CITY OF KALAMAZOO
DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2023, 3:00 p.m. | Community Room, Kalamazoo City Hall

PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson, Curt Aardema, Jeff Breneman, Carl Brown, Grant Fletcher, Stephanie Hinman, Matt Hollander, Susan Lindemann, Clarence Lloyd

ABSENT:

STAFF: Chelsie Downs-Hubbarth, Jamie McCarthy, Melissa Fuller, Paul Thuringer, Jaime Marsman

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:51 P.M

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson
Curt Aardema
Jeff Breneman
Carl Brown
Grant Fletcher
Stephanie Hinman
Matt Hollander
Susan Lindemann
Clarence Lloyd

ABSENT:

EXCUSED:

THE AUGUST 21, 2023, ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ARE RECORDED.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

DIRECTOR FLETCHER MOVED TO ADOPT THE AUGUST 21, 2023 AGENDA. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR FLETCHER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY 17, 2023 MINUTES. DIRECTOR HINMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

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D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report

Ms. Fuller presented the financial report, sharing information on revenues and expenses.

Director Aardema asked for clarification on the flower plantings. It was clarified that these were on the Kalamazoo Mall, not Bronson Park.

DIRECTOR FLETCHER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR HOLLANDER SECONDED.

Mayor Anderson noted that the spending compared to budget was lagging and asked if this was due to timing issues. Ms. Fuller stated that Mr. Vicenzi plans to bring further information to the Board to ensure that items are categorized appropriately as compared to the budget.

NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Downtown Ambassador Report

Mr. Thuringer provided information on the Downtown Ambassador Report, which was requested by Director Breneman. Detailed statistics and a narrative were included with the Board packet. A monthly report can be provided if desired. Mr. Thuringer stated that an ambassador can also be present to attend a Board meeting to answer questions if desired.

Director Lindemann affirmed that a monthly report would be desired. A short narrative or summary of the happenings is helpful as well. Director Lindemann stated that the Board would like an annual visit from the Ambassadors.

Director Brown asked if additional garbage cans should be added to the Arcadia Festival Site, noting that the narrative states that trash accumulates in the park. Mr. Thuringer stated that he could look into this. There was discussion that there are three organizations that pick up trash in the Arcadia Festival Site and yet there are still trash issues.

Director Aardema noted that additional issues are mentioned in the report that need action taken. There was a discussion on what the protocol is for this. Director Lindemann stated that when the contract was signed with the ambassadors, there were staff in place to assist with this. She noted that a Committee could be formed to assist with addressing these concerns. Director Fletcher stated that this could be discussed at the Finance Meeting. Director Breneman stated that downtown shops could also be surveyed for their input/opinion regarding the Ambassador program.

Director Hinman questioned who is guiding the ambassadors regarding the graffiti removal. Director Lindemann stated that the Project & Finance Committee can discuss this with the Ambassadors directly. There was discussion on how citizens can communicate better with the Ambassadors to provide oversight.

Mr. Thuringer stated that he would invite the ambassadors to the next Project & Finance Committee meeting.

Director Hinman noted the increase in unhoused on the report provided. Mr. Thuringer stated that things are happening on multiple levels around this issue.

Director Brown affirmed that the Ambassadors may need better guidance regarding what the DDA's priorities are. Director Lindemann stated that the Ambassadors may need additional information on resources for whom to contact regarding certain issues.

Director Fletcher requested a copy of the contract with the Downtown Ambassadors and clarification on where the funds to pay the contract are coming from.

Director Lindemann affirmed that business owners should be asked to assist in identifying priorities. Mr. Thuringer affirmed that he would assist with scheduling this.

3. Expansion of the Social District

Mr. Thuringer stated that this was also brought to the Northside Cultural Business District Authority (NCBDA) Board last month. The following four businesses would like to be included in the Social District:

- Brewery Outre
- Elysium
- Green Door Distilling
- Louie's Trophy House

The NCBDA Board has indicated that they would welcome this idea. The expansion of the district would allow folks to walk from one establishment to the other, whereas two social districts would not allow participants to bring alcoholic beverages from one district to another.

Director Breneman stated that he is fully supportive of this. He asked what the costs are that would be a barrier to this. Mr. Thuringer noted that a maintenance plan can be a barrier (trash pick-up, trash receptacles, etc.). Mr. Brown noted that the concentration of interested individuals is in the east end of the NCBDA. There was a discussion where the social district would be added.

