

Agenda

Northside Cultural Business District Authority Board of Directors

City of Kalamazoo



Thursday, June 20, 2024

6:00 PM

Senior Ecuminical Center - 708 N. Burdick

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Action: Motion to approve the agenda)

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the minutes from the Northside Cultural Business District Authority Board meeting on May 16, 2024 (Action: Motion to approve)

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

E. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. None

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Planning Committee Assignment - (Combine Committees to ensure greater participation)
 - a. Economic Vitality and Organization
 - b. Design and Promotion
2. Historical Markers - Resident/Business Engagement

H. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

I. STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

J. ADJOURNMENT

NORTHSIDE CULTURAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY BOARD

May 16, 2024

A meeting of the Northside Cultural Business District Authority (NCDBA) Board of Directors was held on Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at 530 North Rose Street.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Mattie Jordan-Woods, Chad Dodd**, Kiar Gamsho, Marilyn Pulley, Tami Rey, Ricky Thrash

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Mayor David Anderson, Damian Henderson, Matthew Norman

Also present from the City of Kalamazoo were:

- Kevin Ford, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Coordinator
- Jacqueline (Jae) Slaby, Neighborhood Activator
- Shelby Donaldson, Permit Technician

** Arrived to the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken at 6:03 p.m., and it was determined that quorum did exist.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Director Pulley, seconded by Director Rey motioned to approve the agenda. A voice vote was taken, and the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF NCDBA MINUTES

Director Rey, seconded by Director Pulley, motioned to approve the minutes from April 18, 2024.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mia Sanchez, the Community Outreach Coordinator of the Institute of Public Scholarship, introduced herself. She stated she was there to observe and see where this organization would be able to help. They work in Arts, Humanities, and Science and have several other programs as well.

Director Jordan-Woods thanked Lou Bilancio from the Ecumenical Center for attending.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Director Jordan-Woods stated that on the agenda there is what is called the Ransom Street Cultural Monument Exercise and when the Northside Cultural Business District was started, they felt it important that the history of Northside residents and Northside businesses be visible for all to see. She then introduced

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Jae Slaby, the Neighborhood Activator for the City of Kalamazoo, who sent out a packet regarding the Ransom Street Cultural Monument Exercise. Ms. Slaby stated the packet included reflection questions regarding colors, style, and features of the monuments that the board prefers, and then she asked that the board decide how they want to have the discussion but added that this meeting is not about finalizing the details, but to get a sense of the direction that the board wants to go in and decide next steps.

Director Pulley stated she would like to the columns to be interactive for the hearing and sight impaired and added she likes one on the first page and the one on the second page with the “crown” on top. Ms. Slaby asked Director Pulley to explain why she chose those, and Director Pulley said she's been other places and she's seen the ones with the tops on them and believes, in the future, if you want to add something to them you can. She also stated she likes the one on the first page that says “epilogue” on it because the shape of it reminded her of a church.

Director Gashmo stated he likes the cubed one on the first page because it has a lot of information on it and Director Pulley said the way it's structured; you would be able to do the same thing with the first one.

Director Jordan-Woods wanted to address what Director Pulley said about the interaction with the pillars. She stated that because a lot of people are into electronics, there could be a UR code that could be scanned in case the voice part goes out, the information could be scanned to the phone and people would still be able to read the information. She said they're calling them cultural monuments but the committee can come up with another name, they can also have an event and let the residents come up with a name for them. She added that people that were coming to the “My Neighborhood” meetings talked about a museum but there wasn't enough money for it, and this is a way for people to know about the history, such as making sure people know about the ecumenical center and what that building stood for, it would be right there. Director Pulley added the QR codes would also allow pictures to be pulled up and could change with the times.

