

**FERNDALE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2017  
8:00 A.M.  
FERNDALE CITY HALL  
300 E. 9 MILE  
FERNDALE, MI 48220**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A. Roll Call 8:04 a.m.

**DDA Board Members Present:** Dean Bach, Michael Hennes, Jay McMillan, Jacki Smith, Mindy Cupples, Pj Jacokes, Jerome Raska and Chris Johnston

**DDA Board Members Absent:** Blake Scheer and Mayor/Council

**Staff Present:** Barry Hicks, Cindy Willcock, Torri Buback

**Guests:** Elizabeth Chase, Nebraska Main Street, Alex Hritcu, MSOC, April Lynch and Jordan Twardy, City of Ferndale, Kim Hart, Ferndale Area Chamber, Anthony Morrow and Julie Banovic, Pulp Detroit

B. Dismissals: Blake Scheer and Mayor/Council

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Director Smith, seconded by Director Raska to amend the agenda to add item VII "Correspondence", moving "Call to Audience to item VIII and "Adjournment to item IX and approve the agenda as amended. All Ayes, motion carries.

D. Approval of Minutes: March 2017

Motion by Director Cupples, seconded by Director Hennes to approve the Minutes for March 2017 as presented. All Ayes, motion carries.

**II. Consent Agenda**

A. DDA/Staff/Consultant Reports

B. Budget Report

C. Strategic Plan

Motion by Director Smith, seconded by Director Raska to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. All Ayes, motion carries.

**III. Call to Audience**

None

**IV. Community Organization Reports**

A. Chamber of Commerce

Kim Hart

Jerome Raska announced that the search for a new Executive Director had been finalized and the new ED would be starting the first week in May. Kim Hart announced that the Artist in You event is April 25th and the 30 pieces of art submitted are all up at the library and will be judged this week, with the winner being announced at the event. Rainbow Run is on the same day as Ferndale Pride this year and will take place on the east side of Woodward. Early registration is now open and there are still

some sponsorship opportunities available. The Chamber held their third Lunch & Learn event with Jon Teodoro of Verde Media talking about making websites more effective to the 25 attendees. Although positions at the Chamber have turned over a lot in recent years, they haven't missed a networking or other event and have even grown them substantially, as well as introduced new programs and improved event profitability and attendance.

B. Ferndale School District

No report. OM Willcock noted the schools and library are both going through transitions of staff.

V. Presentations

A. Spirit of Main Street

Video that was submitted for MSOC Award for the Spirit of Main Street, which highlights what makes our downtown special was viewed. The winner of this award will also receive a \$2,000 prize courtesy of Genisys Credit Union.

B. Pulp Detroit

Anthony Morrow and Julie Banovic from Pulp Detroit provided an overview of their company and its relationship with the DDA, having previously re-done the website and provided marketing and graphic design assistance. Morrow explained that the DDA reached out to Pulp to assist in the creation of a campaign identity for the numerous current and upcoming construction projects throughout the downtown. Wanting to create something positive, they utilized the existing Downtown Ferndale logo with a tweak and created a campaign entitled "Ferndale Forward, with a mission of strategic brand development. ED Hicks provided background on the upcoming/current projects noting that in addition to the Troy/Allen parking development there are also four other major projects, which will add over 400 residential apartments and more office and retail space. These projects created the need for something that could encapsulate that Ferndale is advancing and moving forward and how important timely, accurate communication will be. A joint DDA/City Council meeting will be held on April 17th to discuss strategies and the marketing firm hired by the City for communication of the Troy/Allen project only. While they will develop the messaging for that project only, the DDA needs something that will encompass all of the development in the district and that is why Pulp has been asked to help develop a communication strategy to include all projects. The DDA's goal will be to support and update business owners and residents and encourage the positive long-term impact of these construction projects. Morrow discussed having a macro approach to the people of Ferndale, the people that make Ferndale happen – bar backs, chefs, clerks, etc. and always stressing about moving Ferndale Forward, not focusing on "orange cone syndrome". Pulp will be developing social media strategies for each platform as off-line tactics such as walking guides, chalk art, etc. the campaign is promoting the City and its people, but also changing habits.

