



MINUTES  
DDA BOARD MEETING  
8:30 AM - Thursday, May 18, 2023  
Ypsilanti Freighthouse - 100 Market Pl.

---

**1. CALL TO ORDER (8:33am)**

**2. ROLL CALL**

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

**Staff Present: Elize Jekabson**

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

*Malissa Gillett motioned to approve the agenda. Paul Ajlouny supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.*

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes and staff/finance reports included in the packet are from March.

Staff emailed the correct minutes for approval and supporting documents for context.

*Malissa Gillett motioned to approve the April 27th, 2023 Board Meeting minutes and Paul Ajlouny supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.*

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES EACH) - none.**

**6. STAFF REPORT/FINANCIAL REPORT**

Financial report reviewed by Elize Jekabson. Notably, funding from the county has been received, and funds have been further distributed to the five downtown businesses impacted by break ins.

Staff was able to pay out Beautifypsi in advance of the fiscal year, so they can plan their event in June.

**7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**7.1. Operations and Finance Committee**

Staff provided a brief overview of the committee meeting.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**8.1. Historic Welcome to Depot Town Sign Restoration**

Staff provided updated quotes. Digital Print: \$7,250 Metal Panels: \$5,725. There is no additional charge from the first proposal for removal and disposal of the sign. The lighting is an additional \$1,300.

We are tax exempt so that brings the proposal for the entire project with Narooz's painting at \$8,725.

Pending HDC approval.

The board discussed the history of the mural. If the DDA does not update it, it will not be updated.

Brian Jones-Chance asked about additional electrical conduit extension. Andy French does not expect that amount to exceed an additional few hundred dollars and would feel comfortable to address the additional cost when the time comes.

***Andy French motioned to approve the hand painted mural quotes with lighting at \$8,725. Funding to be budgeted from Depot Town TIF capital improvements and Streetscape Capital improvements. Malissa Gillett supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.***

### **8.2. Leisa Thompson Business Photography Project Pt 2**

Staff clarified the quote from photographer Leisa Thompson. Each business would be \$325.

Staff explained the project. The Ad Hoc Committee was scheduled to discuss this on Tuesday but their meeting was rescheduled to next week. Staff wants the committee to work out how businesses are selected for photography.

Staff is seeking a budget for the project. If each business is \$325, how many businesses is the board comfortable supporting?

Ylondia Portis asked about the goals of the project. Staff responded that the project is mainly for a DDA website and social media content refresh. The business owners benefit as they get to keep the photos for their own use.

Ylondia Portis asked if this is a long term project or a one off project? Staff stated that ideally this would be a long term project. It lost outside funding in 2019, and there are more businesses to take photos of than we could afford in just a year. The longevity is entirely up to the board.

Ylondia Portis would like to work out the strategy ahead of a budget assignment at the Ad Hoc Committee level.

***Andy French motioned to assign the Ad Hoc Committee for Equity and Inclusion the task of creating a plan and budget for the Leisa Thompson Business Photography Project Part 2, and to bring a recommendation back to the board in June. Valory Brown supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.***

### **8.3. Thrift Depot / Delores Alley Light Proposal**

Note for the minutes: The agenda item is for The Ypsi Thrift Shop, not the Thrift Depot.

Discussion on whether or not cafe lights are the appropriate choice. The alley does not lead to public space. Brian Jones-Chance asked could the DDA save money by installing security light fixtures?

Malissa Gillett advocated for cafe lighting, as bright lights cast darker shadows.

Ylondia Portis stated that this project is also about beautification, not just safety.

Brian Jones-Chance would like to see some measurable factors for lighting improvements in the future.

Does lighting actually discourage bad behavior?

Patton Doyle has seen improvement on North Washington St.

Joe Ritchie asked about the power source. He has cafe lights on his building in Depot Town and the power source is a headache.

Ylondia Portis interested in a mural project on this alleyway.

Malissa Gillett suggested a deep clean power wash along with a mural. Staff stated that these projects can be done separately.

Andy French stepped outside to take a phone call and was not present for vote.

***Motion to approve the S. Washington Alley Light Proposal by Malissa Gillett contingent on clarity of who is paying for the power, supported by Valory Brown. Motion passed - Yes - 6, No - 1 (Jones-Chance), Absent - 1 (French).***

#### **8.4. Yiftee Community Cards Yiftee Presentation**

Patton Doyle recapped the Yiftee card program. The operations and finance committee discussed using this software for the ExploreYpsi program.

Staff explained that Yiftee would solve a lot of programmatic issues, but the board does not need to decide whether or not to use Yiftee for a program until the program is on the agenda.

Staff would like to know if the board sees value in a DDA Community Card? If they do, it can be a great option to utilize for programs like ExploreYpsi. It would not be a good fit for the Holiday Storefront Competition. Yiftee can be put in place and can be used by the public at no cost to the DDA. We would just need to set it up on the backend.

The board discussed merchant fees and they do not like that Yiftee is a punch in credit card, which prompts extra fees. They also discussed how traditional gift cards have a low return rate, which is a perk for businesses. The perk would not be translated in the use of Yiftee cards.

The board also talked about the marketing benefits, and how overall the option for a community card could have very good impacts on the district as a whole.

Patton Doyle is not interested in the program on its own, and would prefer to not market it for public purchase but sees a huge advantage for using it for ExploreYpsi and other programs. He is okay with making it available, but not making billboards about it.

Paul Ajlouny would like to weigh out the pros and cons for implementing this over tokens for ExploreYpsi when ExploreYpsi comes to the agenda. He supports making Yiftee available for the DDA in general outside of that.

***Brian Jones-Chance motioned to approve the DDA Community Card partnership with Yiftee. Staff is to set up the backend program, and come back to the board to approve for public purchase, or for specific program implementation. Malissa Gillett supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.***

#### **8.5. CTAP Funding Application**

The funding for JEL, if approved, will be awarded to JEL AfterGlow. The DDA is able to apply for another \$5,000 and may be able to help cover event sponsorship expenses and make more available to other events.

***Ylondia Portis motioned to direct staff to apply for the CTAP funding with a \$7,000 ask for JEL AfterGlow on the condition of a pre-approved budget and plan, a \$2,500 ask for Ypsi Pride, and a \$2,500 ask for Juneteenth. Brian Jones-Chance supported the motion. Motion passed - Yes ( 7 ) No ( 0 ) Abstained ( 1 - French)***

## **9. PROPOSED BUSINESS**

Andy French asked if staff can clarify the zoning ordinance regarding storefront businesses and requirements for operation. There are concerns about storefronts who are not open to the public and do not contribute to the goals of a thriving downtown district.

Staff will reach out to the city planner for clarification.

**10. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION** -none.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

***Motion to adjourn at 10:32am by Andy French, and supported by Valory Brown. Motion passed - unanimous.***