Ms. Slaby said a brief background was shared in the packet and asked if everyone was familiar with the reason behind the cultural monuments and the board said they were, Ms. Slaby then asked for other thoughts about the layout, placement, colors, materials for the monuments, anything the board prefers, then they will work with a group to design them and figure out what would be needed to do that. Director Jordan-Woods wanted it to be made clear that that the committee would work with a design group and they don't want the city to make that choice. Ms. Slaby agreed and added that anything that would go in the right of way needs to be reviewed by the city to make sure that it's something that won't explode or fall apart, and added that it has to be engineered correctly so that it can be put into the right of way in case it got hit by a car, etc...Director Thrash added that they would need to be weather proof and Director Kai asked if there would be room on there for Braille and the committee agreed it would be a good idea, Ms. Slaby added the goal would be to have different multi-media features that would make it inclusive for all people to enjoy them, including those with disabilities and different types of readers she added that they could keep Braille as an option. Director Pulley asked if it's written in stone how many monuments there would be and Ms. Slaby stated, as mentioned in the packet, based on this current construction project, there was 34 proposed from Walbridge to Westnedge, because that was the scope of the reconstruction project happening now, and the 34 locations are based on on-street parking, trees, and utility poles and that is the number they found would be appropriately installed on the south side of Ransom. She added that this is with the understanding that this is something that can be throughout the Northside Cultural Business District Authority, including multiple streets, because Ransom Street within the NCBDA stretches past Walbridge and goes all the way to the River, so if the board is looking to add more within this phase, let the city know and they will look at what would be feasible in the right of way from an engineering standpoint.

Director Jordan-Woods said when talking about this, Ransom was chosen as the first street, and that means the entire Northside Cultural Business District, which goes to the circle where Harrison is, and given the understanding that the city said they were within the realm of the construction, and they voted to have these pillars before the \$12 million Ransom project came up. She added that the city uses northside property to get grants, but it's still the northside so it needs to be made clear that the Northside Cultural Business District goes all the way down to where it is. She said the committee has the ability to borrow money and

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go after grants to ensure the things they would like to see to make the Northside Business District corridor successful, and to make it reflect the culture that is here. She said she understands what Ms. Slaby is saying, that they stopped it at Walbridge, but it wasn't supposed to stop there, it was to go to the roundabout. Ms. Slaby said they didn't stop at Walbridge, but there are construction plans for this reconstruction project that has a scope and the utility upgrades are from Walbridge to Westnedge so when they're asking about the locations, they only know the locations they can put within the construction plans, which is 34 and if they want an increase, that is up to the board to decide, and the city is here to listen to what they want to do.

Ms. Slaby wanted to go back to the style of the pillars and said her understanding is they want to tell multiple stories and Director Gamsho stated it depends on how many things are highlighted which could be historical facts, a historical church, a historical road, a historical tree...Ms. Slaby said initially the idea with Director Jordan-Woods was to lift up the legacy of businesses on the north side and to open it up to specific people and events that may be significant to the neighborhood as well, but with an emphasis on promoting historical businesses. Director Jordan-Woods stated it was to highlight businesses that were owned by black people, but there were also people in the neighborhood that fought for things, but she stated it was imperative that they talk about the content and who was going to choose the content, and said they don't need other people to choose the content and Ms. Slaby said NCBDA will choose the content they want to know what the board wants and they will put it on there. Director Gamsho if there will be space for current events that would be interchangeable, and Director Jordan-Woods said that is what Ms. Slaby is trying to get to and Director Pulley added people would need to be trained on how to keep up with the things that are going on in the neighborhood and Ms. Slaby said one way to do it is to have a digital component and you can direct it to a website, if you want to make the physical monument interchangeable too, that would come down to whatever group designs it, they would have to incorporate it. Director Jordan-Woods stated she felt that would be significant to the community because of all of the happenings throughout the year, such as Juneteenth. She said they will need to have another meeting and asked if anyone else saw a pillar that they liked. Director Pulley asked Ms. Slaby what the timeline is and asked if she was referring to what is being done underground now, and Ms. Slaby said yes, the groundwork is being laid out, and the timeline is at the committee's pace. Director Jordan-Woods explained that what they are referring to as the groundwork is that in the NACD meetings, they asked that they put in the underground wiring so they could have things lit up on Ransom like they do at Bronson Park around Christmas time because the city is lit up everywhere else, but looking to the North, it's dark. She stated that Director Pulley, Ms. Slaby, Mr. Ford, and herself met with some staff at Western to ask them if they were willing to work with them, because they have access to a \$25,000 grant and they have some of the history, and Ms. Slaby said to be clear, the grant is specific to the content development, so the packet is split into different phases so they need to think about what stories they want to tell, the construction of the pillars, and the maintenance of the pillars, so the \$25,000 grant, which is through the State Library Association, is specific to content development and for clarity Director Pulley asked if it was to train the trainers and Ms. Slaby said yes, if that's what they want, it will be part of the proposal. Director Jordan-Woods said Director Pulley and herself wanted to make sure that the Northside residents will not only give their opinions but be trained as ambassadors.

