



**Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the DDA Board of Directors
January 28, 2025**

The January 28, 2025 meeting of the DDA Board of Directors was called to order at 8:31am.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Bryan Turnbull, Amy Bonser, DJ Boyd, Margene Buckhave, David Cole, Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Robert Miller, Shawn Riley

Absent: Aaron Cozart, Mike Jaafar

Also Present: **Present:** Lori Ward/DDA Director, George Lahanas/City Manager, Stacy Pearson/DDA Assistant Director, Justin Quagliata/Community and Economic Development Director, Sandi Wiktorowski/Finance Director, Barbara Moroski-Browne/Mayor Pro Tem, Fred Sheill, Deanna Gilbert/Chamber Rep, Mary Keys, Nancy Darga, Greg Presley, Tony Chubb/City Attorney, Jason Iacoangeli/Toll Brothers, Scott Hansen/Toll Brothers, John Lynch/Toll Brothers

AUDIENCE COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

TOLL BROTHERS UPDATE

Presentation led by Jason Iacoangeli & Scott Hansen of Toll Brothers. Iacoangeli reported that a recent watermain issue was slowing down the process, but that the following dates remained as anticipated:

- Dec 2024 Vertical Construction began on Farmers Market out lot
- May 2025 first building model for this phase
- May – June – open for sale “The Churchill Collection” which is the name for phase 1
- Track Parcel Development Schedule
 - Spring 2025 Underground Utility Install
 - Summer 2025 paving site and construction of first model
 - Early 2026 new home construction, model, and sales office grand opening
 - Entire areas of track parcel to be done in one phase vs the original plan of two phases
 - Information on the project can be found at www.tollbrothers.com/downs or viaphone at 866-267-0537

Long suggested a historical marker to delineate the area as a historical site. Turnbull noted that the markers would be plausible, and that the bicentennial group would be looking at further historic signage and markers throughout the city as well.

DDA BOARD AND STAFF UPDATE

Riley led a discussion on the retirement of DDA Director Lori Ward. Riley reported that a DDA director search would include the development of a job description with the help of Ward, and that this was anticipated to be posted within a week. Riley also explained that a selection committee comprised of Riley, McKindles, Boyd, and Lahanas would interview candidates prior to bringing them before the board for the final hiring approval. Lahanas noted that a special meeting to adopt a formal process and employment process working agreement between DDA and City (MOU) needed in the next week to two weeks.

An exchange was had between McKindles and Lahanas regarding the autonomy of the Northville DDA. Cole began noting that he wanted to ensure the DDA was following the principles of the DDA charter. Chubb included that the DDA director has been hired through the city as a city employee, and as a result of that the reporting structure is to the city manager. McKindles clarified that the DDA bylaws state that the DDA director serves at the pleasure of the DDA board, and that while the director functions as a city employee there is still a reporting relationship between the director and the board. McKindles noted that it would be wise for the DDA to have their own attorney look at the bylaws because there needs to be a sense of independence and autonomy for the DDA, and that the DDA needs to maintain from the city in order to be effective. He continued sharing that the DDA is not just another tax gathering function for the city, and it is important that the director conduct policy and strategy while affectively reporting to the board. McKindles shared that the DDA board may be looking to do things that contribute to the business and vibrancy of downtown that may be independent of the traditional role of the city. McKindles said that the MOU should state that the DDA board will decide on the policy and priorities on quarterly and annual basis, but from an administrative standpoint it would make sense to have the DDA staff managed by the city manager because the board is not able to do that. McKindles continued that there may be some healthy tension, which will need to be worked through with communication between Riley and Lahanas to ensure that this is running smoothly. Lahanas responded that he disagreed with the idea of healthy tension, because where there is tension there is caution, and where there is caution, there is not a sharing of resources. Lahanas continued that he believes there is much more benefit to working fully collaboratively and integrating into one another because it overrules the perception of one versus the other when it comes to decided who is paying for what service within the city. McKindles noted that when the DDA was created it was not meant to be folded into city services, it was created independent of city services for a reason. Lahanas responded that the city is the one inevitably responsible for the failure of the DDA financially. Further discussion was had on the pros and cons of the DDA being part of the city structure versus and independent entity. McKindles continued that the way the past has been conducted shouldn't dictate how the future of policies of the DDA are made and what the relationship of the DDA is with the city. He continued, noting that if Lahanas conducted annual reviews it would have to be under the direction of how well the director carried out the DDA board directives, not how well did the director carry out the city manager's directives. McKindles concluded that he believes there

