

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors
July 20, 2021
Zoom Meeting

The July meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Carolann Ayers, Margene Buckhave, John Casey, Aaron Cozart, DJ Boyd (Houghton County), Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Greg Presley, Shawn Riley, Mary Starring, Mayor Brian Turnbull*

Absent:

Also Present: *Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/DDA Marketing & Communications Director, Marilyn Price/City Council, Dave Gutman/Resident, Barbara Morowski-Brown/City Council, Fred Sheill/Resident*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Presley wants to make a correction to the June 15th minutes and will do it later in the meeting.

Motion by McKindles, seconded by Turnbull to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda, with the exception of the June 15th meeting minutes. **Motion carried unanimously.**

EV CHARGING STATIONS PROPOSAL

Ward said the DDA and DPW met with representatives of Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V), the City's Engineering firm, two weeks ago to discuss the possibility of having F&V assist with the upgrade of the City/DDA's EV charging Equipment. The upgrade would include adding a method of payment to the chargers so that the DDA will no longer pay the bill for the energy consumption which is currently running about \$5,000 a year. F&V sent a staff member out of their Grand Rapids office that is knowledgeable about EV charging stations and would be involved in the project.

F&V reviewed a list of area vendors provided by Detroit Edison and reached out to several of them that appeared to have the qualifications that the DDA/City required. After discussing the DDA/City project F&V recommended vendor, Hage Auto out of

Detroit. Hage Auto has teamed up with Enel X Red E Charging. Hage would assist the DDA/City in acquisition, installation and maintenance of the charging units. A pay station would be installed and the DDA would get a portion of the revenue paid by users. In addition to the two charging stations behind 120 W. Main Street, Hage is suggesting that the DDA/City install charging stations at the two locations on Main Street where the infrastructure is already available and add 4-6 new charging stations in the lower level of the Cady Street Parking Deck. The contract would be for 10 years and the DDA would receive 10% of the revenue. Hage is available to start the project as soon as the contract is executed.

DDA staff circulated a copy of the proposal to the Sustainability Committee for input. It was suggested by City Administration that the proposal, including the location of the proposed new charging stations be reviewed by the DDA's Parking Committee. DDA staff will set up a meeting as soon as possible with the Parking Committee.

Sullivan asked how many EV charging stations are being recommended and if the contract is for 10 years. Ward replied Hage is recommending 10 EV charging stations and their contract is for 10 years. Ward said you can get out of the contract early but need to stay in for at least 3 years in order to avoid penalty fees. Ward said she agrees that 10 years is a long time and the DDA would try to shorten the duration of the contract. Casey said the parking committee will discuss how many spots are actually needed and how long the contract should last. Ward said the DDA would like to explore EV charging stations for ebikes with Hage as well.

Ward said Hage would be responsible for getting our charging stations on EV maps. They provide full service and repair which would take the responsibility off the DDA staff. Presley asked if we have sufficient infrastructure on Main & Center to accommodate EV Chargers in parallel parking spaces. Casey said that most EV stations are in parking lots and decks. Buckhave asked if the charging stations would only be available for electrical cars. Ward said yes. Buckhave expressed concern about taking parking away when it is already difficult to park in downtown.

Buckhave said that she has also seen more overnight parking in the lot behind her and whether they have permits to stay all night and day. Casey said that based on what the Parking Committee has discussed in the past, overnight permit holders do have the ability to park day and night. Ward said she would ask Chief Maciag to clarify the rules on overnight parking and would get back to the Board.

Gutman commented that the main draw for installing the EV charging stations on West Main Street was that they are already wired for use. There are no other spots in downtown that are currently prepared for this purpose. Casey said there is no advantage to going to a prepared location because Hage is covering all the installation costs on the new units.

PROJECT UPDATES

Ward said the DDA is working on getting the electricity for the lights in the Pods and Stands on a timer so the lights do not stay on all evening. Derek Blair, owner of Northville Gallery has reached out to the City/DDA to suggest that the DDA install wall mounted fans to the Pods. Blair has offered for his business to sponsor the installation. The fans are approximately \$350/each and there are 6 Pods for a total of \$2,100. DDA staff has begun to search for the correct fans. The pods already have outlets in them, so once wall mounted the fans can be plugged in. The DDA should consider installing fans in the 4 Stands as well.