Director Lindemann noted that the DDA dollars cannot be expended outside of their district. The Social District is done through the City, not the DDA. Any expansion would go to the City Commission for approval. Mr. Thuringer stated that he would report back to the Board on how this will go forward. Director Brown affirmed the importance of collaboration and consistency. There was discussion about whether businesses could self-fund some of the services. Mr. Thuringer noted that he is working with Attorney Wood on this.

4. Parking Report

Mr. Thuringer stated that Mission North, the parking consultant has provided an update which was included in the meeting packet. He noted that the parking sublease termination that was acted on at last month's meeting is going before the City Commission tonight. The City is also putting together an RFP for a new City Operator. Mr. Thuringer noted that the City is moving forward with this item, but it will take time. Director Brown stated that it was his understanding that pay stations and the transition to a parking plan that was approved five years ago would happen this year. He inquired about the delay. Mr. Thuringer stated that he has not been involved in the discussions in the past, but can look into these items. Director Brown noted that alignment opportunities have been missed for a better user experience.

Director Lindemann asked what the correct venue was to express their parking concerns. Mr. Thuringer stated that the Board is welcome to email him with their questions.

There was discussion regarding the complexity of the parking system and ways to make it simpler and more user-friendly. Mr. Thuringer stated that he could provide monthly reports.

Director Hinman asked for clarification regarding the ability to call 311 for all users. Mr. Thuringer stated that there is also a phone number that can be called for those outside the 269-area code.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. **Recommendation from Events & Marketing Committee to allocate $15,000 for the expansion of Beats on Bates and Workout Wednesdays.**

Director Brown stated that Beats on Bates & Workout Wednesdays have been phenomenally attended and there has also been a good response from the downtown businesses. An extension of these activities through September is being proposed. Additional sponsors are also being considered.

DIRECTOR FLETCHER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EVENTS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE TO ALLOCATE $15,000 FOR THE EXPANSION OF BEATS ON BATES AND WORKOUT WEDNESDAYS. DIRECTOR BRENEMAN SECONDED.

There was a question as to where these funds were coming from. Director Brown stated that Rebekah Kik was able to identify funds that were expiring and would be un-used that could be reallocated for this purpose.

NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. **Approve the allocation of $2500 for the creation of grants, of up to $500 each, to sponsor events in the Downtown area.**

Director Brown stated that at the last DDA Board meeting, downtown store owners came forward with information regarding “In the Zoo” events and requested funding for these events going forward ($500 per event). Engagement and attendance have been wonderful for these events.

Director Brown noted that cost-savings have been found in other areas around holiday events, and the Events and Marketing Committee has identified funds for reallocation. He stated that a process is being established with City Staff to prepare an intake form and to identify sponsorship tiers that will be available for either a pop-up event, one-day event, or multi-day event. The Committee will

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

then review applications. The request from In the Zoo is being reviewed as a multi-day pop-up event. An application process will be completed within the next 60-ish days. Director Breneman affirmed the importance of supporting downtown merchants and the work that they are doing.

It was affirmed that the language in this recommendation can accommodate the request from the Downtown Businesses.

DIRECTOR HOLLANDER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jessica Thompson, Bee Joyful Shop: Ms. Thompson thanked the Board for their support. Ms. Thompson stated that the Ambassadors are doing an excellent job and she appreciates them. She questioned whether re-usable social district cups could be utilized.

Chris Lampen-Crowell, Gazelle Sports: Shared concerns regarding Downtown Dollars and the new app. He also shared concerns regarding the loss of V&A Bootery in the downtown area. He suggested creating an Advisory Counsel that is tasked with providing a Merchandising Plan for Downtown Kalamazoo. He noted the importance of the visibility of all plans.

Becky Bil, Owner of Pop City Popcorn thanked the Board for their work in incorporating the ideas of downtown businesses.

G. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

1. Director Hinman shared that 269-337-8000 is the alternative number to call for 311.
2. Director Aardema stated that ground floor spaces in downtown buildings are a challenge and need to be a focus.
3. Director Brown thanked the Board for continuing to support activating the downtown.
4. Director Breneman stated that he appreciates the comments from the public.
5. Director Lloyd stated the importance of displaying all plans in a public place.

H. ADJOURNMENT

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 4:52 P.M.