



## MINUTES

### **VIRTUAL Monthly Meeting of the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors Meeting**

ONLINE: [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84918538765?PWD=TM9YVkhSNWZEM0TUTHB0DEVMS090QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84918538765?pwd=TM9YVkhSNWZEM0TUTHB0DEVMS090QT09) / PASSWORD: FERNDALE

PHONE: 929 205 6099 (TOLL FREE) / MEETING ID: 849 1853 8765 / PASSWORD: 301421

**THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020 @ 8:00 AM**

#### **1. ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jacki Smith, PJ Jacokes, Sarah Brown, Jerome Raska, Chris Johnston, Janice Semma, Mayor Melanie Piana

MEMBERS ABSENT: Blake Scheer, Nathan Martin

STAFF PRESENT: Sommer Realy, Engagement Manager

ABSENT: Lena Stevens, Executive Director

GUESTS PRESENT:

- Joseph Gacoch, City Manager
- Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director
- Sheryl Stubblefield, Finance Director
- Jennifer Marr, Ferndale Area District Library Director

**CALL TO ORDER:** 8:06 am

#### **2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Motion by member Sarah Brown seconded by member Jerome Raska to approve the agenda. **All ayes, motion carries.***

#### **3. COMMUNITY REPORTS**

*Reports from community organization representatives in attendance.*

##### **3.a. Ferndale Area District Library**

Jennifer Marr, Ferndale Area District Library Director announced library staff came back on Monday, June 8 following CDC checklist guidelines and library association standards. Curbside pickup starts on Monday, June 15 where public can arrange times and call or text upon arrival for contactless handoff. Library is offering limited book delivery for those who need extra assistance. Launched a mobile library card signing feature through the website along with adding canopy streaming service. Library reopening responsibility and COVID-19 plan on [website](#).

#### **4. CALL TO AUDIENCE**

**4.a.** No audience attendees, all participants are staff

#### **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **5.a. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meetings held May 14, 2020**

*Motion by member Chris Johnston seconded by member Pj Jacokes to approve the consent agenda as presented. **All Ayes, motion carries.***

## 6. REGULAR AGENDA

### 6.a. Authorization of Budget Allocation for Outdoor Seating and Business Support Services for COVID-19 Recovery

Engagement Manager, Sommer Realy explained the furniture budget for proposed Library courtyard and popup park would provide a space for the public and employees to gather outdoors at a safe distance. A budget of \$6,500 was previously set to outfit the Library with furniture to create new seating areas, additional litter & recycling cans will be spent on the items chosen by Jenny Marr, Executive Director of the Ferndale District Area Library with the support of the DPW.

Detailed explanation provided by Executive Director Stevens provided was reviewed and discussed amount board members. The total expenditures approved in the revised FY20 (current year) budget by the DDA Board of Directors totaled \$1,168,366. As of 6.3.20 total expenditures recorded in the General Ledger total \$409,512. This does not represent several large expenses which may be delayed in part or in whole until FY21. This proposal does not recommend an increase in overall expenditure levels for either FY20 or FY21, but rather a reallocation of specific line items to fit current priorities. In September 2020 Director Stevens will bring a more comprehensive budget review and amendment to the Board for consideration.

Requested authorization of the following line item expenditures not to exceed the following amounts within the DDA Budget for FY21 (Starting July 1):

- 248-000-818.000 Contractual Services - COVID-19 Business Support Services. FY 21: \$15,000
- 248-000-977.000 Capital Outlay - Downtown Furniture. FY 21: \$40,000

Reallocations are funded by the elimination and or reduction of the following line items:

FY 20

- 248-000-818.000 Contractual Services - Graphic Design \$2,500
- 248-000-931.000 Facilities Maintenance - Sidewalk Repairs \$10,000
- 248-000-931.000 Facilities Maintenance - Downtown Facilities Maintenance DPW Contract, expected reduction from \$165,000 to approx. \$145,000 or less
- 248-000-977.000 Capital Outlay- Pedestrian Alley Improvements \$2500

FY 21

- 248-000-818.000 Contractual Services - Branding Services \$20,000

Chair Jacki Smith is in support of social distancing, creating seating areas to take their takeout orders, there will be trash receptacles, this is in support of people being in the downtown, somewhere to sit and be, move towards our capital improvement plan in a way that we want more parklets and place to interact outside those businesses. Chair Jacki Smith reinforced that Executive Director Stevens found money in the budget that

was allocated for other things, we instead want to focus in support of the businesses for Downtown.

