MINUTES
DDA BOARD MEETING
8:45 AM - Monday, October 15, 2026
SPARK East - 215 W. Michigan, Ypsilanti MI 48197

1. CALL TO ORDER (9:04 am)

A. DDA Mission and Vision

2. ROLL CALL

LIZ WARREN	**(P)**	ANDY FRENCH (C)	**(P)**
DIETER OTTO	**(P)**	PAUL AJLOUNY	**(P)**
VALORY BROWN	**(P) (8:53 am)**	KRISTINE NASH-WONG	**(P) (Exited 9:53 am)**
NICOLE BROWN	**(A)**	BRYAN FOLEY	**(A)**
BRIAN JONES-CHANCE (V)	**(P) (8:54 am)**	EMMY MAURER	**(P)**
MEGAN FOLDENAUER	**(A)**	COLLEEN KENNEDY	**(P)**
JULIUS BUZZARD	**(P)**		

Staff Present: DDA: Elize Jekabson and Danya Youssef-Agha

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Kristine Nash-Wong motioned to approve the agenda. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous. Valory Brown and Brian Jones-Chance absent for vote.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 10-5-26 Minutes

Emmy Maurer motioned to approve the 10-5-2026 minutes. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous. Valory Brown and Brian Jones-Chance absent for vote.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT - (3 MINUTES/EACH SPEAKER)

6. FINANCIAL/STAFF REPORT

A. Financial and Staff Report, SHINE Report, Attendance Report

Elize went over the check registry and went over the grant that came through for the CTAP grant and the mural it is going towards. We did end up paying out the ballard and freighthouse lots, and next month they will be reflected in the report. Elize went over the MML recast leaders grant that we are going after with the city. Elize went over some new businesses that applied for their business license. Ypsi Pool Club, Vinny's Bar and Grill, and La MIchoacana Prime have opened recently. Schultz Outfitters and Bridge

Community Cafe have closed. We are working with Avery Williams for a city art project. Staff attended Ypsi Tasty. Elize went over the SHINE report and attendance report for the board.

Elize then went over the staff report with a presentation. Elize went over the Locable CRM engagement stats, the DDA Community card purchases over the year, Explore Ypsi Card, and social media insights. Elize then went on to go over the crime report and broke it down from all three business districts. We then went over the vacancy report. Healthy vacancy for a downtown is 8-10 percent, and ours is 17.2%. Liz Warren asked about what the enforcement process is for vacant storefronts. Elize went over the city's process. Andy French mentioned that he likes the new presentation and it should be standard. He would like to add a question to the survey that goes out to the businesses to find out if people plan to renew the current lease they are in or not.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Operations and Finance Committee

Emmy Maurer went over the last meeting and what they discussed. They discussed renewing the SHINE contract and Holiday BOGO discussion and what they recommended. We will be going over both topics later in the meeting.

B. Marketing Committee

We will be talking about the workshop series in New Business.

C. Grants Committee

Dieter Otto went over the last meeting and discussion items. New grants and updates to current grants.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Restorative Conferences Network Introduction

Elize introduced Stephanie Pocsi-Morrison and Kevin from the Restorative Conference Network. This is a collective group with the DDA, Ypsilanti Library, Student Advocacy Center, Girls Group, Ozone House, Educate Youth, and Corner Health. Everyone listed in the group is on page 46 and 47 of the packet. This group is trained in restorative conferences. They offered if anyone on the board or business owners wants to get trained, they can provide that. Stephanie went over the process they have for incidences that occur. Danya asked what the training looks like and how long it takes. Stephanie said it is a total of 6 hours. Stephanie mentioned the idea of doing a de-escalation training before doing the restorative conference training. Kevin mentioned last month they have helped over a 100 youth. This is not an emergency response situation, but a restorative collaboration to help with harm caused after the fact. Liz Warren asked if they are collecting data to see how their services are impacting the community. Stephanie mentioned they just started the program and they are working on analytics. Andy French mentioned that crime in downtown is an issue, and tracking analytics is important. Danya asked if they

have a presence online. Stephanie mentioned they are working on the online presence. The board thanked them for their time and efforts.

B. 2026/2027 SHINE Contract

Elize went over last year's SHINE contract and the new contract proposed for this year. Operations and Finance recommended cutting the hours at Riverside and Frog Island Park during the winter. Operations and Finance recommended bringing their winter services to W. Cross. Leroy recommended a $2,000 a month budget for W. Cross inter services, and Elize is wanting to cut it down to $1,000 a month especially with the warmer winter we are supposed to have. Colleen Kennedy asked if the SHINE crew can check the trash cans on Washington more often. Elize mentioned they can direct Leroy to keep an eye on it. Colleen Kennedy also mentioned directing the SHINE crew to be less vocal about the passcode for the dumpster enclosure.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SHINE TEAM CONTRACT RENEWAL FOR DECEMBER 2026-NOVEMBER 2027

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Colleen Kennedy and supported by Member Dieter Otto.

WHEREAS, the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) District, promotes the public health and safety of the DDA District and found a need for litter cleanup and overall beautification of its district; and

WHEREAS, The SHINE Team provides litter clean-up/beautification services while employing justice-involved individuals in need of work; and

WHEREAS, the YDDA has contracted services with Life After Incarceration, Transition and Reentry (LAITR) since November 2024, and the SHINE Team transitioned to the leadership of the non-profit, DM19 Collaborative Reentry Services in Summer 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:
The YDDA approves a one year contract renewal proposed by DM19 to include trash and litter pick up, snow/ice clearance of ADA ramps in the Downtown and West Cross Districts, weekly dumpster enclosure maintenance in the three downtown enclosures.

