

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

PRESENT: Curt Aardema, David Anderson, Clarence Lloyd, Trisha Kidd, Stanley Steppes, Jessica Thompson

EXCUSED: Rick Searing, Jeff Breneman

ABSENT: Kwame Gyimah

STAFF: Erin Hahn (Community Investment Administrative Assistant); Jessica Wood (Legal Counsel)

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR AARDEMA CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:01 P.M.

PRESENT: Curt Aardema, David Anderson, Clarence Lloyd, Trisha Kidd, Stanley Steppes, Jessica Thompson

EXCUSED: Rick Searing, Jeff Breneman

ABSENT: Kwame Gyimah

THE JULY 21, 2025 ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES IS RECORDED.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

DIRECTOR THOMPSON MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE JULY 21, 2025 AGENDA AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR LLOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING ON JUNE 16, 2025. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report – May 2025

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The Board elected to postpone the acceptance of the May 2025 financial report until the August 18 meeting so that Ms. Behymer would be present to provide an explanation of the report.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Rose Street Plaza MOU Amendment

Director Kidd excused herself from the room for this discussion and vote due to a conflict of interest.

Director Aardema explained that the Board is being asked to amend the existing Rose Street Plaza MOU to include IronWorks as the corporate entity name, rather than PlazaCorp, as previously listed.

MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE ROSE STREET PLAZA MOU TO REFLECT THE IRONWORKS CORPORATE ENTITY NAME. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. 2025 DDA Millage

Director Aardema explained that the DDA levy has been in place for many years and must be reauthorized annually by the DDA board to allow the City to collect and distribute it on the board's behalf. Although the City Commission has already taken action, board members agreed it was appropriate to formally ratify the measure and authorize the board chair to sign the necessary documents.

DIRECTOR LLOYD MOTIONED TO RATIFY AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY'S 2025 LEVY OF THE VOTED DDA MILLAGE AS REFLECTED ON THE RELATED ATTACHMENTS FROM THE CITY'S FRO AND AUTHORIZING AND RATIFYING THE BOARD CHAIR TO SIGN NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION. DIRECTOR STEPPES SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

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During director comments, several key themes emerged:

- **Downtown Experience & Vitality:** Board members praised recent downtown vibrancy, noting an increase in foot traffic, community events, and positive experiences from residents and visitors alike.
- **Strategic Planning:** Members requested the three-year strategic plan be sent out to the full board again for further review and discussion, acknowledging the importance of continued long-range planning.
- **Development Oversight:** Several board members emphasized the need for the DDA to have a stronger, more strategic role in evaluating development proposals, especially those involving financial incentives such as step-asides, tax abatements, or funding support.
- **Parking Policy & Park Kalamazoo:** Several members expressed deep concerns about the disconnect between the Board and Park Kalamazoo. Issues raised included aggressive enforcement, lack of grace toward visitors, and the negative impact on the downtown experience. Members emphasized the need for strategic alignment and recommended inviting both Park Kalamazoo and the city's Blueprint Parking consultants to future meetings.

Bates Alley & Infrastructure: Questions were raised about who is responsible for maintaining and funding infrastructure like Bates Alley decks and downtown banners. Members agreed these topics deserve formal agenda time to ensure long-term sustainability and clarity for new businesses.

H. ADJOURNMENT

DIRECTOR AARDEMA ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 5:18 PM.