



## DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD

January 18, 2022

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, January 18, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:14 P.M., and the following were

Present: Ben Slocum, Chairperson  
Robin Bennett, Vice Chairperson  
Gary Albert  
Joe Keedy  
Jennifer Shorter  
Mayor John Murphy

Absent: Marnie Duse and Drew Smith

Also in attendance were Downtown Director Becky Goodman and Executive Assistant Sarah Bek.

### **Organization of Board**

Chair Slocum announced that the first order of business at the January meeting was to select a Chair and Vice Chair and to set the schedule of meetings for 2022. Albert moved that Slocum again be elected Chair and Bennett be elected Vice Chair and that regularly scheduled meetings continue to be held the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. Keedy seconded. All in favor.

### **Approve Consent Agenda Items**

Downtown Management Board members discussed the first item of routine business, the December 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes; acknowledgement of bills since December 21, 2021 that totaled \$79,989.29; and December expense and income reports as prepared by the Downtown Director. Upon motion made by Shorter and seconded by Bennett the consent agenda was approved. All in favor.

### **Hear Report on Downtown Director 2021 Evaluation**

Chair Slocum reviewed that the board discussed the Downtown Director's 2021 evaluation form in closed session at the close of the December 21, 2021 meeting and that there were very positive board comments especially during the past few challenging years.

The Downtown Director appreciated the support and nice comments. She also reported that the two absent board members tonight were excused due to COVID related concerns.

### **Review 2018-2022 Strategic Plan Workplan**

The Downtown Director reviewed that when the current strategic plan was completed and approved a workplan was developed that would track the projects listed in the written plan; suggested that the board review the status of the current plan projects and the prognosis for their completion; that the current plan was written before COVID and several items in the plan have been affected by the pandemic; that the plan is developed around design, organization, promotion and economic enhancement (DOPE); reviewed plan in detail of items that have been completed and progress of others; that there has been recent development of social media campaigns along with MLive of sharing business successes of downtown and doing business here; reviewed that the Park Masterplan planning will begin in 2022 and is hopeful that a board member will be part of the planning process; reviewed status of Local Historic District Study Committee; and that the marketing plan has been completed with the goal of eliminating printing, radio and tv and utilizing more social media outlets.

Board members discussed that it was a good thing that they did not implement a movie theater downtown in 2019 due to pandemic challenges; inquired if there had been any feedback on opening up outside sponsorships for events; suggested partnering with other organizations such as Rotary for community events and to create more robust marketing and events; heard from those in favor of getting rid of the Local Historic District Committee or initiate a meeting; and inquired what the Historic District Committee does once the creation of a downtown local historic district is created.

The Downtown Director reported that the ice carver that was used in the past was not available and a new contractor was hired to take their place for the upcoming winter event; decided not to obtain outside sponsorships due to not ever working with the new sculptor; that there are ice supply chain issues; that the purpose of a Historic District Committee is to promote historic preservation, tourism, keep downtown pristine, and to write code ordinances for a historic district; that the State has to approve ordinance and also the historic district designation opens up more opportunities for grants.

### **Review RFP for Strategic Planning Consultant**

The Downtown Director reviewed that the current Downtown Strategic Plan expires at the end of 2022; that the plan is meant to be updated every five years; that the past two plans have been written in house, as updates, under the direction of the City Planner; that during the 2021 budget process the board determined that it was time to start fresh with a new plan created by an outside consultant; and that a draft request for proposal (RFP) was included for review and will be approved by the Organization Task Force with a goal of sending out by February 1.

Board members discussed draft RFP; inquired cost of past plans; inquired if \$15,000 that was budgeted was an adequate amount; discussed the option to remove the budget amount to not sway bidders from submitting a proposal; inquired on the process and what plans would be in place to include downtown business owners and property owners; heard the importance of public input; inquired how many people would receive the RFP; concurred that the next plan and process should be done right even though it may cost more; discussed 2023 goals specifically concerning strategies for accessibility including bikes, scooters, etc. and how parking funds should be spent; discussed if the board should be expanding focus or are needs changing; heard that the Organizational Task Force has discussed the possibility of changing the Parking Committee to Accessibility Committee; asked that staff get a legal interpretation for City Council's resolution to approve parking increases and what that money can be used for; and concurred to further strategize accessibility.

