MINUTES
DDA BOARD MEETING
8:45 AM - Thursday, November 19, 2026
SPARK East - 215 W. Michigan, Ypsilanti MI 48197

1. CALL TO ORDER (8:52 am)

A. DDA Mission and Vision

2. ROLL CALL

LIZ WARREN	**(P)(9:05am)**	ANDY FRENCH (C)	**(P)**
DIETER OTTO	**(P)(Exit 10:51 am)**	PAUL AJLOUNY	**(P)**
VALORY BROWN	**(P)(8:54 am)**	KRISTINE NASH-WONG	**(P)**
NICOLE BROWN	**(P)(9:11 am)**	BRYAN FOLEY	**(A)**
BRIAN JONES-CHANCE (V)	**(P)**	EMMY MAURER	**(A)**
MEGAN FOLDENAUER	**(A)**	COLLEEN KENNEDY	**(P)**
JULIUS BUZZARD	**(P)**		

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

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Brian Jones-Chance motioned to approve the agenda with the removal of the presentation "Flowers Everywhere" (item C under New Business section) . Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed - unanimous. Valory Brown, Nicole Brown, and Liz Warren absent for vote.

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

5. FINANCIAL/STAFF REPORT

A. Financial Report and Check Registry

Elize went over checks that had gone out, went over conference fees, and powerwashing of N. Adams lot.

B. Staff Report

We applied to MML on behalf of "Flowers Everywhere", assisted on Halloween decorations downtown, graduated from Recast Leaders Cohort, and started our Maestro CRM. Elize went over the prepared staff report. Covered topics such as: Black Friday/Small Business Saturday sale for community card, Explore Ypsi, social media update, crime report, vacancy report, DDA-led events, Ypsi Underwear Lady mural

completion, and the MDA award for Business Owner Portrait Series. Kristine Nash-Wong mentioned adding a to-do list for board members.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Committee for Equitable Investment

Brian Jones-Chance went over the last meeting. The Equitable Investment Committee is doing a survey for the DDA businesses.

B. Operations and Finance Committee

Paul Ajlouny went over the last meeting. A lot of the topics are on the agenda for today.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Downtown Curb Replacement Budget Amendment - OHM Engineering

Elize went over the issues with the planned curb replacement. OHM is here to discuss and go further into the issues that led to the increase in cost. There was an increase in the amount of curb space that was initially anticipated. With the cost to shut down the road it did prevent the ability to have the contractors come back before the board could meet. Contractors went ahead with the work to save for the cost of reclosing the road. Andy French mentioned that the Operations and Finance did recommend to approve the amount that went over the budget so that it did not fall on the city. Andy French mentioned to OHM that this is not the first time that there has been an increase in cost over the estimate. Rachel from OHM went over some additional testing we could request to have a better estimate. Fraser from OHM also mentioned that when dealing with older infrastructures there are more unknowns when going into construction.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE MICHIGAN AVENUE MEDIAN REPAIRS - ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION

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

WHEREAS, clean, safe, and cared for are care values of the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA).

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2026 The YDDA authorized the City of Ypsilanti to add the Michigan Avenue Median repairs to their concrete contract, with the YDDA covering cost of construction, design and engineering services, and related traffic control measures, not to exceed $35,000.

WHEREAS, actual construction cost exceeded the agreed upon $35,000.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The YDDA authorizes the City Manager to approve an additional $23,520 on the Downtown Median Repair Contract from the YDDA Downtown Capital Improvements account to cover the additional cost of construction.

YES: Liz Warren, Kristine Nash-Wong, Nicole Brown, Paul Ajlouny, Andy French, Dieter Otto, Brian Jones-Chance, Julius Buzzard, Colleen Kennedy
NO: 0
ABSENT: Emmy Maurer, Bryan Foley, Megan Foldenauer
ABSTAINED: 0

VOTE: Motion Passes

Resolved, this 19th day of November, 2026

B. Strategic Plan Review - POW! Strategies

Christiana from POW! Strategies came to review the strategic planning session we had in October. The presentation can be found on page 28 of the packet. Christiana went over district needs, key strategies, business vitality & investment, business recruitment strategy steps, connectivity & activation, event analysis, community event mini-grant and examples, organizational capacity & accountability, organization structure, training & education, community needs, DDA team building, board member commitments, retaining and attracting young professionals, volunteer recruitment strategies, and an action plan. She then went over our 2026 successes, SWOT update, needs assessment for 2027, needs by district for 2027, action plan for districts, key partners list, capital improvement plan, and strategic goals.