Ms. Slaby said so now that it's clear that the committee will decide who designs it and the construction, she guesses the city has no role in it and Director Jordan-Woods said she's not saying the city doesn't have a role in it but the board wants to be active participants in it and have decision making powers. Ms. Slaby asked if, at this time, do they want to incorporate the bricks that they are pulling out of Ransom Street because the thought was how to incorporate them, and can they be incorporated into construction of the cultural monuments because the city has to have a role, but since the committee wants to decide on that, she wants to focus on making sure that they're keeping enough bricks because that will cost money, so a decision needs to be made on how many will be kept and stored. Director Pulley said it sounds like there is a timeline, as she asked before and Ms. Slaby said only regarding the bricks because they need to get a sense of do they want to incorporate the bricks and is there a sense of what that looks like because one example was of a monument made completely out of bricks. She asked if that's the direction they wanted to go in or would they only want to make the base out of bricks and Director Dodd stated he thought they

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were keeping the bricks for sidewalks and Ms. Slaby stated they talked about doing pavers at crosswalks and Director Jordan-Woods said they abandoned that because there weren't enough bricks to be saved, but they can have one of the bottom portion of one of the designs the bricks for 36 pillars, but Ms. Slaby said they can go up to 40, they just have to have an idea of how many bricks they need. Director Thrash asked if all of the monuments would look alike and Director Jordan-Woods said yes, they want them all to look alike Director Thrash said that they would need a lot of content for 36 pillars and Director Jordan-Woods stated that they have the content, but others have been allowed to make it disappear, which is the point of having activities and events with past and current residents. Director Rey added that she isn't sure they should discuss content first, the focus should be on design first, then talk about the bricks, then decide how they're going to pay for it and content should be the last thing they talk about and Ms. Slaby said that depends on how they want to showcase the content because that might dictate the design and because Director Jordan-Woods has a thought on providing audio, so they would need to figure out how to incorporate the audio which could mean oral recordings, and when constructing the pillars you have to take into account space for speakers, wires, which would look completely different then a pillar that just had signs on it. Director Rey stated that to figure all of this out in 30 minutes is ridiculous, and can't be done, but she likes the idea of using some of the brick at the bottom, middle, and top (she referenced the third figure on the first page) and Director Gamsho stated they could put LED lighting on the top layer so that they would light up on the four sides maybe during Christmas, which would attract people to it. Director Rey said they need to figure out how much brick to save and Ms. Slaby said the city can figure out the calculation if they want to do the base and Director Jordan-Woods answered a question posed by Director Dodd and added the city engineers will pick out the bricks and won't pick out ones that are deteriorating and the only part of the monument that will be made out of brick is what it's sitting on, like the bottom part can be brick and the rest of it steel, and Ms. Slaby added most likely there will be a concrete footing that will go underground with a pole coming out of it, and then the base is not a real base it's surrounding and Director Jordan-Woods said it would state bricks from Ransom Street are incorporated in this design. Director Rey asked if the part of Ransom Street the meeting is on was made of brick and Ms. Slaby stated that at one time the whole street was brick. Director Gamsho said a standard brick is 8" x 4" the city has done the calculations on if it was a full 3 ½ foot monument made out of brick, so they can figure out the base.

