



MINUTES  
DDA BOARD MEETING  
8:30 AM - Thursday, March 21, 2024  
Back Office Studios - 13 N. Washington St.

---

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

## 2. ROLL CALL

PATTON DOYLE (C)	P	KAYIA HINTON	P
YLONDIA PORTIS	P	ANDY FRENCH (V)	P
DIETER OTTO	P	PAUL AJLOUNY	P
MALISSA GILLETT	P	VALORY BROWN	P
NICOLE BROWN	P	BRIAN JONES-CHANCE	P (8:42am)
BRYAN FOLEY	P	GERRY KREINER	P
REX RICHIE	A		

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

## 3. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

## 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Andy French motioned to approve the February 15, 2024 Board Meeting minutes and Paul Ajlouny supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous.*

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

## 6. STAFF/FINANCIAL REPORT

**A. Staff Report** - Staff report given by DDA Interim Director, Elize Jekabson

Match on Main is back on. The program was delayed and then brought back with little warning. The due date does not align with our board schedule. Staff verified with the Match on Main specialist that DDA board approval is not required to choose applicants and submit applications. Staff will be scheduling a grants committee in early april to score applications, and notify the board who will be moving forward. Staff was able to collect a \$4,075 insurance claim for the depot town wayfinding sign that was run over by a semi truck in 2021.

The N. Washington St. Light project approved at the previous meeting was presented to City Council. City Council approved paying for ongoing maintenance of the lights.

Staff attended the Michigan Downtown Association spring workshop in East Lansing.

**B. Financial Report** -

We have disbursed the \$25,000 Match on Main grant to Bird Dog Baking.

Staff has had the annual budget meeting with the City Finance Director. It will be presented to City Council in May.

Staff is working with DPS to explore options for pedestrian trash pickup throughout the DDA to cut costs.

## 7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### **A. Operations and Finance Committee**

Committee report provided by Andy French. He spoke about bonding for the Depot Town Plaza Redesign. The committee believes that that this is a good use of our bonding capacity.

#### **B. Committee for Equitable Investment**

Dylan Cinti provided a presentation of a roundtable that will present key stakeholders projects to support including events and a business playbook.

Discussion about equity and whether these asks align with that.

#### **9. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Frog Island Park - Conceptual Plan with DPS Director Bonnie Wessler**

Bonnie Wessler presented the conceptual plan for the Rice Street lot area and boat launch.

More lighting was requested by the DDA.

##### **B. Brownfield Redevelopment Presentation with Nathan Voght - Economic Development Specialist - Washtenaw County**

Nathan Voght presented his slideshow. Conversation about affordable housing in Ypsilanti ensued.

##### **C. First Fridays Ypsilanti - 2024 Season Updates - Malissa Gillett - Director**

Malissa Gillett gave updates about the program, including its new website, its new user interface, new ordinance friendly signage, year-round maps with QR code that goes to participating locations, and the movies in the park planned for this season.

The board was very happy with the updates.

Bryan Foley stated that as good as this event looks, no one will come if there isn't a solution to the Downtown issues socioeconomic and substance abuse issues. Viability of community depends on discussion of substance abuse and socioeconomic problems.

Ylondia Portis asked to add this discussion as an agenda item in May.

##### **D. Depot Town Plaza and River Street RFQ**

***Brian Jones-Chance motioned to approve the Fishbeck bid for the Depot Town Plaza and N. River Street Redesign RFQ at \$39,000. Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed - Yes: 8, No: 0, Absent from vote: 2 (N. Brown, Gillett)***

##### **E. DDA Staff Review and Executive Director Contract**

Andy French was uncomfortable with the proposed severance pay. The executive committee explained why they were comfortable with the amount.

***Patton Doyle motioned to approve the Executive Director Contract with a four month severance amendment. Andy French supported the motion.***

Paul Ajlouny reiterated that up to twelve months severance without cause for twelve years dedicated service not outlandish.

Discussion ensued.

***Paul Ajlouny offered a friendly amendment for six months severance.***

Elize Jekabson stated they are perfectly happy with six months.

***Andy French accepted the friendly amendment. Motion passed - unanimous.***

The room congratulated Elize Jekabson as the DDA's Executive Director, effective 4/1/24

**10. PROPOSED BUSINESS** - none.

**11. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)** - none.

**12. ADJOURNMENT** (10:48am)