



**Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors
February 27, 2024**

The February meeting of the DDA Board of Directors was called to order at 8:05am.

ROLL CALL

Present: DJ Boyd, Margene Buckhave, David Cole, Aaron Cozart, Mike Jaafar, Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Robert Miller, Shawn Riley, Amy Bonser, Mayor Brian Turnbull

Also Present: Lori Ward / DDA Director, Stacy Pearson / Assistant DDA Director, George Lahanas / City Manager, Sandi Wiktorowski / Finance Director, Al Maciag / Police Chief, Barbara Moroski-Browne / Mayor Pro-Tem, Dave Gutman, Mary Keys

AUDIENCE

Keys noted that while celebrating the success of the Chili event the previous weekend, an improvement for the future should be to announce the street closures along with the promotion of the event so that people are not surprised by the closures. Additionally, she suggested that street closure updates should be made public and always located in the same place for reference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by McKindles, **seconded by** Turnbull to approve agenda and consent agenda as presented. **Motion carried** unanimously.

AWARD OF LANDSCAPING CONTRACT

Ward led discussion on recent landscaping contract. The bid opening was held on February 22, 2024 and two proposals were received. Begonia Brothers and CQC of Romulus submitted proposals. Price increases were anticipated as both the cost of materials and labor have increased over the past 3 years. Begonia Brothers pricing was consistently lower than CQC. Reference checks have been completed. The DDA/City been working with Begonia for years on landscaping and the Skeletons are Alive event held each October in downtown Northville. City staff is recommending Begonia Brothers be retained for unit prices listed in their proposal. The Mayor noted the excellent job that Begonia Brothers has provided over the years.

Motion by Boyd, **seconded by** Buckhave to approve landscaping contract with Begonia Brothers and forward to City Council for their approval. **Motion carried** unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ON DDA FINANCES AND DRAFT BUDGET

Boyd led the discussion on DDA Finances and kicked off the discussion on upcoming changes to budget, debt commitment, and unrestricted fund balance. Boyd noted that the City has gone to a different format for budgeting for all of the departments. Boyd walked the Board through the new budget format. The DDAs 14 page line item budget has been condensed to one page that breaks the budget into 3 sections: Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance.

The DDA's debt will be retired in 2024 – 25, with the final payment of \$167,518 being made to pay off the bonds issued in 2010 for the streetscape improvement project. The debt retirement will allow an additional, approximately \$175,000 annually, for pay-as-you-go projects or to service the debt on a new bond issue that the DDA may seek to pursue. Boyd also pointed out the unrestricted fund balance is approximately \$225,000. In previous discussions over the years, the DDA set a loose policy to retain 25% of the unrestricted fund. The Organization Committee had several meetings with City Manager George Lahanas. During the meetings, Lahanas assured the Organization Committee that the DDA had the full support of the City and the DDA may be overly conservative in its goals for fund balance. Lahanas suggested to the committee that they utilize the revenue to implement priority projects and programs and count on the City to assist should some unexpected emergency occurs, rather than just assembling a large fund balance. The City's practice has been very conservative in estimating revenues. New revenue generated from building sales, construction and other projects are not calculated in to the projected revenue until it actually occurs. Boyd suggested that we spend some time at future Board meetings to discuss how to utilize the new revenue generated from development, debt retirement and that we review the practice of compiling a large fund balance. McKindles confirmed that the DDA budget does not include projected revenue from new development. Boyd confirmed that this was the case.

Wiktorowski expressed that final taxable values will be prepared in the near future, and that the board of review will look at assessments to taxes and finances in the near future. There will most likely be some additional changes due to Board of Review as well. Changes can be anticipated after this time and a better look at exact numbers will be available.

Ward walked the Board through the new format of the budget. The DDA provided the Board with a description of the expected revenue and expenditures addressed in the proposed budget.

Boyd stated that the City has completed a cost allocation study to determine how the City allocates its expenses across all departments. The formula will consistently be applied. Lahanas stated that the information will give the public a look at the true cost of providing services. In the initial years, the City will not be charging the full amount of the cost allocation to the DDA, but may phase it in over time. McKindles asked if there was a

percentage that was applied over all department. The percentage differs from department to department and is subjective. McKindles suggested that in the near future that the DDA and City have a policy discussion of the role of the DDA.

Wiktorowski noted that at the end of this current fiscal year, the DDA has planned for a \$285,322 unrestricted fund balance. Going forward, that fund balance grows to \$334,000, to \$612, 103, to \$891460 and by year 2027-28 the fund balance will be at \$1,174,674. Ward note that the goal for the proposed 2024-25 budget is to get the funds out of fund the DDA's fund balance and into projects. Cole asked if there could be a discussion to take the unrestricted fund balance down further in the proposed budget. Boyd was in agreement.

Ward reminded the Board that the next month formal action will be taken on this item. Boyd noted that as an informal action item we need to identify the necessary priorities, visions, charter parameters, and policy for the DDA. Additionally, a clarification on city versus DDA responsibilities should be made over the upcoming months. Boyd requested that this along with discussion of a bond be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Boyd concluded stating no formal action is needed at this time.

INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Ward led discussion on the outdoor dining permit and ordinance, as well as announcing the second reading on March 18, 2024 of this ordinance along with an amendment to the Entertainment Ordinance. Permits will be distributed after the second reading. Ward also discussed the logistics of what each dining permit covers. There is no action required as this is an update.

Keys spoke, voicing her concerns that she is not seeing discussion on accessibility issues as a part the dining ordinance. Not all problems such as ramps and ADA are business problems. Keys noted all ADA needs to be addressed throughout town to make Northville accessible to everyone. Turnbull added that ADA issues are under the DPW Director's supervision.

Long asked for clarification on the street closures. Ward stated that the direction from council is that Main Street and Center Street be closed seasonally. Turnbull stated that the city is transitioning, and the City may move forward on holding a preliminary advisory vote on the ballot in November. Riley noted that the DDA is following lead of what council is telling us to do.

Lahanas said the last set of bollards will be going in last week of April, or before the road closure in May.

Design Committee – Miller announced the upcoming meeting next week.

Marketing Meeting – Riley and Ward noted the upcoming March 6 meeting on an overall updating of chairs and goals. Riley noted that Wednesday night concerts would be removed.

Economic Development Committee – Cozart noted the upcoming March 8 meeting along with a possible date and time change to future regularly scheduled meetings. Ward added that the last meeting included a discussion on ordinance and broader goals at next meeting.

Parking – Maciag updated the parking committee search for vendor app. The group has narrowed it to a single company and the purchase proposal will go to council soon. Revenue estimate to be “revenue neutral” from this program with a focus on getting a more accurate view of users and to ease the officer’s ability to deal with complaints of over parking times. Maciag also added that the cadet program for the police department will begin with two new cadets.

Long asked if the DDA would be going paperless soon. Lahanas said that the group will be notified when we move to paperless meetings, along with available training on the switch to a paperless system.

Long asked if anything is being done to monitor or protect the legacy of the Northville Downs, such as a significant pictorial history. Turnbull answered that a group went into each building to take anything of importance, and that the group met four months ago and entered every building. Turnbull was unsure of the photos, but added that perhaps Mill Race has older photos.

Turnbull thanked the DDA for the excellent work on the 2024 Chili in the Ville event.

Ward noted that the Day of the Dude would be on March 6, an Up to Go event lead by Manfred Schon from 4-10 pm with the theme of The Big Labowski. This event includes the closure for Main Street only for the duration of the event.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Cole, seconded by Turnbull to adjourn the DDA Board meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Pearson, Assistant DDA Director
Northville DDA