



MINUTES  
DDA BOARD MEETING  
8:30 AM - Thursday, January 20, 2022  
Back Office Studio - 13 N. Washington St. / Virtual Hybrid

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**1. CALL TO ORDER (8:35am)**

**2. ROLL CALL**

PATTON DOYLE (C)	P
YLONDIA PORTIS	P
KAYIA HINTON	A
ANDY FRENCH	P
DIETER OTTO	P
JEN EASTRIDGE	P
PAUL AJLOUNY	P
LOIS ALLEN RICHARDSON	P (9:21am)
ALEX MERZ	A
BRANDON DENT	A
BRYAN FOLEY	P

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

*Andy French motioned to approve the agenda. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.*

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Jen Eastridge motioned to approve the December 16, 2021 minutes and Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.*

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES EACH)**

Malissa Gillett owner of BG Salon greeted the board virtually.

**6. STAFF REPORT/FINANCIAL REPORT**

Building sales data has been pulled and will be presented at the next Op and Fin meeting. Dolores restaurant is closing. They announced that their last day will be January 28th.

**7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**7.1. Operations and Finance Committee**

The committee had a 3 hour long meeting and Andy French thanked everyone who was at that meeting because they were able to accomplish a lot.

Everything they discussed is on the agenda aside from the movie series quotes, which the committee found was not ready to be brought to the board.

**7.2. Ad-Hoc Committee for Equitable Investment**

Meeting was informative, and the committee is having great discussions.

**7.3. Grants Committee Meeting** - On today's agenda.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **8.1. DDA Staff Performance Review**

The board asked the staff if they would prefer a closed session.

Staff stated that if a closed session was needed for a more honest conversation, they would like a closed session, otherwise they are okay with a public review. The DDA board was confident that the review would be the same whether in closed or in open session.

Andy French was working on staff compensation and bonuses for his own restaurants, and started thinking about DDA staff. When he realized that this was a conversation that has never been had, he decided to advocate and get this on the agenda as soon as possible.

Patton Doyle shared review score charts and comments shared to him by the other board members. Both employees had positive reviews and feedback.

Andy French stated that DDA has had a bad history as a dysfunctional organization a decade ago, and there is no sign of that now. Staff has done a great job of being stewards of DDA finances. He shared to the board that the DDA does not have control of compensation, the City does, but the DDA has an opportunity as a board to make a grant for employees as a bonus. His initial thought was a \$10,000 bonus for the Director, and \$5,000 for the Coordinator. He stressed that the DDA board has a responsibility for the staff, and it's important to retain their talents. MLive reported just yesterday the Ann Arbor DDA Director starts at \$142,000 a year.

There is a current study by the City where it has been found that many positions make less than other cities of the same size. The Ypsilanti DDA director makes \$71,000 and the Coordinator makes \$39,000. Ylondia Portis recommended that moving forward, there needs to be some sort of regular metric or rubric with expectations from staff.

Christopher Jacobs explained that the DDA pays \$58,000 total towards staff compensation to the City of Ypsilanti. That amount was set in the administrative agreement with the City, and why the DDA can not give performance based raises.

Paul Ajlouny asked what is the City doing? Do they give performance based raises?

Patton Doyle suggested that the board takes a closer look at the IGA. We are getting an incredible deal on staff, but they are not getting the correct compensation. On the other hand, we are paying far more for services we are not receiving from the City. This should be adjusted accordingly.

Staff has never received a performance based raise or bonus from either the City or the DDA. There have been cost of living adjustments.

Jen Eastridge exclaimed that this is unacceptable. We shouldn't take advantage of Elize and Chris's love for Ypsilanti. We need to aggressively look at making sure that we take care of, and retain our staff. Pay increases are necessary and well-earned. A single bonus is a carrot and not enough.

Mayor Lois Allen Richardson arrived at 9:21am.

Patton Doyle would advocate for salary wages right now, but unfortunately that is not in our toolbox right now. He suggested that a bonus reflects a percentage of 5% based on income.

***Andy French motioned to approve a \$10,000 bonus for Christopher Jacobs, and a \$5,000 bonus for Elize Jekabson, to be split from all three districts. Paul Ajlouny suggested a friendly amendment. Based on this metric, Elize's bonus comes out to \$6,000.***

***Andy French accepted the friendly amendment. Dieter Otto supported the motion.***

Paul Ajlouny pointed out that when he was in corporate and got bonuses, his bonuses were taxed at about 40%. Can we factor in taxes or run it through payroll?

Ylondia Portis stated that we need to have parameters and rigor and make sure no one can poke holes in our process.

Jen Eastridge agreed that the board needs to be able to defend their decision. There needs to be a formal write up of comparable salaries and the fact there haven't been any staff increases in at least three years.

Patton Doyle appreciates their points, and explained that none of this was raised by Elize, Chris or Joe, but by a board member. He believes that this year can serve as a template and a starting point, but feels comfortable making a decision today based on board member employee reviews submitted, and the current health of the DDA.

Paul Ajlouny suggested creating a committee that could create these formal parameters.

Dieter Otto stated that supplemented pay through bonuses is not a good idea when pay increases need to be addressed. He asked about other two staff members who contribute to the DDAs value?