AND FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The SHINE team provides snow clearing services for the Downtown and the West Cross Districts discussed by the board. These services are supplemental to encourage accessibility and do not release the responsibilities of the property owners for snow removal.

AND FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The YDDA authorizes the YDDA Executive Director to sign an updated contract for $88,080 that reflect these amendments.

AYES: 10- Liz Warren, Dieter Otto, Valory Brown, Julius Buzzard, Andy French, Paul Ajlouny, Emmy Maurer, Collan Kennedy, Kristine Nash Wong, Brian Jones Chance
NAYS: 0
ABSTAINED: 0
ABSENT: Nicole Brown, Bryan Foley, Megan Foldenauer

VOTE: Motion passed
Resolved, this 15th day of October, 2026

C. DDA Community Card - BOGO Match

Elize went over the BOGO deal that the Operations and FInance committee recommended. The deal would include a $20 match for every $100 purchased for the DDA Community Card. Andy French mentioned that the Aubree match program includes an expiration date for the amount matched. Elize is going to ask Yiftee if that is something we can do, and if the funds expire, if we get that money back. Liz Warren recommended changing the name because it is not a true BOGO deal.

RESOLUTION APPROVING A DDA COMMUNITY CARD BOGO PROGRAM

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Brian Jones-Chance and supported by Member Julius Buzzard.

WHEREAS, Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) promotes district vitality through creating incentives and driving foot traffic to storefront businesses

WHEREAS, the YDDA Operations and Finance Committee recommends that the YDDA pilot a Buy One Get One Incentive ($20 Match on every $100) through the DDA Community Card program for Black Friday and Small Business Saturday

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The YDDA authorizes staff to pilot a Buy One Get One Incentive ($20 Match on every $100) through the DDA Community Card program for Black Friday and Small Business Saturday.

AYES: 10- Liz Warren, Dieter Otto, Valory Brown, Julius Buzzard, Andy French, Paul Ajlouny, Emmy Maurer, Collan Kennedy, Kristine Nash Wong, Brian Jones Chance
NAYS: 0
ABSTAINED: 0
ABSENT: Nicole Brown, Bryan Foley, Megan Foldenauer

VOTE: Motion passed
Resolved, this 15th day of October, 2026

D. FY 25/26 Facade and Rehab Funding and "Change-of-use" Grant Eligibility

Elize went over the change-of-use grant update on page 54. This came up because of an awarded and extended grant we gave for a project for $40,000, but unfortunately that project is no longer happening because of state funding being pulled. We will be putting that $40,000 back into the budget, and the grant committee recommended to take that money and put it towards next year's face and rehab grant program which makes $80,000 available for next year. Out of that conversation that included a "change-of-use" to the program to help bring spaces up to code. Colleen Kennedy asked logistically how this would play out. Elize went over the timeline of the grant. Andy French mentioned he is in favor of this as long it is clear that it is code specific.

RESOLUTION FOR RETURNED DOWNTOWN FACADE AND REHAB GRANT FUNDING

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Colleen Kennedy and supported by Emmy Maurer.

WHEREAS, Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) promotes district vitality through its Facade and Rehab Grant Program.

WHEREAS, grantee William Sloan has informed the YDDA that his project is no longer viable due to circumstances beyond his control and will no longer request disbursement of $40,000 Downtown FY 25/26 Facade and Rehab Grant fund (currently in Downtown restricted fund).

WHEREAS, the YDDA Grants Committee discussed including allowing "Change-of-use" projects for the Facade and Rehab Grant program.

AND WHEREAS, the YDDA Grants Committee recommended the $40,000 be budgeted towards the FY 27/28 Downtown Facade and Rehab Grant program for the total budget of $80,000.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The YDDA directs staff to update the Facade and Rehab program to include "Change-of-use" eligibility, and to bring back to the Board for approval, and to leave $40,000 in the Downtown Restricted fund until the FY 27/28 grant cycle.

AYES: 9- Liz Warren, Dieter Otto, Valory Brown, Julius Buzzard, Andy French, Paul Ajlouny, Emmy Maurer, Collan Kennedy, Brian Jones Chance
NAYS:
ABSTAINED:
ABSENT: Nicole Brown, Megan Foldenauer, Bryan Foley, Kristine Nash-Wong

Vote: Motion passed
Resolved, this 15th day of October, 2026

E. DDA CTAP Marketing Workshop Series Update

Elize went over the CTAP grant we received and half of it went to the mural in Depot Town, and half is going toward the Marketing Workshop Series. There will be a possible stipend given to attendees to increase motivation of business owners participating. Dates and topics:

November 20, 2026 - Search Optimization for DDA Businesses
December 4, 2026 - DDA Collaborations and Partnerships
January 15, 2027 - Social Media 2.0
February 5, 2027 - Data-Driven Campaigns on a Budget

We have discussed adding an e-commerce workshop and a workshop on how to create flyers on a budget to avoid AI flyers.

9. PROPOSED BUSINESS
Elize mentioned we are expecting to see the strategic plan soon.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT - 60 MINUTES TOTAL (3 MINUTES/EACH SPEAKER)

11. ADJOURNMENT (10:12 am)