



DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD

January 17, 2023

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, January 17, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:13 P.M., and the following were

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

Absent: Marnie Duse

Also in attendance were Downtown Director Becky Goodman and City Manager Shane Horn.

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 2023. Albert moved, supported by Shorter 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 and change start time to 6:00 P.M. All in favor.

Approve Consent Agenda Items

Downtown Management Board members discussed the first item of routine business, the November 15, 2022 regular meeting minutes and December 13, 2022 special joint meeting minutes; acknowledgement of bills since November 15, 2022 that totaled \$38,928.69; and November and December expense and income reports as prepared by the Downtown Director. Shorter moved and seconded by Keedy to approve the consent agenda. All in favor.

Hear Public Comments

Chairperson Slocum asked for public comments and there were no comments.

Approve Parking Committee Appointment

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Parking Committee is to be composed of four Board members and one member at large; that there has been a Board member vacancy on the committee for several months; and Chair Slocum asked Board member Drew Smith to serve on the committee.

Motion by DeWindt supported by Shorter to appoint Drew Smith to the Parking Committee. All in favor.

Discuss Façade Improvement Grant Program Initiative

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Design Committee is looking to revive its current Façade Grant program through different promotional means and grant requirements; that there have been fewer applicants the past few years with more requesting funds for maintenance grants; that the committee discussed other ways to spend funds that would benefit the character and look of downtown; that the Design Committee is not abandoning the façade grant initiative, but looking to take a step back this year and potentially offer façade grants only in certain years; that the committee is interested in working on interpretive signage for the train tracks, an historical marker and an identity sign for Pennsylvania Park; that these projects are identified in the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Parks and Recreation Director agreed that this work would be acceptable as long as his staff was involved in the planning; that the committee has \$50,000 budgeted and asking for approval for that amount to be used on this new project for Pennsylvania Park while putting the façade grant program on hold until a future date to be determined.

Board members discussed program; heard from those in favor of using funds towards the signage project and excited to see collaboration between Design Committee and Parks and Recreation; heard comments on pre-façade grant program arrangements with banks on interest rates to aid in building improvements as additional incentives; discussed changing name of budget line item; inquired on application period and deadlines and the potential to change to allocate funding for planning purposes; and inquired on the lighting project status in Pennsylvania Park.

The Downtown Director responded that funds would only be used this year for signage project and façade grant program would continue in future years; that lighting was approved a few years back from the Parking Committee; and façade grant applications are due March 1 and are approved at the March DMB meeting.

Motion by Bennett supported by DeWindt to accept Design Committee requests to redirect the 2023 façade improvement grant program funds for interpretive signage for Pennsylvania Park.

Board members further discussed and heard from those interested in waiting this year to see if there may be applications submitted; inquired when the committee needed deadline for bids; that it is a valuable use of the money, but bigger projects have funds earmarked, but not coming to fruition; and heard from those in favor to seek grant applications as planned and have Design Committee or Parks and Recreation Department submit budget for signage project.

Ms. Bennett withdrew the original motion.

Board members genuinely were in support of project idea and concurred to table this matter until more information was provided and continue with the normal façade grant improvement program for 2023.

Discuss Trash Area Behind Chamber Building

The Downtown Director reviewed that there has been an ongoing trash issue affecting businesses on the 300 block of Howard Street that backed up to Park Avenue; that the matter needed to be reassessed; that prior to the restroom renovations, a trash enclosure was built behind the Chamber building which was locked and accessible only by a passcode combination; that the enclosure was funded equally by the property owners bordering the Park and by the DMB; that when the new restrooms were constructed, building boundaries were expanded and a new enclosure was built by the City that was funded as a part of the restroom improvements; that the enclosure has a locked door, but is not entirely enclosed due to the City's needs to be able to enter and service the electrical equipment located inside enclosure; and that there is a need for a solution to this ongoing trash problem.

Board members discussed posting signage inside and outside the enclosure in regards to dumping and who is allowed to use; discussed installing a video camera; heard concerns that this is a safety issue; that original rules should be enforced as much as possible; that food compostable is allowed; and general enforcement by Public Safety or soon to be Code Enforcement Officer is needed.

Chair Slocum asked for public comments and heard from a business owner relative to this enclosure and that it is a good start to install a video camera; heard concerns with who is allowed in the enclosure; and the need for general enforcement.

Reports by Downtown Committees

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Design, Marketing, Parking and Organization Task Force notes were in the packet.

The Downtown Director further reported that Thirsty Thursday's are starting back up and the first one is this week; annual meeting is scheduled for 5:30pm, February 23 in the Rose Room at the Perry; planning is underway for Winter Wonderland Weekend and that the Downtown is partnering with Parks and Recreation for bump jumping and cardboard sled events like the old winter carnival days with prizes; that there has been a good response from applicants for the Marketing Promotions Director position and some interviews and have been conducted; and that she has been invited to a staff meeting next week regarding the entryway to downtown.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, this January 17, 2023, meeting adjourned at 9:02 P.M.