



Downtown Development Authority

City of Ecorse, Michigan

Minutes - APPROVED

Thursday, January 7, 2021 – 8:30 am via Zoom

Planner Laura Haw, with McKenna, called the DDA Board meeting to order at 8:39 am and led roll call.

A. ROLL CALL

Present:

Johnny Gewarges, Chairman
Kosta Callis, Vice-Chairman
Jackie Brown, Secretary
Lamar Tidwell, Mayor
Darcel Brown, Mayor-Pro Tem, Councilman
Richard Marsh, City Administrator

Also Present:

LaTonya Lamb, City Councilwoman
Marilyn Oliver, Treasurer
Carolyn Harris
Laura Haw, McKenna
Sally Hodges, McKenna
Stephanie Peña, McKenna

Excused:

Bob Reed, Dan Brown, and Kelly Rose

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Councilman Brown and seconded by Mayor Tidwell to approve the agenda for the DDA Board regular meeting of January 7, 2021, as presented. Ayes all.

C. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Planner Haw identified a typo regarding Kelly Rose's name on page one of the draft meeting minutes and recommended this be corrected.

Moved by Councilman Brown and seconded by Jackie Brown to approve the minutes, as amended. Ayes all.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Planner Hodges informed the DDA Board that the responsibilities of each elected board role will be outlined in the DDA Bylaws, to be presented at the next available meeting. She briefly provided a summary of those positions. It was mentioned that the Treasurer does not need to be member of the Board. Without the draft Bylaws, Planner Hodges recommended to table the role of Treasurer, but recommended electing the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary positions.

Moved by Mayor Tidwell and seconded by Jackie Brown to nominate Mr. Gewarges for Chairman. Moved by Councilman Brown and seconded by Mayor Tidwell to close the nominations and elect Mr. Gewarges as Chairman. Ayes all.

Moved by Mayor Tidwell and seconded by Chairman Gewarges to nominated Mr. Callis for Vice Chairman. Motion by Councilman Brown and seconded by Mayor Tidwell to close the nominations and elect Mr. Callis as Vice Chairman. Ayes all.

Moved by Mayor Tidwell and seconded by Councilman Brown to nominate Ms. Brown for Secretary. Moved by Chairman Gewarges and seconded by Councilman Brown to close the nominations and elect Ms. Brown as Secretary. Ayes all.

Moved by Councilman Brown and seconded by Chairman Gewarges to table the nomination for Treasurer until the bylaws are complete. Ayes all.

E. APPROVAL OF 2021 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Planner Haw explained that the DDA is required to meet a minimum of four (4) times a calendar year. The proposed schedule provides for regular monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 8:30am. It was mentioned that the schedule has since be updated, moving the February 4 meeting to February 11 (second Thursday) to align with the DDA Development and TIF Plan schedule.

Moved by Chairman Gewarges and seconded by Councilman Brown to approve with the meeting schedule with amendment for the February 11, 2021 meeting date. Ayes all.

F. DEVELOPMENT AND TIF PLAN UPDATES

Planner Haw reviewed the two DDA Development and TIF Plan required maps with the Board: the DDA Boundary and Development Area Map and the Existing Land Use Map. Planners Haw and Hodges walked the DDA through a review of the preliminary TIF projections for the next 21 years. Planner Haw also presented a list of preliminary projects critical for the DDA to consider over the life of the Plan, with the understanding that the listing of projects is flexible and can be adjusted based on funding and partnership opportunities.

Planner Hodges asked the Board members to each share their top three priority projects. Chairman Gewarges is interested in revitalizing façades; creating an inventory for the redevelopment of sites; and the marketing of vacant properties.

Vice-Chairman Callis asked if it was possible for DDA to become the developer and landlord of properties. Planner Hodges confirmed that the DDA is legally allowed to do so. Vice-Chairman Callis suggested the rehabbing homes, leasing them out, bundling homes and selling them to real estate investors. Vice-Chairman Callis is largely concerned with controlling the pace of development.

Mayor Tidwell advocated for the implementation of garbage cans and street sweeping program along the corridor, corridor beautification.

Ms. Brown recommended intersection improvements along Jefferson and Southfield, specifically adjustment of the 'no turn on red' signage.

Councilman Brown supported the façade improvement program to create a visually attractive and inviting corridor.

Mr. Marsh supported code enforcement; demolition of blight and deteriorating buildings; façade renovation and other improvements to the corridor to enhance the streetscape.

Lastly, Planner Haw presented the revised project schedule, which has been adjusted slightly to accommodate City ordinance adoption requirements.

G. JOINT MEETING WITH THE RIVER ROUGE DDA

Planner Haw recommended to schedule a joint meeting with the River Rouge DDA to start collaborating on future projects. Mayor Tidwell recommended pushing the joint meeting until after adopting the Development and TIF Plan, and recommended the Board invite River Rouge to their June 3, 2021 regular meeting. The Board requested Planner Haw and Hodges to coordinate this meeting with the River Rouge DDA.

H. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Councilman Brown thanked the newly elected officers and McKenna staff, and expressed excitement for future work of the Board.

Chairman Gewarges asked how long the River Rouge DDA has been established, Planner Hodges confirmed 20 years. Chairman Gewarges asked if Wyandotte has a DDA and if a joint meeting will be held together with them. Chairman Dewarges proposed the Board meet with Wyandotte as well.

Anthony Decuir, resident of Wyandotte and alumni of Ecorse, offered comments on the success of Wyandotte's DDA and mentioned Pat Slack (River's Edge Gallery) as a resource for the DDA. Mr. Decuir provided his phone number for the Board: (734) 752-0797.

Councilman Brown asked how to handle public comments in future meetings. Planner Haw confirmed that moving forward, the agenda will incorporate a public comments section.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Chairman Gewarges and seconded by Mayor Tidwell to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 am. Ayes all.