



MINUTES
DDA BOARD MEETING
8:30 AM - Thursday, March 16, 2023
Back Office Studios - 13 N. Washington St.

1. CALL TO ORDER (9:00am)

2. ROLL CALL

PATTON DOYLE (C)	A	KAYIA HINTON	P (Virtual non-voting)
YLONDIA PORTIS	P	ANDY FRENCH (V)	P
DIETER OTTO	P	JEN EASTRIDGE	A
PAUL AJLOUNY	P	BRYAN FOLEY	A
MALISSA GILLETT	P	JOE RITCHIE	A
VALORY BROWN	P	NICOLE BROWN	P

Staff Present: Christopher Jacobs, Elize Jekabson

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Dieter Otto motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Malissa Gillett supported the motion.

Motion passed - unanimous.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Paul Ajlouny motioned to approve the February 16th, 2023 Board Meeting minutes and Nicole Brown supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES EACH)

Emy Deshotel, Secretary at Ypsilanti Enterprise Association - Advocated for safe sidewalks and a snow clearing program downtown.

6. STAFF REPORT/FINANCIAL REPORT

Staff and financial report in the packet reviewed by Christopher Jacobs.

A retail business has approached the DDA to develop 123 W. Michigan Ave.

7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

7.1. Operations and Finance Committee

Andy French spoke about the committee meeting. Reiterated that it is difficult to read the finance report and wants to see accrual-based accounting, instead of cash-based accounting. We don't get information every month that allows us to do our work.

The committee was informed that there was no need to update the bylaws in regards to membership expansion.

The committee spoke about the bus shelter on W. Cross, and recommended that staff have further discussions with AAATA.

7.2. Equity Committee

Ylondia Portis provided the update. The committee has been working with Sharonda Simmons to hold DDA equity conversations with the community including a conversation with clients of the warming center.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. 2023 Landscaping Contract

Two bids have been provided - DJs and RNA

Staff held a public meeting to review areas for landscaping.

Andy French wants to scrap the part of the contract that says “not to exceed X dollars”. He worries that it could lead to minimizing maintenance. He wants to see a bid based on the scope that we want.

Due to the time sensitivity, staff asked the board to take an action, such as scheduling a special meeting or to empower the executive board to make the landscaping contract decision.

Ylondia Portis motioned to empower the executive board to make a decision on the 2023 Landscaping Contract. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.

Andy French requested that each district have its own quote for landscaping rather than the traditional all district quote that is split based on revenue percentages.

8.2. Bicentennial Billboard and Banners

The Operations and Finance Committee recommended that the bicentennial billboard not go through a call for art process because of the shortening timeline, and the DDA staff time used on behalf of the Bicentennial Commission. They recommended that the billboard follow the banner design which is the bicentennial logo in front of historical photos.

The historical photos provided would be adjacent to its actual location.

Ylondia Portis suggested that if we do approve historical photos, that we ask the commission to work with more historians and provide photos that speak to everyone's history. She wants to make sure that the DDA doesn't rush through an approval that might backfire later because the imagery is not inclusive. Staff suggested that a solution to the billboard selection photo could be an image of the building that stood in place of the parking lot before it burned down. However, if the sticking point is photo selection, staff could design the billboard as an advertisement with no historical photo that would read “Ypsilanti DDA celebrates Ypsilanti’s Bicentennial” and advertise the large event in August and provide a website or a QR code.

8.3. Upcoming Special Event Sponsorship Requests

Staff showed a list of sponsorship requests received and those still expected.

There will need to be a lot of thought put into divvying the funding.

Elize Jakobson stated that they hope that the DDA will consider support outside of special event sponsorship for First Fridays. It encompasses many events, and should not take away from other events funding opportunities nor lose support because of the increasing popularity of this fund.

8.4. Washtenaw County Request to split business reimbursement for vandalism

Angel Vanas advocated for county support, and the county offered support with the expectation that the DDA would distribute the funds and that the DDA would split the cost.

Paul Ajlouny informed the board that there has been a string of robberies on West Cross in the last few weeks, he does not think that the DDA should pay for vandalism unless the DDA can pay for every break in or robbery in the district.

This would set an unsustainable precedent and is not a good solution.

Staff agreed that the DDA could support in different ways to help businesses see through similar situations on a case by case basis through marketing or business highlights.

9. PROPOSED BUSINESS - none.

10. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Emy Deshotel - Advocated for safe sidewalks. She will not visit downtown if the sidewalks are icy. Suggested utilizing a volunteering project for snow removal.

Nicole Brown shared that the interview board for police chief will be meeting next week. Patton Doyle will be sitting on that board.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:03am by Paul Ajlouny, supported by Valory Brown. Motion passed-unanimous.