Brian Jones-Chance asked if Christina had any advice on incorporating students. Christina recommended starting with a think tank with a small group of students to create solutions.

~~C. Flowers Everywhere, Growing Community in Ypsilanti - Avery Williamson and Krista Skytta~~

D. DDA Bylaw Update

Draft of the updated bylaws can be found on page 139 of the board packet. Elize went over the process of putting the bylaws together. Attorneys rewrote bylaws from scratch and committees reviewed and put in notes. Elize went over the volunteer members for advising the group and attendance bylaws section. Elize went over section 5.1 for criteria for all board officers to be given priority to residents of the City of Ypsilanti. Operations and Finance argued to strike through that section that Equitable Investment brought forward. Kristine Nash-Wong asked why Operations and Finance struck through the section. Andy French explained that not many of our board members live in the city and living in the city doesn't

mean they don't have the same buy in for the city or experience. Brian Jones-Chance argued that buy-in for residents versus non-residents is not the same. Colleen Kennedy asked for clarification on the guidelines for becoming board members. Paul Ajlouny also argued that non residents do still have the same buy-in as non residents. Colleen Kennedy argued that would make the pool smaller. Brian Jones-Chance clarified this would just be preference for business owners who are also Ypsi residents to have priority. Dieter Otto argued that we do not need more restrictions to make quorum since that is something we already struggle with. Elize mentioned having this be something we discuss when elections come versus having it be in the bylaws. The agreement to strike through section 5.1 and having it be something considered in process. Brian Jones-Chance brought up the requirements for board members, and Elize mentioned that it is a state statute. The board agreed to add the language from the state statute for requirements into the bylaws.

The board also agreed to remove the draft language in section 5.1 for chairperson verse officer. Section 5.7 in red of the draft was added by equitable investment for nomination of officers, and operations and finance agreed that the nomination process should take more time to consider and suggested 5.7 should read “Nomination Process. Nomination of officers shall adhere to the DDA’s Nomination of Officers Policy (create policy)”. Liz Warren offered keeping the draft from Equitable investment and including in the text a reference to the nomination policy we will create. Board agreed to section 5.7 “Nomination Process. Nomination of officers shall adhere to the DDA’s Nomination of Officers Policy. Nomination of officers shall be made from the floor at the regular meeting in December each year, and the election shall be immediately thereafter. A candidate receiving a majority vote of the entire DDA Board shall be declared elected and shall serve a term of one year or until their successor shall take the office. Vacancies in office shall be filled immediately by regular election procedures. The officers shall be members of the DDA Board.”

Operations and Finance Committee suggests putting section 9.2 as a policy rather than a bylaw. Nicole Brown mentioned since this is an open meeting it might have to be policy. The board agreed to leave it as it is with an addition of a timed amount per section of 30 minutes. Elize mentioned this will go to council for approval and more changes could come from that. Elize went over the attendance bylaws that have been added in. Nicole Brown mentioned that city council still has to vote for the board removal process. Valory Brown asked when this would go to council, and Elize mentioned it might be on the schedule for December. Brian Jones-Chance mentioned that we did include language for additional responsibilities for the treasurer. The Treasurer would become chair for the Operations and Finance Committee.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE BYLAWS OF THE YPSILANTI DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Brian Jones-Chance and supported by Member Dieter Otto.

WHEREAS, Section 204 of Act 57 (MCL 125.4204) requires the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) Board to adopt rules governing its procedure and the holding of regular meetings, consistent with the Open Meetings Act, subject to the approval of the governing body; and

WHEREAS, the YDDA Operations and Finance Committee was tasked with restating the YDDA Bylaws, last updated in 2009 with support of staff and the YDDA Attorney; and

WHEREAS, the YDDA Board, Advisory Committee, and Attorney have reviewed the Bylaws and finds that they are consistent with Act 57 and the Open Meetings Act.

WHEREAS, that the Bylaws are subordinate to, and shall be interpreted consistently with, Act 57 and other applicable law, and any future amendment to the Bylaws shall be subject to Council approval as required by Section 204 of Act 57

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the YDDA Board approves the Bylaws of the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED The YDDA Board respectfully requests that the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving the YDDA's Restated Bylaws, adopted by the DDA Board on November 19, 2026.