Andy French gave thought to Joe Meyers and the position that was recently vacated by Scott Slagor. Joe encouraged focusing on Christopher and Elize who do the majority of the DDA work in an earlier conversation.

Patton Doyle pointed out that the DDA does need to keep in mind the stipend the incoming Preservation Planner might receive from the DDA if written into their position.

***Patton Doyle called the question. Roll Call vote.***

***Motion passed - unanimous.***

Mayor Lois Richardson asked why not raise the amount for staff in the administrative agreement?

Andy French responded that he would love to have this conversation with the Mayor and others on how to adjust the administrative agreement as well as the IGA. We are underpaying on employee wages, but overpaying on services we are not receiving.

## **8.2. Hamburger Marys Facade and Building Rehab Grant Application**

Dieter Otto commented on behalf of the Grants Committee that they believed the project is a great investment.

Owner Doug Hanchett described the Hamburger Marys concept coming to the Tower Inn space.

Andy French is overall supportive of the project, but stated that there is a slippery slope when the DDA grants start paying for business expenses. It will set standards for all incoming grants.

The intent of the grant is to improve the structural integrity of a space. These need to be long term improvements.

Ylondia Portis stressed the documentation of what is deemed ineligible.

The grants committee had gone over and listed eligible and ineligible expenses.

Normally eligibility is communicated by staff in the application process. Staff asked for the grants committee to go over the old application ahead of the next grant cycle and give further clarity on eligible/ineligible items.

The board discussed the possibility of a separate business activation grant.

***Ylondia Portis motioned to approve the Facade and Rehab reimbursement grant submitted by Hamburger Mary's for up to \$15,000 towards eligible expenses. Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.***

Doug Hanchett thanked the board for asking the tough questions. They hope to open Monday.

### **8.3. YIES Billboard**

Celeste Green presented the updated billboard. She thanked the boards and committees for all the feedback leading up to this point.

The question was raised if YCS was looking for the DDA to pay for the printing and install of the billboard. Last time YCS did their own print and install, but we let them use the space for free. The last billboard was an advertisement though. This is not a promotion or advertisement.

Patton Doyle is comfortable with just a free lease unless they remove the Spanish for Kids logo.

Staff suggested the DDA logo be added to the sign in exchange for funding.

***Mayor Lois Allen Richardson motioned to split the cost of the printing and installation of the billboard 50/50 with YCS, and for the design to include the DDA logo. Ylondia Portis supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.***

### **8.4. Depot Town Alley Light Repair**

Half of the cafe lights are out in the alleyway in Depot Town.

The quote recommends full replacement.

The lights were damaged by an Ypsi Glow installation, and the Operations Committee asked staff to inquire about the incident and the events insurance.

Pre-installation photos were given that showed that some of the lights were already out. The installation did pull down some lights but was not related to the damage. The contractor took responsibility for that.

Brian Foley, an electrician himself stated that the quote at \$2,400 was a no brainer.

***Andy French motioned to approve the repair of the Depot Town Alleyway lights at \$2,400. Bryan Foley supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.***

### **8.5. ALTA Survey for Sale of Riverside Arts Center**

RAC hopes to finalize the purchase of their building by spring of this year, and the DDA need to provide an ALTA survey.

***Dieter Otto motioned to recommend approval of the Nederveld quote for \$3,100 for the ALTA survey, pending clarification that all parcels of concern are included including path and parking lot. Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.***

#### **8.6. Downtown Dumpster Murals**

The Operations and Finance committee recommended three artist quotes to paint murals on the dumpster enclosures.

Mayor Allen Richardson asked if youth artists or competitions were considered.

Staff responded that the surface of the enclosures are a little more complicated, and with covid, teacher staffing capacities are limited. Not all artists have experience working with kids, and they get left out of mural opportunities because of this.

Patton Doyle suggested other opportunities that can be more community art minded.

Jen Eastridge loves the opportunity to get professional artwork into this city and to support professional artists who were hit hard by the pandemic. It would raise the bar for beautification in the City.

Artists recommended from the Operations committee are local and have shown examples of murals in the community.

Ylondia Portis asked about the theme and goals of this project.

The goal is to help beautify the lots, to discourage the misuse of the dumpsters, and give a sense of community ownership of the space.

Quotes range from \$2,000 to \$4,500.

Jen Eastridge does not feel comfortable paying one project at \$4,500 because they put that as their value, and the other for the same project at \$2,000. She wants them to have a set price.

Jen Eastridge stressed that board members should not base their decision based on the perceived intricacy of the work. It would be like comparing the value of a Degas to a Jackson Pollock.

Staff agreed that a market rate per square foot should be put in place should that be the direction of the board, but keep in mind that our budget will only be able to support one mural this fiscal year, and we will have to wait on the other two.

Ylondia Portis said we need to set a budget.

Jen Eastridge said we can counter the offer, the artist can agree or disagree. Artists can be free to make adjustments to their designs if they need to.

***Andy French motioned to table this item and Bryan Foley supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.***

#### **8.7. City Council Goal Setting**

The board reviewed the goals in the packet.

#### **9. PROPOSED BUSINESS - none**

**10. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION** Malissa Gillett - Owner of BG Salon - Stated that it was a pleasure to see effective conversation on these topics.

#### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

***Motion to adjourn by Andy French and supported by Lois Allen Richardson. Motion passed- unanimous.***