on the parking issue.

Buck stated their interest is to try to maximize satisfaction in the downtown and optimize the resources available whether it is parking spaces, funds, time or support. He stated the Board continues to hear concerns from businesses regarding changes to downtown parking and he wants to insure they are heard.

Scott expressed concern that the Parking Committee was formed seven months ago and the DDA is simply having dialogue. He stated the DDA should have addressed this issue years ago. He noted four to five sites should have been selected for a parking structure and discussion should have been held on how it would be financed. He stated this needs to get done.

Buck stated the parking deck dialogue has been going on for many years with studies, three potential sites selected; but due to economic challenges decisions were not made. He indicated the DDA is looking next year to establish a site for a parking deck and will know after Fresh Thyme opens what direction parking should take. He stated he has been quoted in the paper as having the desire to be proactive and look for solutions now.

Schneemann believes the DDA should be able to have dialogue about issues that affect the downtown including a parking structure.

Sean Murphy advised that the parking study should be updated.

Galvin believes the boards and commissions are in place in part to help Council make decisions and represent the citizens. He stated historically the DDA has been involved in economic development, TIF, promotions, and the Main Street Program. He stated each board and commission has their role and he viewed the Parking Committee as a tool to gather statistics, data, and the like. He discussed the overlap of boards and commissions and indicated the City Manager as the central coordinator. He suggested using the administrators to help with communication problems.

Galvin summarized the discussion by saying parking management is a continual adaption to the needs of the businesses, the customers, the citizens, and visitors.

b. Council Members and DDA Board Members

Discussion was held concerning DDA members who do not regularly attend meetings and the continuing struggle to achieve a quorum at their meetings.

Knowles advised that officials from Main Street Oakland County came out to conduct board training. As part of the training, they re-emphasized the commitment level that was expected.

Buck stated he would like to see a more diverse board that would include businesses on the south side of Grand River. He noted there are two re-appointments coming up.

Discussion followed regarding interviewing board members who are up for re-appointment.

Responding to a question from Scott, Knowles stated there is a provision in bylaws to address board member absences.

VI. DDA JOINT OPERATING AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY

a. Downtown Development Authority Joint Operating Agreement with the City of Farmington

Murphy provided background on a DDA joint operating agreement with City of Farmington, noting it was a two-year agreement established in 2013 and expired in 2015. He advised Administration is recommending renewal of the agreement.

In response to a question from Galvin on how to move forward with approving the agreement, Schultz stated the agreement needs to be approved by both the DDA Board and Council. He suggested it to become a rolling contract, automatic renewal, with a three-month cancellation.

Buck expressed support for making the change to the term of the contract.

Schneemann stated as a former DDA member, he understood the agreement was meant to be short term and on a trial basis.

Murphy then suggested a 2017 termination date, and then during the budget process renew it as necessary.

Schultz asked for input from both parties as to what language should be included in the contract.

Knowles stated she supports current contract as stated with annual rollover; and would like the option of another year added.

Schultz summarized the discussion by saying the language of the contract would include the renewal provision until 2017.

Galvin then instructed the city attorney to prepare the contract and resolutions for both the DDA and City Council.

VII. FINANCES

Murphy noted the City has helped out the DDA for the last several years, but as TIF funds increase he would like the board to provide more financial assistance to the city. He cited a number of projects including landscaping along Grand River and help to cover incentive costs to encourage Maxfield Training Center redevelopment.

Buck stated he believes that the DDA and City Council have a history of collaboration that supports each other.

Gallagher stated some issues can be addressed through volunteer help.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Murphy stated he would like to be more engaged in the DDA but his current schedule prohibits him from doing so. He was informed of the date and time of the next meeting which he stated he could attend.

IX. COUNCIL AND BOARD COMMENT

Scott expressed appreciation for the meeting and the frank discussion that was held

Cowley spoke about the accomplishments of the DDA during his tenure on that board. He expressed concern over the DDA's lack of achievement. He indicated the DDA should find board members that will show up to meetings, and address issues as they arise. He stated City Council and the DDA Board need to get on the same page. He pointed out that all boards and commissions should get on the redevelopment bus to allow for change and growth in the City. He does not want to see the DDA go back to being a garden club wherein the best interests of the city would not be served.

Bowman expressed appreciation to all volunteers and noted that civic engagement is important for residents.

Murphy stated he supports and encourages ongoing dialogue, however, issues other than parking are important as well such as the Farmington Road streetscape.

Skrzycki stated she has no comment, but admonished everyone to “play nice in the sandbox.” She noted everyone is there for the same purpose and wants the best for Farmington.

Gallagher recommended Council and the DDA Board meet more often. They need to put some dates on the calendar.

Galvin discussed the "car as a service" he presented at the State of the Cities address. He suggested the DDA could consider taking it on as a service to the downtown in the future. He indicated he is reaching out to Bosch to explore this idea and invited anyone to help him in looking at this venture.

Galvin announced a joint meeting between the two City Councils and the Farmington School Board on February 29th at Greek Island Grill.

X. ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Steve Schneemann, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Sara Bowman, Council Member
AYES:	Bowman, Cowley, Galvin, Schneemann, Scott

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

William E. Galvin, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

Approval Date: April, 18, 2016