YES: Liz Warren, Kristine Nash-Wong, Nicole Brown, Paul Ajlouny, Andy French, Dieter Otto, Brian Jones-Chance, Julius Buzzard, Colleen Kennedy
NO: 0
ABSENT: Emmy Maurer, Bryan Foley, Megan Foldenauer
ABSTAINED: 0

Vote: Motion Passes

Resolved, this 19th day of November, 2026

E. N. Huron Lot Discussion / Parking Meter Discussion - Request to Council

Elize went over the projects we want to accomplish with our parking lots but with hesitation over moving forward if the city will just meter the new lots we complete. Elize and Kristine met with the city manager, Andrew. Andrew mentioned they are just following the 2019 parking study. Elize asked if the DDA could get a new parking study so that the city can make a more accurate decision for metering. The City Manager suggested bringing to council a resolution to pause metering until we can get a new parking study so we can move forward with construction.

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT CITY COUNCIL PAUSE THE INSTALLATION OF NEW PARKING METERS WITHIN THE YPSILANTI DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY DISTRICTS

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Brian Jones-Chance and supported by Member Kristine Nash-Wong:

WHEREAS, the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority ("YDDA") has invested $384,680 over the past three years in repairs to three City-owned parking lots (North Adams Lot, Freighthouse Lot, and Ballard Lot) within the YDDA Districts, and is preparing to repair the North Huron Street parking lot at an estimated cost of $450,000; and

WHEREAS, the YDDA Board has concerns regarding the City's plan to install meters and charge fees in all City-owned parking lots within the YDDA Districts, as the plan does not account for the current level of demand for business-district parking; and

WHEREAS, the City's parking implementation plan relies on a parking study conducted in 2019, and the YDDA recognizes that conditions in the downtown area have changed substantially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the YDDA is committed to supporting a vibrant, accessible downtown and to making parking decisions based on current, reliable data;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the YDDA Board requests that the Ypsilanti City Council pause the installation of any new parking meters or kiosks within the YDDA Districts while the YDDA commissions and contracts for an updated parking study of the YDDA Districts within six months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, upon completion of the study, the YDDA Board requests a joint meeting with City Council to review the study's findings and recommendations.

YES: Liz Warren, Kristine Nash-Wong, Nicole Brown, Paul Ajlouny, Andy French, Brian Jones-Chance, Julius Buzzard, Colleen Kennedy
NO: 0
ABSENT: Dieter Otto, Valory Brown, Emmy Maurer, Bryan Foley, Megan Foldenauer
ABSTAINED:
VOTE: Motion Passed

Resolved, this 19th day of November, 2026

Rachel from OHM mentioned if we want to move forward with a spring construction of N. Huron Lot then we need to have everything approved by January. Colleen Kennedy asked about updated signage and landscaping with the construction. Elize mentioned that it could be included. Kristine Nash-Wong mentioned that signage needs to be updated throughout the city. Elize asked the board if we want to

move forward with this project even if City Council does not approve the pause of metering. Liz Warren mentioned having an updated construction sign for projects that include language about DDA funded.

F. SHINE Contract Amendment

Elize went over the shine contract amendment and language used form the last meeting. Elize is asking for the contract to be approved at presented.

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

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Kristine Nash-Wong and supported by Member Brian Jones-Chance.

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 $91,560 that reflect these amendments.

YES: Liz Warren, Kristine Nash-Wong, Nicole Brown, Paul Ajlouny, Andy French, Brian Jones-Chance, Julius Buzzard, Colleen Kennedy
NO: 0
ABSENT: Dieter Otto, Valory Brown, Emmy Maurer, Bryan Foley, Megan Foldenauer

ABSTAINED:
VOTE: Motion Passed

Resolved, this 19th day of November, 2026

G. Ypsilanti Restaurant Week

Danya went over the restaurant week. Liz Warren asked how restaurant owners feel about this. Andy French mentioned he likes the idea.

Liz Warren motioned to approve Ypsilanti Restaurant Week, Brian Jones-Chance supported the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

H. Downtown Median Design and Estimate - Discussion

Elize was tasked with looking into replacing the planters on the medians. The cost would be close to $100,000. If we are spending that amount we are looking into the viability of redesigning the medians. MIHQ has designs that they did not go through with for the median redesigns. The cost estimate for this design from MIHQ is close to $1.6 million. If our TIF renews this could be something we could bond for. The board has asked for the start of redesign for Washington St, and the Operations and Finance committee has suggested including redesign for the center medians on Michigan Ave to that RFQ.

9. PROPOSED BUSINESS

Elize mentioned nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer for next month.

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

11. ADJOURNMENT (10:12 am)