The Downtown Director responded that the last few plans were completed in-house by the City Planner, and that Hyett Palma was accomplished through a blueprint grant; that the consultant will provide the process and timeline of public engagement; and that the RFP will be sent out to approximately 10 organizations including Bob Gibbs and Beckett and Raeder.

### **Approve 2022 Summer Event Partnership**

Vice Chair Bennett reviewed the proposed 2022 summer event partnership and Chair Slocum recused himself as a board member and participated as a citizen. Vice Chair Bennett further reviewed that \$10,000 is budgeted for Downtown Live and/or an end of summer event; that staff has been approached by members of the Beards Brewery team regarding partnering with the DMB to hold a "Summer Send Off" event in August; that Beards is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2022 and is looking for ways to mark it with celebrations; that Beards is offering to provide a band to entertain for this event; and that the DMB would provide organization of the event including application for the street closure at the end of Bay Street, promotion and any other miscellaneous items.

Ben Slocum, Beards Brewery representative, reviewed that the event would be similar to Short's Brewery's outside event; that the event location is ideal since attendees can utilize the downtown social district; that Beards is requesting to have a concert in the dead-end area of Bay Street behind their building; that Beards would sponsor and pay for the band if concert is on Bay Street; and that it would be free to the public and any beverage from social district would be allowed.

Board members discussed event details; inquired if there was a barrier between highway and green space; heard concerns regarding safety issues due to concert area and potentially a large crowd being so close to highway; inquired on size of event and how many people the proposed area would hold; discussed dates; inquired if Beards would provide security; heard from those concerned of setting a precedence and will competitors or other downtown businesses want to do this for every large anniversary; discussed if the event would cost more than the \$10,000 budgeted; suggested the possibility of hosting the concert in Pennsylvania Park and what could Beards sponsor if located elsewhere; heard concerns of the outside perception and if it would seem as if downtown was throwing a party for Beards Brewery; discussed that it is important to define details and responsibilities of each party; and concurred that the board was supportive of event, but specifics needed to be identified.

Mr. Slocum responded that within the special event application safety will be reviewed by staff including the Director of Public Safety; that a proposed date is mid-to-late August; that the City or DMB would provide security, but Beards would be willing to pay for those services; that this is a public event, but Beards is sponsoring the band and additional services; that if the concert was in Pennsylvania Park it is not part of the social district so beverages would not be allowed; that a different location would change the degree of sponsorship; that the band would need to be scheduled within the next month or so to secure for summer; and that Beards would issue checks to the DMB for their responsibilities.

Ms. Shorter moved that, seconded by Albert to approve the summer send off event and move forward with sponsorships and activities. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

### **Reports by Downtown Committees**

**Marketing Committee** – The Downtown Director reviewed Wonderful Winter Weekend and reiterated that the past ice carver was not available and a new contractor was hired; that there were approximately 30 sponsors; and shared the book that will be used for the event.

**Design Committee** – The Downtown Director reported that the committee is moving ahead with façade grant program with looser guidelines.

**Parking Committee** – The Downtown Director reviewed that the committee needs two new Board member volunteers.

**Organizational Task Force** – The Downtown Director reviewed that they did not meet due to COVID, but that on average they have been having four-hour retreats.

Vice Chair Bennett reported that she will be attending the RRC Academy.

### **Report from City Staff**

Mayor Murphy reviewed that City Council appointed Mike Atchison to the District Library Board; approved a grant to MDNR for additional funding for Marina fuel tank replacement; and discussed amendments to the zoning ordinance.

### **Other Miscellaneous Comments**

Chair Slocum further reviewed that two board members are needed for the Parking Committee and that the Organizational Task Force has discussed potential policies and board members serving on committees.

Ms. Shorter reported that she was selected to the Governor's Round Table on January 24 representing downtown businesses and Northern Michigan.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, this January 18, 2022, meeting adjourned at 9:08 P.M.