

MINUTES

Allen Park Downtown Development Authority

MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, March 23, 2023

6:30 p.m.

The Allen Park Downtown Development Authority met for its monthly session on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., at city hall, 15915 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairperson Mazag called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL** Vice Chair/Secretary Riviera called the roll. A quorum was present.

Present:	Alex Alexander	Director
	Paul Carnarvon	Treasurer
	Frank Cieszkowski	Director
	Fred Frank	Director
	Jeff Holden	Director
	Kurt Mazag	Chairperson
	Gail McLeod	Mayor
	Cynthia Riviera	Vice Chair/Secretary
	Tom Strobl	Director
	Andre Tirado	Director (6:35 pm)
	Pete Zingas	Director (6:35 pm)

Others Present:	Trevor Daniel	DDA Legal Counsel
	Ben Hughes	DDA Executive Director

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by J. Holden supported by P. Carnarvon to approve the meeting agenda.

Resolved to approve the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Motion by G. McLeod supported by J. Holden to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting.

Discussion G. McLeod commented that we need to remember to look at establishing and utilizing committees. Also requested a change under Stuart Leve reimbursement to clarify he did not damage the trees, but that it was for payment on replacement of trees that he did not complete and for other work paid for but not completed.

Resolved to approve the minutes with the modification of Stuart Leve Reimbursement language.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. CITY UPDATE AND DISTRICT ISSUES –

- G. McLeod - March 19, 2023 the 10 day notice to demolish the theatre was provided
- F. Frank – Planning Commission, and subsequently the City, has approved the plans for the Caribou Coffee to go in at the former Boomer site.
- C. Riviera – asked for plans on the trees on the Ecorse lot...suggested maybe plant them at Rotary Park or plant somewhere in else in the DDA district.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

Motion by G. McLeod supported by J. Holden to approve the February 2023 expenses and accept the financial report.

Discussion – T. Strobl asked about follow up on additional T Bills or additional investments. Mr. Hughes is requesting we wait until the DTE quotes come in and hopefully that report is discussed or voted on at the April Board meeting, and then decide on cash outlays for investments. Continued discussion on how much we could invest further.

Resolved to accept the financial report and approve the expenses.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

- Councilman Marcos – Question on whether two additional sides of Allen Road are going to be included in the Spring Clean Up
- Steve Donahue – “the balloon guy” –
 - Question on DDA website – google has a former site, but you can’t get to the website from the City website, and the need for their coordination to be the same. Offered to help with the DDA website.
 - Expressed concerns over the elimination of the DDA office and movement into the City Hall. He appreciates the ease of access to the DDA instead of having to go through City Hall, the concern over a vacant building, and the feel of small business without the DDA having an office space within what he considers the main part of DDA and wasn’t even sure that Southfield is part of the DDA because of the lack of communication about the district area.
- Councilman Lalli – commented that he does not believe the DDA should move its offices into City Hall and that it is centrally located and important to have a separate presence

8. STREET BANNERS

Motion by C. Riviera supported by P. Zingas to approve the applications from Allen Park High School, Cabrini High School and Inter-City Baptist High School for placement of Park Avenue Street Banners. **Discussion** – J. Holden wants to take these opportunities to solicit more involvement into the DDA. F. Frank mentioned MEL-NAP and Southgate Anderson schools to also be included. Asked about inquiring into their involvement and not just with email, but phone. Asked to modify motion if those two schools could be included in an amended motion. Follow up on additional T Bills or additional investments.

Amended Motion by C. Riviera supported by P. Zingas to approve the applications from Allen Park High School, Cabrini High School and Inter-City Baptist High School for placement of Park Avenue Street Banners and to also include MEL-NAP and Southgate Anderson students who are Allen Park residents.

Resolved to approve the applications from Allen Park High School, Cabrini High School and Inter-City Baptist High School for placement of Park Avenue Street Banners and to also include MEL-NAP and Southgate Anderson students who are Allen Park residents.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. FARMERS MARKET ADVERTISING

Motion by C. Riviera supported by A. Tirado to approve the joint advertising between the DDA and Kapolnek Farms.