Member Mayor Piana questioned what is the cost split between library furniture and how parks will be maintained; will it be library or DDA responsibility?

Engagement Manager Sommer Realy, \$6500 is allocated for Library specifically.

Maintenance will be a group effort between Library and DPW. Umbrellas, for instance, will be the Library staff's responsibility. Trash receptacle at library are maintained by DPW and Downtown Maintenance Staff.

Member Jerome Raska questions the consideration of sponsorship for some of the furniture. Chair Jacki Smith commented, we should absolutely consider sponsorship for it. If people like it or want to add more, we can invite in sponsors for that. I know I would like to sponsor some too.

Sheryl Stubblefield, Finance Director stated she will reserve asking questions until the budget is reviewed, details listed on this agenda will be added into the BS&A notes. Engagement Manager Sommer Realy explained that these parks are following the same guidelines as all other parks. The dog poop station you will find at the parks in downtown area are the same you will find in all Ferndale parks. The Library courtyard will have green picnic and umbrellas with black trim.

Sheryl Stubblefield, Finance Director mentioned the city's pilot program with "Big Belly". Jordan Twardy, CED Director agreed to follow up on this with the sanitation department and report back.

Member Jerome Raska mentioned that the DDA has continuously fought the battle of "What does the DDA do and what are they doing for us" and questions if there is any plan for signage stating "This is brought to you by the DDA, we're working for you and helping you out." Member Mayor Melanie Piana agreed and suggested a co-branded welcome sign with mention of how the funds are providing the parks.

Member Chris Johnston stated that it is a good opportunity for people being together, which will always be important.

*Motion by member Pj Jacokes seconded by member Jerome Raska to approve the reallocation of previously budgeted funds as recommended by Executive Director Stevens. All Ayes, motion carries.*

#### **6.b. License for Use of Property at 165 E. 9 Mile Road for Outdoor Seating**

Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director mentioned that Mr. Dorfman, the property owner of 165 E. Nine Mile Road was approached and a lease was negotiated. The DDA will supply an insurance rider, one-time payment of \$1000 plus cost of lawn maintenance supplied by property owner's vendor. The Dorfman

property lease term end on December 31, 2020. A maximum of \$3,500 will be spent on furniture and park enhancements such as doggy poop and hand sanitizer stations. will be a max of \$3500 to start this off. Discussion of allowing local businesses to host and rent out space is in process.

Chair Jacki Smith suggests inviting business owners to activate the alleyways as another option of rental space.

Engagement Manager, Sommer Realy expressed excitement for businesses to be able to come outdoors to create some open-air space, and the message of, “We want to be together, but safely.” The rainbow lights from The dot fence will be strung in the W. Troy pedestrian alley.

Member Chris Johnston shared the DIY festival has used this space about four times for festivals and paid up to \$1,500 per weekend. uses that space for festivals, probably four times. I think we paid up to \$1500 per weekend. That space is referred to as the “grassy null” and is a popular space for the condo residents.

Member Sarah Brown asked about potential barrier or lip to protect public from those who drive down the adjacent alley. Engagement Manager Sommer Realy confirmed that the DPW will be creating a barrier that does not look like a construction site. Mayor Melanie Piana suggested flower planters as sort of an entryway and hopes for some shade options too. Member Jerome Raska agreed and liked the flower idea. Member Pj Jacokes inquired whether lighting is needed.

Engagement Manager Sommer Realy states hours have not been determined. One of the challenges we are facing is the temporary aspect of this property and lack of electricity. Based on member Chris Johnston experience, streetlights provide an ample amount of light at this location, additional possible lighting options include glow in the dark paint and solar lights.

