

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2024, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson, Curt Aardema, Stephanie Hinman, Susan Lindemann, Clarence Lloyd, Jessica Thompson, Matt Hollander

ABSENT: Jeff Breneman, Kwame Gyimah

STAFF: Paul Thuringer, Meghan Behymer, Chelsie Downs-Hubbard, Erin Hahn

OTHER: Adam Charette, Steve Glista

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:06 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson
Curt Aardema
Stephanie Hinman
Susan Lindemann
Clarence Lloyd
Jessica Thompson
Matt Hollander

ABSENT: Jeff Breneman
Kwame Gyimah

EXCUSED:

THE JUNE 17, 2024, ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ARE RECORDED.

Director Lindemann welcomed the new Downtown Coordinator, Meghan Behymer. Paul Thuringer stated that there will be a transition period until about September.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

DIRECTOR AARDEMA MOVED TO ADOPT THE JUNE 17, 2024 AGENDA AS AMENDED. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR HINMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 20, 2024 MINUTES. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

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D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Finance Report

Steve Vicenzi was not present to share the finance report. It was determined that there were no significant updates and that the report was self-explanatory.

MAYOR ANDERSON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT. DIRECTOR AARDEMA SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Downtown Ambassadors Presentation – Adam Charette

Adam Charette of the Downtown Ambassadors was present to give a presentation about the program. Mr. Charette presented a synopsis of the work the ambassadors do along with a list of statistics gathered during the month of May 2024. The statistics were divided into four categories: cleaning, hospitality, safety, and outreach. Mr. Charette stated that with the introduction of several new staff members, he hopes to have increased bandwidth to do more weed removal and power washing of sidewalks.

There was a discussion about panhandling being a city ordinance violation, specifically when done in a bike or traffic lane. Mayor Anderson clarified that the city ordinance does not see panhandling in a bike or traffic lane as a city ordinance violation, but it may be considered a traffic violation, and that panhandling in groups or after dark is not permitted. Mr. Charette said the Ambassadors' main concern regarding panhandling is that it does not disturb downtown visitors.

There was also a discussion about the purpose of the statistics, with several Directors voicing concerns that the data needs to be shared with the right people to make changes, especially regarding the unhoused population. Mr. Charette explained that the Block-by-Block program is used in over 140 cities nationwide, and that one such city that has had great success in alleviating the unhoused population is Milwaukee. Directors Lloyd and Thompson suggested the Ambassadors reach out and learn from other communities like Milwaukee to gain insight into how they used the data to implement change. Director Hollander stated that the discussion of how to use this data should be continued at the Executive Committee meeting.

3. Committee Reports

Events and Marketing Committee

Director Thompson stated that the Committee touched on RFPs that need to go out next year, worked on proactive marketing and website updates for upcoming events, and approved funding for the Sounds of the Zoo music festival. Director Thompson also stated that the Committee decided to alter the Downtown Kalamazoo logo by removing the word "partnership," and Director Lloyd confirmed that this is a short-term solution to developing a new logo.

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Project & Finance Committee

The committee reviewed the financial report and did not have anything additional to share.

Recruitment & Retention Committee

Director Hollander shared that the Committee is meeting this week and will have more to discuss at the next board meeting. They have been busy getting data and information into a workable format. Director Hollander stated that he has been meeting with landlords in the downtown core over the past few weeks and is continuing to try to connect with other landlords and retailers in the community.

Executive Committee

Director Lindemann stated that the Committee met with Adam Charette previously, asking him to join this meeting to present to board members. There was a discussion about adding the cost of recruitment/retention to the next Executive Committee agenda.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Request for Support Letter to EGLE for Grant Application

Legal counsel Steve Glista stated that there is an opportunity for the city to apply for the EGLE grant that would help fund the demolition and environmental abatement of the former public safety building at 116 W Cedar Street. Mayor Anderson inquired if this grant would take away a Brownfield credit opportunity for a future development. Director Hollander stated that it would not close the door for the Brownfield TIF agreement, and that it is similar to what was done with The Creamery. Steve Glista stated that the application deadline would be a quick turnaround as it is due in July.

DIRECTOR HOLLANDER MOTIONED TO SIGN THE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE EGLE GRANT APPLICATION. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. DIRECTOR AARDEMA AND DIRECTOR HINMAN ABSTAINED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. There were no members of the public present.

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

1. Director Lloyd asked for clarification on what the DDA and DEGA are responsible for, and what the city is responsible for. Paul Thuringer stated that staff will work on locating the document that details the division of responsibilities for the next meeting.

H. ADJOURNMENT

1. Director Lindemann **ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 4:06 P.M.**