Chair Bach noted that it is going to be very important to get the communication going soon, as there seems to be a segment of the population that seems not to be getting information. ED Hicks noted that the Ferndale Forward concept is all encompassing for the downtown and as more information becomes available it will be shared. He also noted that the City is really the driver behind the information resources for the

Troy/Allen project, but this is the way the DDA will communicate that information. Director Smith inquired as to whether SMS/text messaging would be utilized, as it was an integral part of the West Nine communication plan. ED Hicks explained that it was not, but components could still be added to the plan. Smith also noted the need for continual communication and one point of contact. Discussion was had regarding the Troy/Allen project steering committee and their focus on the parking situation. Also discussed was that the DDA enews sent via Mailchimp seems to not be getting to everyone on the list. Director Raska noted that these projects involve more than just the DDA boundaries and the need to identify who will be responsible for communication – DDA, City or Chamber – or will there be three separate messages? He expressed the need for Ferndale Forward to cover the entire city, not just the DDA. City Manager Lynch noted that the City will be the conduit for the information and the DDA, Chamber and other parties will be the vehicle to get that information out in the way they deem most effective for their audiences. The City has parkferndale.com and are more focused on residents, with the DDA being more focused on businesses.

**VI. 2016 Annual Community Checklist**

Alex Hritcu, Assistant Main Street Coordinator for Main Street Oakland County explained that as part of the Main Street program they meet with Select Level communities at least once a year and conduct an evaluation on the 10 points. This year Elizabeth Chase from Nebraska Main Street is acting as the lead facilitator for the evaluation. Chase explained that she had read through the materials submitted for the evaluation and would like to get feedback on what's going well, what's not and what challenges might best be addressed through more assistance from MSOC. Positives included the one-page plan and having five things to focus on, rather than the extremely cumbersome and extremely large previous versions of the plan that were based on the four pillars of Main Street, good communication throughout the organization, being a unified organization that is more focused and has boards and committees that work well together. Chase inquired about feedback from businesses and it was explained that that is being worked on right now and personal visits are powerful and we're finally doing them. A fresh and cooperative relationship with the City and Chamber was also viewed as a positive and would be integral in moving forward with the Troy/Allen project. Committees function better and are more task oriented. Discussion was had regarding the DDA boundaries as well as the TIF capture area and the ability of the DDA to accomplish everything it wants with the resources it has.

Challenges include parking and all the change that will be happening, as it's hard to control what people think of the DDA, especially if the project isn't smooth. Mastering community buy-in is also a challenge, as is the matching of DDA priorities with City priorities. Director Johnston noted that the Ferndale Forward program is an opportunity to get people on the DDA's side and if this is accomplished there won't be the challenges that currently exist. Not only is this a huge challenge, but it's also a huge opportunity. Chase asked about that is currently being done for outreach to the community, both the business community and the community at large. In addition to the newsletters that seem to have some delivery challenges, there is a retention visit program and on Monday there is a joint DDA/Council meeting to discuss the Troy/Allen development. It was noted that regardless of whether people receive texts, email, enews, etc., the DDA needs to continue face to face business interaction as well. The community at large mostly receives information via social media,

and it was noted that some believe that the DDA lacks a robust communication plan outside the business owners.

Wish list items to MSOC include getting information on programs and assistance available and sharing successes of those that have utilized those programs. Director Smith noted that as a Board member she has not been a fan of MSOC or previous directors, so she doesn't really care what they have to offer. The contentious relationship with those connected to the program have created ill will with the program as a whole. ED Hicks noted that there have been leadership changes at the County level and his experience is that the new Program Coordinator has been positive, although the frequency of obligated training opportunities presents a challenge in attending. Further discussion was had on the new Refresh Approach versus the more rigid 4 point approach. Overall, the Board feels that following the Main Street approach isn't a priority and has "shut down" the message, although there is an opportunity to build bridges to make the relationship better. It was noted that there seems to be more energy with the committees having tasks that are accomplishable and assignable and partnerships that have been formed. Chase explained that the new approach focuses more on the integration with/between the committees, and not everyone working separately. It was noted that the relationship between downtowns and the Main Street program is really a two way street, with each partner learning from each other and the opportunity exists to continue to grow these relationships.

**VII. Correspondence**

The Mayor and DDA received correspondence from the opposition for the mixed use construction project advising they were withdrawing their petition against the project and noting that they wanted to have more input into the project/process. DDA ED and OM have met with Jaye Spiro of Mejjishi Martial Arts and have an open, ongoing dialogue. The major concern is length of construction of mixed use vs. cast-in-place parking only structure. The DDA continues to work on getting the correct information out and maintaining constant communication.

**VIII. Call to Committee Chairs & Board Members & Staff**

OM Willcock provided an update on the MSOC awards, Community Foundation grant, summer movie series and other upcoming events, with ED Hicks noting that the Board will review the event budgets at their June Meeting.

**IX. Adjournment**

Motion by Director Cupples, seconded by Director Smith to adjourn the meeting. All Ayes, meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.