*Motion by member Jerome Raska seconded by member Mayor Melanie Piana to approve License Agreement by and between 165 E 9 Mile Rd LLC and the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority. **All Ayes, motion carries.***

#### **6.c. New Concept and Budget for 'Affirmations Bench' Project**

Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director stated that this project has been in process for a long time. One of the concerns about the Affirmations bench, is that we wanted this to potentially stop a car, whether purposeful or accidental. The lack of trees in the streetscape is an opportunity for improvement, but also, you want to be able to have a more porous situation, so you don't want to have it necessarily blocked up because people cross the street. We want it to be more open and hide bollards in it. Board is recommended to approve a budget of \$10,000 for the Affirmations Bench Parklet.

Member Jerome Raska inquired about the purpose of the trees, provide shade or aesthetic. CED Director Twardy stated trees offer both, shade and preferably aesthetic in addition to acting as a barrier for cars.

Member Jerome Raska mentions when talking about trees, trees do block storefronts immensely, and it can hinder people seeing what kind of businesses are there. Recommends that more creative ways for shade specifically is discussed further.

*Motion by member Mayor Melanie Piana seconded by member Pj Jacokes to approve budget recommendation from Executive Director Stevens that budget remains inclusive of grant funds received and not in addition to those funds in amount not to exceed \$10,000, including engineering and design services. **All Ayes, motion carries.***

#### **6.d. Resolution in Support of the City of Ferndale City Council's Declaration of Commitment to Antiracism**

Chair Jacki Smith shared that this resolution is not only important to me, but the Ferndale DDA and the whole city. The DDA social media accounts are being tagged in different statements on and it is very important to say something. Silence is the worst thing we can do. Member and Mayor Melanie Piana with city council, has provided a statement that the DDA should support as the first step into the anti-racist movement that is happening right now.

Member Mayor Melanie Piana explained when the city council was approached about putting out a statement, which all cities have been doing, denouncing racism and emphasizing their values of diversity/inclusion, she feels that Ferndale has repeatedly done that, and the circumstances which everyone is addressing with structural racism. In collaboration with councilwoman Kat Bruner-James, and several other organizations the City of Ferndale put a declaration of Commitment to Antiracism on Friday of last week. This declaration is a commitment to become a more racially conscious organization. This is a process; it does not happen overnight. Looking at policy and practices needs to happen over time, even though there is a sense of urgency to do everything now. The City of Ferndale is looking to develop a racial equity policy in the future. Ferndale Police Department has been leading reforms within the department for the last 4-5 years, from the Obama 21<sup>st</sup> Century policing model. This is fertile ground for making changes.

Chair Jacki Smith states that one thing is missing, a commitment to forming a focus group or committee. It is not included in this document, because businesses are all focused on our business priorities now, and availability to provide time in a focus group is difficult at this time.

Member Mayor Melanie Piana shared that Kat Bruner-James and herself also express that this is an imperfect document. The sense of urgency was more important and the racial equity toolkit by following that process will require us to create a committee, and we were not ready to announce that the day after processing the declaration. The DDA is encouraged to participate in defining a clear action plan when we are ready to take that on.

Member Pj Jacokes commented with a concern that in a month everything will go back to normal. Suggested it may be helpful to add this as a monthly item to keep this front and center.

Chair Jacki Smith added that will be our job as board members to not forget about this or let this slide.

Member Chris Johnston agreed and added he feels as though it is like the design guidelines for logos, something to keep that in mind and approached with a checklist, where we cannot forget it because it is engrained.

Chair Jacki Smith states partnering with the City on this resolution will be helpful that and hold the DDA board accountable and partnering with the City will be helpful to make that happen.

Member Sarah Brown commented that she thinks this is in align with what the board has spoken about a few months ago, follow-up and keep in touch with businesses who have left Ferndale. Things we can do under this proclamation would be for Ferndale to report on experiences in different businesses in a more formal way.