Director Jordan-Woods asked if they will be adding two or four more because they have to figure out where the money is coming from because there is no money set aside for this and they need to figure out if they are going to borrow money or go after grants from the Kalamazoo Foundation or the Gilmore Foundation, and Director Dodd said he thinks they should wait until they get through the design process and Ms. Slaby said Director Dodd has a valid point because they haven't decided what the audio looks like or any of the other features and that plays a role in construction and maintenance. Director Jordan-Woods stated they want to make sure that they put all of the pillars from one end of the Northside Cultural Business District to the other end and they will only be on one side of the street. Director Dodd said to his point, what if Director Rey said they should be digital, and if everyone agrees, they can start to figure out a budget because people are more apt to read digital screens than still words. Director Jordan-Woods said, as Director Rey brought up, there doesn't need to be a lot of content, but they can incorporate both because there are people that still read, and people who will want to use the QR codes. She said they don't have to give up anything, but they want to make sure that everyone in the community has access. She said it's important to talk about adding the pillars now because when it comes to budget and talking to people about giving money, they need to tell them so do they want to agree on 34 or 38 pillars so they can also set aside bricks for that? Director Rey asked how they know 34 is enough and Director Jordan-Woods said everything was laid out and they stopped it at Walbridge, so adding four more will get them passed Walbridge, and she wants it noted in the minutes that they are looking at 38 pillars. Ms. Slaby said at one time it was mentioned that they want to see this throughout the entire district and Director Jordan-Woods stated the committee agreed to start with Ransom and when it's time to move on to North Street, it may have a different set of pillars, but the focus is Ransom and Ms. Slaby wanted it recognized that future pillars may not incorporate the bricks because enough weren't saved beyond the 38. Director Pulley asked that will all of the

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underground work done on Ransom need to be done on North and Ms. Slaby said it depends on the design, so if certain features will be incorporated, it may require electrical and the work would be needed and Director Jordan-Woods added they would need to look for different money because right now, the money is here on Ransom, and the design on North Street may be different but the focus needs to remain on Ransom and Director Pulley suggested starting with one design and ending with another and Director Rey said they can keep the same design so if a corner doesn't have electrical, they can just have words and pictures so they all look alike and Director Jordan-Woods stated they can also go after grants to put in electrical and they lucked out that the city, because they had put so much money into the riverfront and torn it up twice with tax dollars, said "Ok, we will still do something on Ransom." and the committee suggested that while they're doing something on Ransom, put in the infrastructure so that there can be lighting, it would just be a different grant for North Street. Ms. Slaby said the city isn't doing Ransom Street because Harrison circle was dug up twice, the city is doing it because the sewer main is at max capacity and Director Jordan-Woods added it was also because several people went to Commission saying that the city keeps going past where most of the current residents live because they were going up and down where PlazaCorp owns property and they were asking how they can do that when they hadn't even done Ransom, so it did have something to do with residents speaking up and asking why the city wasn't going where most of the residents and there's a grocery store. Director Jordan-Woods asked if city staff at the meeting had everything we need and is a vote necessary on the design and Ms. Slaby stated it was only to facilitate a conversation amongst the committee to figure out who they want to design it and what it looks like and she wanted to know about the bricks and how many would they need to be saved and to record in the minutes there will only be enough bricks salvaged to incorporate on Ransom Street, and not for future pillars. Director Jordan-Woods asked what would happen if the city said they don't have enough bricks to incorporate into 38 pillars and Ms. Slaby said the there is enough because they saved enough bricks to incorporate into 34 pillars made completely of brick. Director Jordan-Woods asked the committee if they want all the bricks saved and Ms. Slaby stated it will cost to store them, it just depends on how many and Director Jordan-Woods asked for an explanation about the cost because they were told they were going to save the bricks so that they could be incorporated and Ms. Slaby said it cost money to pull them in a certain way, cleaning them up, putting them on pallets, and storing them, which is why they need to get a number now so that they can talk to the contractor and tell them how to pull them and she wants it noted that if they save as many bricks as they can but they run out before all of the pillars in the district are completed then that doesn't mean somebody did something wrong, it just means they ran out of bricks. Director Jordan-Woods stated once they know how many bricks were saved, they can revisit how they're going to design the monuments, she then asked Ms. Slaby if she has everything she needs and Ms. Slaby replied yes and at some point, the committee will figure out content, who designs it, who will pay for it, and installation. Director Jordan-Woods said she wanted to be clear that they want involvement from the city to assist them, which can include grant writing because she asked David Anderson, and he said the city staff can write grants for this. She reiterated she wanted to make it clear that they are not saying that they don't want the city involved in picking out an engineer or designer, they're saying that they want to make the decision on who gets hired and they were told by Mayor Anderson that the city grant writers can assist in helping write grants and they may ask for assistance from the city to put together an RFP to designers. She mentioned Ms. Slaby wrote up a summary for Western stating what the district is and there were certain elements that said that residents were making decisions and not leaving it up to other people. Director Pulley asked who some of people are who attended the meeting and Director Jordan-Woods pointed out one of the people in attendance was Mr. Bilancio who works at the Ecumenical Center. She stated he wanted to get involved because he thought the project is a great idea, she also said that is why she wanted to have community involvement because she didn't want the decisions to rest solely with the board.