Discussion – J. Holden wants to look into a printer locally instead of in Florida. Also suggested if we do this it should be open to other business too. Also mentioned this appears we are associated with this vendor. F. Frank mentioned including linking it to the DDA Facebook page. Wants to ask Postnet or Allegra for the printing and mailing. G. McLeod said we are being asked to pay ½ the expense of his advertising. Has concerns about other businesses asking the DDA to pay for ½ of their advertising also and is concerned about going down that road. P. Carnarvon mentioned that it would be a good problem if other businesses came asking for marketing too, and that it could be more costly as this is a mailing not just printing.

Resolved to approve the advertising.

A Roll Call Vote was Taken and the Motion carried by a vote of 9-2 with **J. Holden and A. Tirado** opposing.

10. ALLEY PAVING

Motion by G. McLeod supported by F. Frank to approve paying for the paving of three (3) alleys in May 2023 using funds from FY 2022-23 Budget.

Discussion – clarification that the DDA is simply paying for the costs of the project but the City contracted with the contractor and oversees the project, so this is not subject to the bid requirement and therefore does not need to be waived.

Resolved to approve the payment for the alley paving.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. FAÇADE AWARD FOR 17001 SOUTHFIELD ROAD

Motion by P. Carnarvon supported by J. Holden to approve the disbursement of \$10,000 in Façade Grant Funds to the owner of 17001 Southfield Road.

Resolved to approve the disbursement.

Motion carried unanimously.

12. STATUS OF THE DDA OFFICE SPACE

Motion by F. Frank supported by G. McLeod to not exercise our option on the DDA office lease and enter into an agreement with the City at a cost not to exceed \$7,500 annually for the DDA to have office space inside City Hall effective July 1, 2023.

Discussion –

- Ben Hughes – recommends moving into City Hall. significant cost savings. Respects position that it is important for autonomy and accessibility. Believes from an operational efficiency standpoint it is very important to be at City Hall. Currently spends more than half his time at City Hall – but working on DDA matters. Lauren believes DDA conference room is very helpful for special events. Parks and Rec said the DDA can have access to their facility to stage events. Will be beneficial to have Lauren in same location as himself.
- Paul Carnarvon – this is more about perception and less about the money. He has lived in Allen Park all his life and didn't know DDA had an office until becoming a board member. Thinks vacant space creates opportunity. Think this could reduce friction between the City and DDA. Open to 6 month extension to provide more time.
- Frank Cieszkowski – believes the DDA has more presence, autonomy and accessibility if remain in the current space. Ben has an office already at City Hall. Why pay for it when he already has it, and why give up the current space. Expressed concern about the vacancy this would create downtown. Very convenient staging area for events where we are currently.
- Fred Frank – disagrees that this lease is unusual. Thinks it's very common. Only unusual item in lease is that we pay annually in a lump sum instead of monthly. Surprised the City is charging \$7500 for the space for the DDA. Believes moving into City hall contributes to synergy.
- Jeff Holden – struggling with this decision. Thinks money is not the main concern. The question is which of these 2 locations works best for the DDA. If we keep the office space, it works great for events. If we are in City Hall, collaboration and working together should be better.
- Kurt Mazag - concerned about the potential for the DDA to have additional cost to repair the office space if we extend the lease as we have been there for many years. Uncomfortable with Lauren being alone in the DDA office for safety reasons.
- Gail McLeod – this is a cost saving. Building department pays \$50,000 for space. City has sufficient space to offer DDA. Views DDA as a key entity to benefit community. Thinks the current lease is very unusual in that it is a triple net lease.

- Cynthia Riviera – on behalf of herself and Lauren they believe it would be beneficial to extend the lease 1 year as Ben has not experienced any DDA events yet. Thinks it will be beneficial for him to experience the season of events before making the decision. The office space has been available to businesses for many years and is concerned about the after hour access to City Hall or other department buildings for the events as sometimes it is 7 am to 1 am during the events. Concerned about adding another vacant building to downtown Allen Park.
- Tom Strobl – thinks collaboration is more important than the money. Helpful for Ben to be at City Hall.
- Andre Tirado – believes the long term prospect is better for the DDA to be in City Hall. Thinks cost saving could help market to businesses and community that DDA is now located in City Hall. Open to negotiate the lease for additional time, but not in favor of exercising 2 year option.
- Pete Zingas – doesn't agree to try and re-negotiate the lease. The current lease option is very cheap at \$5.50/sq ft. Has met with many cities and DDAs and has never met at an off-campus DDA from the City Hall in other cities. Does not think the DDA being located inside City Hall is imposing on anyone who wants to meet with the DDA.