Member Janice Semma showed interest in being a part of the focus committee. Chair Jacki Smith suggested that the board explores the next steps to create a committee in support of this declaration. Member Sarah Browns recommendation should be included which allows business owners to report on their experience. Engagement Manager Sommer Realy mentioned that a lot of people and businesses are showcasing their black-owned businesses on social media and asks if this something we should showcase on the DDA's social media channels.

Member Sarah Brown asked if Ferndale recognized Juneteenth as a holiday. Member Mayor Melanie Piana confirmed the City of Ferndale recognizing that for the first time this year.

Member Jerome Raska mentioned businesses that are not minority owned but have a diverse staff and team should also be supported.

Chair Jacki Smith suggested that the DDA supports the business in Downtown Ferndale. This is more of a celebration for black business owners, as there are more barriers as a person of color owning a business and believes the priority needs to be those people specifically. We can absolutely support black people who work in Ferndale, but I think we need to prioritize the business-owners, as the DDA is about businesses first. As a reminder, the DDA is discussing a planning session to re-confirm and set our motion forward. This declaration will be something at the top of the list moving forward.

*Motion by member Jerome Raska seconded by member Janice Semma to approve the Adoption of resolution in Support of the City of Ferndale City Council's Declaration of Commitment to Antiracism. **All Ayes, motion carries.***

## **7. PRESENTATIONS**

### **7.a. Downtown Maintenance Report**

Engagement manager Sommer Realy provided a positive report on behalf of the Downtown Maintenance Team stating that all the flowers are in the ground. DPW staff is still on a limited level, so the scheduling is a little bit delayed, but they are doing good as usual with sanitation and gardening, and then they are moving into keeping up with the cleanliness.

### **7.b. Ferndale DDA Updates**

Jordan Twardy, Community and Economic Development (CED) Director reported distribution of 237 PPE Reopening Toolkits provided by Oakland County has been well and we still have several extra. Tomorrow, Joy Wells from the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce is doing one more touchless pick up event at Incubizo. We want to be cautious of a second wave, so we are going to hold some supplies in the event we need to do another mass push. We are going ask businesses to take a survey and ask about the main concerns, we're addressing the outdoor seating and dining, retail, combined advertisement, common promotional materials that they're responding to COVID 19, as well as the placemaking amenities. The City will be launching Open in Ferndale at the end of this month. Open in Ferndale is a web portal, attempting to make it easy for businesses to access what they need along with certain advertisement, investment, promotions, will be under that brand, which will be led by the city on top of what the DDA does. We have created a style guide with communications, so everyone can use it, to help organize that vibe.

Engagement Manager, Sommer Realy reported that on June 30, 2020 the virtual meetings act is set to expire. The next board meeting in July, on schedule for July 9, will be taking place at city council. We will make sure we are as safe and distinct as possible. The #openinferndale Patronicity campaign raised \$4,457 dollars and we will receive a match of \$4,000 from Main Street Oakland County. Suggested doing a follow-up YouTube video as a "thank you" with snapshots of going into different businesses to see how they are doing. A decal and poster design called "We Care, Ferndale" with a song lyric reminding everyone of proper COVID-19 safety measures is being delivery to businesses next week.

Chair Jacki Smith recommends business owner to follow a Facebook group called "Businesses that follow distancing rules Michigan".

## **9. CALL TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS, BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF (note more than 3 minutes)**

Member Jerome Raska stated, if there is anything else community wide that we can use our vacant property for, please let us know.

Member Chris Johnston commented about the City and DPW and how they are keeping their operations flowing. If the current staff did not have the same levels of experience, you would not know that. He is proud of Ferndale. (Share this with Carlos).

Chair Jacki Smith mentioned there are businesses in the Downtown area that have been shuttered and are quiet. Not knowing what is going on with them, we as a board does

not know how to help. Chair Jacki Smith asks members to reach out to Sommer for 10 business contacts and ask them how they are doing. If you could send an email or phone call, one email to one person, that would help. Engagement Manager Sommer replies by staying being neighborly and friendly is the best we can do at this situation. A contact list of ten business will be supplied upon receiving board members request.

#### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by member Jerome Raska, seconded by member Chris Johnston to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 A.M. **All ayes, motion carries.***