
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Thursday, August 21, 2025
Community Planning and Economic Development
245 N. Rose Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jason Novotny; Sharon Ferraro; Andrew Schipper; Michael Gurnee; Rachel Bair; Scott Petersen; *T.J. Ward; Lucas Middleton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alonzo Wilson; Kyle Gulau; Eddie Warr

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Jamie McCarthy (Development Manager); Jared Chambers (Business Specialist); Heidi Waffle (Brownfield Project Assistant); Erin Hahn (Community Investment Administrative Assistant); Bobby Boyd (Economic Development Supervisor)

Meeting was called to order at 7:49 AM by Chair Novotny.

MOTION TO EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS: Director Bair moved to excuse absent members; seconded by Director Middleton. Motion approved by voice vote unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Director Bair moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Director Gurnee. Motion approved by voice vote unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Director Ferraro moved approval of the minutes from the meeting of June 26, 2025; seconded by Director Gurnee. Motion approved by voice vote unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of a recommendation to the City Clerk's Office for a 2-year approval of the Adult Use Retailer Permit to 2233 N Burdick, Inc. dba Levels, contingent on the Applicant correcting the tax and zoning deficiencies by August 31, 2025. If the Applicant fails to correct the deficiencies by that date, then the recommendation is approval of a 90-day probationary renewal.

*Director Ward entered the meeting at 7:52 A.M.

Mr. Chambers updated the board that the business still owes taxes on a related parcel and he anticipates they would pay that before the end of the week. In regard to their zoning deficiencies, they had replaced the dead shrubs at the front of their location but they were not large enough for the zoning ordinance. They should have the shrubs replaced by the end of the month.

Director Ferraro noted on page 1 they did not check the box for the type of permit.

Mr. Chambers said it is common that applicants miss that checkbox, but he did confirm with the business what the permit was.

Director Ferraro stated thinking as a historian, if someone comes back to look at the documents decades from now and has questions, it is nice to have the paper trail be complete.

Director Gurnee moved approval of a recommendation to the City Clerk's Office for a 2-year approval of the Adult Use Retailer Permit to 2233 N Burdick, Inc. dba Levels, contingent on the Applicant correcting the tax and zoning deficiencies by August 31, 2025. If the Applicant fails to correct the deficiencies by that date, then the recommendation is approval of a 90-day probationary renewal; seconded by Director Middleton.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of a recommendation to the City Clerk's Office of a 2-year renewal of the 1 Adult Use Class C Grower and 1 Medical Class C Grower Permits to Seven Point Supply, LLC.

Director Ferraro moved approval of a recommendation to the City Clerk's Office of a 2-year renewal of the 1 Adult Use Class C Grower and 1 Medical Class C Grower Permits to Seven Point Supply, LLC; seconded by Director Ward.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of an Economic Initiative Fund Loan for Main Street East, LLC in the amount of \$96,000 to support the build-out of an entrepreneur incubator and co-working space.

Mr. Connor Sampson, representative of Main Street East LLC and Treystar, said they are working on building out a space for Start-Up Zoo, a nonprofit that supports entrepreneurs and founders. It is a collaborative work environment that they currently have in the office building and they are looking at expanding to meet the community needs. The project totals about \$960,000. They will be using smaller, local construction companies to complete the project. They are looking for a loan to help fund this work.

Director Schipper asked how many spaces will be available.

Mr. Sampson said it won't be like traditional co-working space. It will be a mix. It is hard to give an exact number because there is a lot of open work space and 4-person office space. The vision is like a membership where you can also use other amenities available.

Director Schipper asked how many are on a wait list currently to use the space.

Mr. Sampson said he knows there is good interest in the community, but does not know if Start-Up Zoo has a number yet.

Director Bair asked how Start-Up Zoo services compare to what Can-Do Kalamazoo is currently doing, which is also raising funds for a coworking space.

Mr. Sampson said they work together and operate a little bit differently. He said Start-Up Zoo is trying to create something that does not currently exist in Kalamazoo. He referenced Bamboo coworking company and an open workspace as opposed to hard-walled offices.

Director Ferraro mentioned KNAC is also pursuing a type of collaborative working space. She hopes there will not end up being an oversupply of start-up space.

Mr. Sampson talked about examples of different customers and their needs.

**Director Middleton moved approval of an Economic Initiative Fund Loan for Main Street East, LLC in the amount of \$96,000 to support the build-out of an entrepreneur incubator and co-working space; seconded by Director Ferraro.
A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

Mr. Chambers introduced Mr. Bobby Boyd, the new Economic Development Supervisor, and explained he will be the new EDC board liaison.

Mr. Boyd shared he is excited to be working with the board.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 8:03 AM by Chair Novotny.

Signature

Printed Name/Chair



Heidi Waffle/Recording Clerk