Resolved to not exercise the option on the DDA office lease and enter into an agreement with the City at a cost not to exceed \$7,500 annually for the DDA to have office space inside City Hall effective July 1, 2023.

A Roll Call Vote was Taken and the Motion carried by a vote of 9-2 with C. Riviera and F. Cieszkowski opposing.

13. DDA BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

Motion by A. Tirado supported by J. Holden to approve the proposed DDA operating budget for FY 2023-2024.

Amended Motion by A. Tirado supported by J. Holden to approve the proposed DDA operating budget for FY 2023-2024 as amended by F. Frank's suggestions.

Discussion –

- Ben Hughes – presented a proposed budget. The TIF revenue or property tax revenue is a projection, and a conservative one, as indicated by the City Finance Director as she expects the revenue to be higher.
- Gail McLeod – agrees with City Finance Director that the revenue as presented is conservative and expects it to be higher once the numbers are finalized by the City.
- Tom Strobl – questioned why the budget only reflects about \$200k for street lights when the cost is estimated to be \$800-850k. Mr. Hughes indicated that DTE is proposing a 4 year financing plan at 0% interest.

- Paul Carnarvon – inquired about the fund balance. Mr. Hughes noted that this is the DDA savings account and that this proposed budget utilizes \$123,000 from the fund balance, but if the City finance director is correct, we likely will experience an increase in the projected TIF revenue and not need to use the fund balance.
- Fred Frank – questioned how we could possibly spend \$582,600 on Allen Rd. streetscape in the next fiscal year. Mr. Hughes indicated we could not but it is in there because of the Wayne County road status report and for other potential updates and improvements. Noted the proposed budget included two line items for Alley Paving Projects. Proposed modifying the proposed budget to increase the façade grant line item account ending -430 from \$50k to \$100k and reduce the DDA Infrastructure line item account ending -425 from \$100k to \$50k.
 - Motion makers amended their motion to include this proposed change.

Resolved to approve the budget as amended.

A Roll Call Vote was Taken and the Motion carried by a vote of 9-2 with C. Riviera and F. Cieszkowski opposing.

14. LANDSCAPING SERVICES CONTRACTS FOR DDA DISTRICT

Motion by G. McLeod supported by A. Tirado to approve the following three (3) one-year contracts to Seasonal Property Management, LLC:

1. Spring Cleanup in the amount of \$12,785
2. Weekly grass cutting for 32 weeks in the amount of \$7,680
3. Monthly tree trimming and weeding for 6 months in the amount of \$9,000

Discussion –

- F. Frank – noted the motion should include language that the board is waiving the bid requirements as there is no economic benefit as this is renewing a current contractor (while expanding the scope of services), it is a better rate, and attempts to obtain other quotes were unsuccessful. He personally spent countless hours while he was the chair trying to obtain quotes, to no avail.
- C. Riviera – does not believe they did a good job on the weeding after taking over for Stuart Leve last year. She gave Mr. Hughes another company's information but they did not get back to him.

Motion carried by a vote of 10-1 with C. Riviera opposing.

15. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

1. *Commercial Building Status Registry* – list of properties in the city and a status report on open items
2. *DDA District Repairs Status Registry* – list of items that need attention
3. *Status of Major Roads in the DDA District* – explanation on which entity owns and maintains the roads and the status of repair work, plus any items that need attention

16. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – Mr. Hughes updated:

- a) *Thunderbowl Tournament* – information was prepared promoting the DDA and its businesses and provided to Thunderbowl and the Hotels to provide to the hundreds of visitors for this major PBA tournament. DDA paid for \$250 add in their promotional packet.

17. ATTORNEY REPORT - Mr. Daniel

- Reminder to be mindful of the Open Meeting Act when circulating emails amongst board members

18. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

- J. Holden – Culver's is sponsoring the USBC tournament. Chamber wants a directory booklet.

19. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by C. Riviera, supported by P. Carnarvon to adjourn the meeting.

Resolved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Ended at 9:22 pm.