



DDA Board Meeting  
8:00 am Wednesday September 2, 2026  
City Hall Conference Room  
23600 Liberty Street  
Farmington, MI 48335

## Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 AM by Todd Craft.

### 1. Roll Call

**Present:** Todd Craft, Karlyn Cassidy, Claire Perko, Joe LaRussa, Sean Murphy, and Tom Pascaris

**Absent:** Shawn Kavanagh, Donovan Singleton, and James McLaughlin

**Others Present:** Jess Westendorf, Jenny Gray

### 2. Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by **LaRussa**, seconded by **Cassidy** to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Approval of Regular Agenda

Motion by **LaRussa**, seconded by **Cassidy** to approve the regular agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Public Comment

No public comments.

### 5. Executive Director Update

Westendorf reported a strong close to the summer programming season, including the highest-attended Friday night concert to date, with attendance estimated at more than 1,000 people. Planning was underway for Harvest Moon and the Grand Raven Festival, with additional volunteer opportunities available.

Physical improvement projects were nearing completion. Work at Farmington Insurance Agency included window and sidewalk improvements, while the Art Park Promenade was down to final punch-list items. The Public Art Committee selected 11 sculptures for Riley Park and the Art Park Promenade, with installation anticipated by mid-October.

The Retail Lab continued to receive positive media attention. Staff was assisting the current tenant with next-step opportunities while preparing for Valbona Vintage to move into the space, with a late-September opening anticipated. Six additional incubator applications had been received, providing a strong pipeline of future candidates.

Westendorf also reported on recent engagement with the Mayors Association of Michigan and anticipated future familiarization tours for other downtown organizations. A

proposal was being prepared for a 2027 Main Street Now mobile workshop featuring Farmington, Ferndale, and Rochester. SEMCOG Experience Farmington filming was scheduled for September 17.

## **6. Approval of Invoice #1 Midwest Sculpture Initiative**

Westendorf shared the Midwest Sculpture Initiative Fall Outdoor Exhibit Series. Farmington is one of seven participating communities and selected 11 sculptures by 11 different artists for a one-year exhibit in Riley Park and the Art Park Promenade. The total program cost is \$24,800, with the first invoice totaling \$15,675. Funding will include the annual public art allocation, Art on the Grand proceeds, sculpture-sale commissions, and the Main Street Oakland County District Placemaking Award.

Motion by **LaRussa**, seconded by **Perko**, to approve Invoice #15275 in the amount of \$15,675 to Midwest Sculpture Initiative for the 2026 Fall Outdoor Series. The motion passes unanimously via roll-call.

### **Votes**

Ayes (6): Perko, Cassidy, Murphy, Craft, LaRussa, Pascaris

Nays (0)

Absent (0): Kavanagh, McLaughlin, Singleton

## **7. Hillside Townes TIF Reimbursement #1**

Motion by **Murphy**, Seconded by **Pascaris**, resolved to approve Reimbursement Request #1 for Hillside Townes, 33000 Thomas Street, in the amount of \$1,021,954. The motion passes unanimously via roll-call voting.

### **Votes**

Ayes (6): Perko, Cassidy, Murphy, Craft, LaRussa, Pascaris

Nays (0)

Absent (0): Kavanagh, McLaughlin, Singleton

## **8. Committee Updates**

### **a. Promotions Committee**

Promotions Committee had not formally met. Staff reported significant activity surrounding Harvest Moon, Grand Raven, and other fall programming following a strong conclusion to the summer concert season. The committee was expected to meet to review the Metromode contract and future promotional services.

### **b. Business Development Committee**

A committee meeting was being scheduled to discuss renewal of the Principal Shopping District and review six Retail Lab/incubator applications. The Board

discussed the current Retail Lab tenant's progress, including repeat customers and lessons learned through the 90-day model. Permanent Retail Lab signage and a tenant blade sign had also been approved.

**c. Design Committee**

The Design Committee reviewed and approved for new businesses. Staff also noted that Comicade had submitted information for a potential sign grant, which will return for future committee and Board consideration.

**d. Public Art Committee**

The committee completed selection of the 11 sculptures for the Midwest Sculpture Initiative exhibit to be displayed in the Art Park Promenade and Riley Park on a 1 year contract. The Make a Wave project continued to receive positive public feedback, and staff was exploring the addition of further panels to allow more community members to participate.

**e. Organization Committee**

Cassidy reported that the committee had met with three prospective volunteers who had recently expressed interest in DDA involvement. The conversations helped identify individuals' interests, skills, and availability, with at least two expected to participate in Harvest Moon. The Board emphasized the importance of timely volunteer follow-up and matching volunteers with appropriate committees and projects.

**f. Harvest Moon Committee**

Gray reported that volunteer shifts were approximately 75% filled. Additional volunteer outreach was planned. Food and beverage participation was strong, including Sante's planned participation in the wine area, and staff reported receiving more food vendor applications than in prior years.

**g. Grand Raven Caw-mittee**

Planning was underway for the month-long Grand Raven programming. The Strut will include the Moonlight Mischief Makers and a family-friendly choreographed witch dance. Thrill the World rehearsals had begun with performance October 24th, Raven installation was scheduled for September 27, and additional programming included Tuesday evening story readings and activities throughout downtown.

**9. Other Business**

The Board discussed bicycle, e-bike, scooter, and similar wheeled-device activity downtown. Members expressed support for a "Walk Your Wheels" approach in the central downtown area to improve pedestrian safety. Sidewalk decals were identified as a possible communication tool, and the Board discussed reviewing the number and location of bike racks.

The Board also discussed pedestrian crossing patterns on Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road and whether temporary measures could be used to test additional crosswalk locations where pedestrian behavior does not align with existing infrastructure. Westendorf noted that Grand River Avenue is under MDOT jurisdiction, making even temporary testing subject to state approval. Members also raised liability concerns regarding unauthorized or informal crosswalk markings.

Westendorf also advised the Board that staff was reviewing a draft public art policy prepared by the City's attorneys.

#### **10. Board Comment**

Craft thanked the Board members for the time and volunteer effort they contribute to the DDA and emphasized the importance of recognizing those contributions.

#### **11. Adjournment**

A motion by **Pascaris**, seconded by **Murphy** to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 AM. The motion passed unanimously.