has to be distinction and separation between the DDA and the city so as not to comingle the DDA priorities and the city priorities because there are reasons why the DDA is separate from the city. McKindles stated that the issues should be clarified by attorneys. Riley included thoughts that it is the administrative side of things that needed to be cleaned up and made clear in an MOU. Riley added that the DDA would talk to an attorney. Bonser noted that she also agreed with Riley that an understanding that splits the DDA from the city would be necessary. Boyd added that a bad outcome from this would be if DDA budget was coopted into the city budget, but he does thing a working agreement with the city that addresses all issues can be made. Miller stated that there were two issues at hand, hiring of the new director, and also reassessing how the DDA does business and that this is a great opportunity for looking at that. Boyd noted that the goal will be developing a working agreement between the DDA and the city, and that the MOU will be important in this.

Ward led a discussion on the election of DDA officers with a discussion on bylaws.

Motion by Turnbull, seconded by Long to keep all present officers in their positions.
Motion carried unanimously.

SHARED MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS POSITION

Ward reported on the shared DDA / city marketing position updated that seventeen resumes were accepted for considerations, three interviews were conducted over the past week, and a finalist is still in process. Lahanas included that he had delivered an offer and the candidate is expected to start in next three weeks. Ward explained that the position was made possible by a 25% contribution from DDA (current = \$24,000 / year and we will consolidate this into the shared position pay) and 75% city contribution toward the position's salary. Ward concluded that the DDA has IMJ Communications as a marketing contractor through the end of February.

SHARED DPW POSITION

Lahanas reported that the DDA has joined with to develop a shared position for events and summer seasonal work which will cover the downtown seasonal work for half of the year from May 1 to November 1 as well as being available in evenings during event coverage. The other half of the year the position will report to the DPW. Lahanas noted that the position is posted, and that the city and the DDA will share a 50/50 cost.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR RAP GRANT

Ward presented a letter of support from DDA for RAP Grant, a matching grant up to a million dollars for streetscape and curbless street project. Ward was seeking board approval for the grant letter. Ward explained that the DDA has been working with OHM on the grant, and that the grant does not indicate that the DDA is in support or refute of the streetscape project. As it will be several months until approval, Boyd requested it be put on an agenda in spring prior to announcement and budgeting. Lahanas suggested April meeting agenda.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES CONTRACT

Summer Concert Series Contract (Handout) – Ward / Pearson / Riley motion for concerts to be presented at special meeting.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Design Committee – Miller – meeting next month

Marketing Committee – Riley – next week's meeting will discuss the direction of the group for the upcoming year.

Parking Committee – Ward – the recent parking study results will go to the planning commission shortly and details will be shared with the board so that all can attend that meeting. All information will also be available online on the DDA and City websites.

Organizational Committee – Boyd - none

Economic Development Committee – none

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Gilbert shared that the Chamber of Commerce would be hosting the Community Awards dinner on February 6, 2025 and the State of Community on April 11, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Riley reminded the group that the next meeting would be held on February 25, 2025 at 8:30am in DDA Meeting Room A.

Motion by Turnbull, seconded by McKindles to adjourn the DDA Board meeting.

Motion carried unanimously. **Meeting adjourned at 10:18am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Pearson, Assistant DDA Director

Northville DDA