Director Thrash asked questions regarding the timeline and Ms. Slaby stated that because this is the board's project, they can set their own timeline and Director Jordan-Woods added that she wanted to have committees regarding the project and have the meetings every other month. She said she wants the committees to contain people who work and/or live on the northside and added that they should have a timeline of when they want to have an RFP put together because if a grant writer is going to write a grant,

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they will need some sort of guideline. She then asked the board if they can have committee assignments and come back next month to talk about what they worked on. She asked if there were any more comments and Director Thrash stated he liked Director Gamsho's idea regarding the LED lights and Director Gamsho said they would be low maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Committee Formation:

Director Jordan-Woods asked the committee if it was ok if she contacted people and asked if they would be open to serving on a committee and the chair would get with the people, set the date and let city staff know when the meetings would be. She stated the city has offered their offices and said she believes they can also meet at the Ecumenical Center, as well as some other places. She said a lot of work can be done before the meetings and that would help narrow down timelines.

2. Step Aside Request:

Mr. Ford there's a potential project, he believes, on Willard Street. He explained he's been trying to gather information on how it works, but Brownfields are a specific type of TIF, like the NCBDA district has, but a developer would come to the group, do a presentation and request a step aside where the NCBDA would step aside and allow them to capture whatever they need to within a time frame, then the remaining time the NCBDA would capture the remaining value. He added the project on Willard isn't in phase two, but if they request a step aside he would set it up for the developer to speak before the board and he would provide them with information, then they would need to decide but it's in the district and according to his sources, that's how a step aside works. He added that going through Brownfield is a process and it's still early so when the developer gets to the part of having to request it Mr. Ford will set it up. Director Jordan-Woods wanted to know if the NCBDA votes against giving them the step aside, can Brownfield give it to them anyway and Mr. Ford said he doesn't know. Director Jordan-Woods said she wants to know why they would come to the board if the board has no power and asked if Mr. Ford can get that information for them and added if Brownfield can do whatever they want, she doesn't want the boards time wasted and said she feels it would be insulting to do so and said if the developer is working with Brownfield, the board is being kept in the dark since they knew nothing about it. She said she is only speaking for herself. She asked for more comments and Director Gamsho added the biggest thing is to keep their TIF intact and to capture it, but if they are pushing through the development, the property value is probably worth 10 times that and Director Jordan-Woods said that is her point because new development generates dollars for the committee to be able to spend district improvements she added if the committee doesn't have any control, don't act like they do. Director Jordan-Woods asked Mr. Ford when the boards TIF ends and stated she thinks she saw 2035. She asked if there were any more questions about the step aside and the benefits. Mr. Ford said it was just put on his radar and he wanted to give the board a head's up and he doesn't believe they're in phase two yet, but it could happen and he will share when he learns more about it.

COMMUNICATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

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Director Henderson, seconded by Director Pulley motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Submitted by:

Shelby Donaldson, Permit Technician

Approved on: _____

DRAFT