



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

1. CALL TO ORDER (8:34am)

2. ROLL CALL

PATTON DOYLE (C)	P	KAYIA HINTON	A (online)
YLONDIA PORTIS	P (8:53am)	ANDY FRENCH (V)	P
DIETER OTTO	P	PAUL AJLOUNY	P
MALISSA GILLETT	P	JOE RICHIE	A
VALORY BROWN	P	NICOLE BROWN	A
BRIAN JONES-CHANCE	P (8:43am)	BRYAN FOLEY	P
GERRY KREINER	P		

Staff Present: DDA: Elize Jekabson, City: Katie Jones, Bonnie Wessler

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Andy French motioned to approve the agenda. Paul Ajlouny supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Malissa Gillett motioned to approve the October 19, 2023 Board Meeting minutes and Valory Brown supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES EACH) -

Sun Chao - Back Office Studios : Spoke about car break-ins in S. Huron Lot, asked DDA to nudge construction on N. Adams lot along, spoke about a vision impaired client who is having a hard time seeing in darkness. Asked to push DTA to fix the lights. DDA relief grant - BOS is not a transactional business, and they had a lot of issues with costs not revenue loss. They have improved revenue since 2021 since 2022.

Evan Sweet - Ward Three Councilperson - His first DDA meeting. He is here to learn more about what the DDA is doing in person.

6. STAFF/FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Staff Report -

Staff report provided by Elize Jekabson

Working with Engage EMU extended the cards to November 30th to get as many cards used as possible. Downtown dumpster on N. Adams have been moved to the street while the lot is being upgraded. We are at the end of the Relief grant. Staff is taking the Redevelopment Ready Community training. Coffee with Elize and Katie at SPARK east tomorrow between 10 am - 2 pm. Michigan Downtown Association Conference was a very beneficial conference for staff.

B. Financial Report

Staff provided a financial report.

Elize sat down with Andrew, the City Manager to sort budget issues in the cities financial system. There is a new report in the packet - the third and fourth lines are accurate. Elize will work on putting this information in a live doc that they can update accurately for a financial snapshot.

Patton Doyle pointed out that the public relations line item was still there and needs to be removed from Depot Town.

Staff reported that at the last city council meeting, city staff presented a new structure for the planning and building department. Council has approved DDA staff being removed from the Planning Department to be fully paid for and led by the DDA.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Operations and Finance Committee

Andy French reported that the caboose is complete, and the signal tower started this week.

There was an invoicing issue with caboose - the hired contractor miscalculated costs, but the subcontractor generously covered the overages as a thank you to the DDA for preserving the caboose.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Conversation with DPS about Maintenance and Capital Improvements

Bonnie Wessler, DPS Director presented.

Rule of thumb, maintenance tasks are union work, transformational work is not union work.

DPS Prioritizes safety issues , Bonnie has been focusing on trying to develop a plan for projects at least by seasons for capital improvements.

Additional discussion of whether there will be any pause in service this year while they transition between the current DPS yard to the new space at 599 Mansfield.

DPS is working on prioritizing parking lot snow clearing.

Bryan Foley and Dieter Otto who both have worked with DPS directly praised Bonnie for being the more effective DPS Director in many years. They hope to see her continue in the role.

Bonnie informed the board that she is working with Elize to streamline DTE light pole replacement. Stock lumineers are black, our poles are green. She will be pulling some quotes to paint the poles black . If we are willing to go with black light poles then DTE would stock them and replace them.

North side of Adams lot will be open this week.

B. Downtown Relief Grant Appeals

The board reviewed the appeals and discussed. The application says that businesses are eligible.

Discussion ensued about whether or not business implies nonprofit. The board restated that the grant was designed to support struggling small businesses. Corner Health Center is not in danger of closing due to the construction, and they did not contribute to the TIF fund that this money is being pulled from.

Brian Jones-Chance motioned to deny Corner Health Center's appeal for the Downtown Construction Relief Fund. Gerry Kreiner supported the motion passed - unanimous.

Back Office Studio: The DDA determined grant amounts to be 10% of loss in revenue. Back Office Studios did not see a revenue loss, but has asked the DDA to cover damages and staff time to deal with the damages at about \$3,000.

Gerry Kreiner asked about the applicants insurance. We are not an insurance company.

Staff reported that they were told that insurance didnt cover these damages.

Valory Brown pointed out that from an equity standpoint we would need to consider other applicants damages if we approve this for BOS.

Staff reported that many other applicants had physical damages similar to what was reported here, and we did not cover those costs.

Ylondia Portis motioned to deny Back Office Studio's appeal for the Downtown Construction Relief Fund. Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed. Yes - 8 , No - 2 (Jones-Chance, Foley).

C. Holiday Lighting

Holiday Lighting Express has provided a quote for the Depot Town Trees, Light Poles down N. Huron St. and up West Cross.

Staff will present tridge to the county because it isn't in our budget.

Staff has requested many more quotes for Downtown Ypsilanti.

Andy French motioned to approve the Holiday Lighting Express quote for the Light poles, Depot Town Trees, and excluding the tridge. 2,500 to be pulled from Depot Town TIF Capital improvements. All remaining Downtown Holiday lighting funds to be contributed to the county lighting efforts. Gerry Kreiner supported the motion. Motion passed. 9 - yes, Absent - 1 (Foley)

D. Strategic Planning - TIF Plan Review

Staff asked if the board is available 12/14 vs 12/21. It sounds like most board members are available on the 21st. Staff will check with the consultant on available dates. There will be a half day with DDA 201 training and then strategic planning. Approval of calendar and election of officers will happen in advance.

Consultant was a recommendation from the Michigan Downtown Association.

Andy French made a motion to approve the Strategic planning consultant POW Strategies for \$3,500 and Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.

E. Downtown Management Training Series

All webinars add up to \$450. This gets us the links and staff can share it with the whole board.

Discussion with who would be required to take the webinar. Possibly required for the executive committee. There's no enforcement but strong encouragement. Michigan Downtown Association has been useful to staff.

Andy French motioned to approve the Downtown Management Training Series for \$450. Malissa Gillett supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.

9. PROPOSED BUSINESS

Andy French suggested an RFP for the Depot Town plaza to get that going for the springtime.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES) - none.

11. ADJOURNMENT - 10:36am