Ward said the DDA received an email from a resident with a concern for the outdoor dining areas not being handicapped accessible. The structures area enclosed by planters and fencing that makes it difficult to access the dining area. The DDA sent an email to all of the restaurant owners providing them with information on the issue and a date that the outdoor dining would need to be modified per the building official Brent Strong. No changes were made. Strong reached out to the DDA last week and followed up with the 3 business owners who had not yet complied.

The DDA has been working with Fleis & Vanden Brink on beautifying the entrances. It has been determined that only one type 3 barricade is required at each intersection with the current road closed signage. DPW confirmed that they have additional barricades at DPW that are newer and in better shape that we could swap out with the units that are there. This alone would be an improvement. No additional signage is required and no flashing lights are required. They made some minor suggestions on a type of barricade that could be used to replace the police cars. Before purchases for new equipment are made, DDA staff wanted to have a discussion with the Executive Committee about how long the streets might remain closed.

DDA staff has been working with both Begonia Brothers and Don Green Electrical to secure estimates for the purchase and installation of overhead Tivoli lights similar to Town Square. The DDA would like to use the same vendor that was used for Town Square and the recent replacement of the Town Square lights. The DDA received Green Electric's estimate of \$115,000 on Wednesday for both Main and Center Streets. Presley asked if a pattern for the lights was provided by Green Electrical. Presley feels that the Design Committee should weigh in on the pattern for the lights before any decisions are made. Riley questioned whether the \$115,000 estimate was for just Main or both Main and Center? Ward agreed the proposal was not clear and would ask Green Electric. Sullivan asked if the anchors for the lighting would be on the front facades of all the buildings. Ward said yes, they would be on the front of the buildings. Sullivan is concerned that over the past few years the downtown has had trouble with building facades falling off. Sullivan said the City could be blamed for the damage if the lights are deemed responsible. Sullivan also said it will be time consuming and costly getting an easement from all the building owners. Ayers cautioned the Board to be cautious concerning the DDA budget given all the other projects that may be forthcoming.

The DDA has also been exploring retractable bollards as a solution for street closures if they were to remain closed indefinitely. Chris Rizik recently sent the DDA information about a bollard system that moves on a track to open traffic. Ward said we open the streets several times a week so the flexibility of this system would be welcomed. The 4 sets of 6 bollards were approximately \$500,000. DDA is also investigating retractable bollards that can be recessed into the street, flush with the street, when needed. This can be done through a hydraulic lift or manually. This seems to be a less costly option. In addition, Fleis & Vanden Brink suggested adding barriers to replace the police cars and that can be moved when needed by tipping the units on the side and moving them like a dolly. Ward said it is hard to spend large amounts of money until we know for sure if the street closures are permanent.

Ayers wondered what the process will be to determine if the streets will remain closed. Riley said that at the Executive Committee they discussed doing another Community survey in the 4th quarter. Riley said the plan is to reach out to all the stake holders before moving forward. Ward said we need to experience what the 4th quarter will look like now that people have less covid restrictions and can dine inside restaurants. Starring said with the new covid variants we could remain closed.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

a. Design Committee:

Ward said the Design Committee will start meeting again regularly and they will have a report for the next meeting.

b. Marketing Committee:

Riley said the Marketing Committee talked about the Arts and Acts event and how it was received in the new location. Ward said the new location was problematic to the library and the Community Center so most likely not a permanent solution. The Chamber is beginning to plan the Heritage Festival, the scope and scale will be smaller this year. Turnbull said the 4th of July Parade was shorter but was well attended, the community enjoyed having the parade back.

c. Parking Committee:

None

d. Organizational Committee:

Ward said only 4 applications were received for the new Administrative Assistant position. Ward and Johnson interviewed one of the candidates. The candidate has a background in marketing so would be a good fit for the open position. We are doing background checks and plan to offer her the job if all goes well.

e. Economic Development Committee:

Cozart said the Economic Development Committee (EDC) met in late June to discuss the Exchange Bar & Grill's rooftop deck and other renovations. The committee had a favorable response to their drawings and plan to prepare

feedback for the Planning Commission to review. Cozart said there has been some talk about the Northville Downs project moving forward again but EDC is waiting to get involved until the preapplication process is complete.

f. Sustainability Committee:

Riley said that the Committee has no additional updates but their next meeting is on July 29th.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Presley said he will address the issue with the June 15th minutes at the August Board meeting.

Motion by Turnbull, seconded by Casey to adjourn the DDA Board meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 am

Respectfully submitted,
Jeri Johnson, Marketing and Communications Director
Northville DDA