



**VIRTUAL Monthly Meeting of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors
Downtown Development Authority Meeting**

ONLINE: [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/81750893032?PWD=ZUHECJJQAK5IQNFYMM1CD0R](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81750893032?pwd=ZUHECJJQAK5IQNFYMM1CD0R)

PASSWORD: FERNDALÉ

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MEETING ID: 817 5089 3032

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 @ 8:00 AM

1. ROLL CALL

CALL TO ORDER: 8:02 am

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jacki Smith, PJ Jacokes, Nathan Martin, Sarah Brown, Jerome Raska, Blake Scheer, Mayor Piana

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Johnston, Janice Semma

STAFF PRESENT: Lena Stevens, Executive Director; Sommer Realy, Engagement Manager; Reilly Colman, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS PRESENT:

- Joseph Gacioch, City Manager
- Sadie Quagliotto, Social Media Manager

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Motion by Member Jerome Raska seconded by Member Nathan Martin to approve the agenda.
All ayes, motion carries.*

3. PRESENTATIONS

a. DDA Executive Director Updates

Executive Director Lena Stevens provided updates on events occurring in the next six months. Discussed continuation of COVID-19 recovery, outdoor spaces, and final touches of Schiffer Park – including removal of barriers. It will be a great space for the community.

In regard to payment in lieu of parking discussed at previous meeting, more feedback will be discussed with City Staff before confirming a decision.

Director Stevens also provided an update on The dot, stating there is no official date to be determined at this time. The timeline and schedule have changed due to supply chain problems and delivery of materials. More information will be put out to the public shortly.

Social districts are currently on hold and will not be implemented this fall and winter. The idea will be revisited in January to help prepare for spring.

Member Jerome Raska asked if there had been any discussions with the bar and restaurant community. Putting it off may make us look unprepared. There should be

more communication with restaurants to gather opinions, as this is a partnership with the businesses.

Director Stevens stated the timeline is not of concern. There has not been any business outreach out of fear of providing a resource that may not happen. There will be discussions with other neighbors and community members for guidance. Given the circumstances of COVID-19, it is best to limit our outreach to conversations rather than moving forward with the event at this time.

Member Raska suggested forming a committee to emphasize team effort and maintain action on this topic.

Mayor Piana mentioned she had reached out to two mayors and one city manager. Port Huron applied for the social district application in June and was supposed to start after Labor Day and end in October, however, their application was not approved. Their Downtown structure is similar to Ferndale. However, The City of Cadillac applied and was approved within 24 hours, despite their participation and district levels to be much smaller. This is a legislative-designed policy.

Chair Jacki Smith asked if the tents could have walls. Director Stevens confirmed the structures cannot resemble indoor space and contain alcohol consumption within it.

Member Raska mentioned that the City of Holly is planning on developing their alleys as designated areas, but also extend down the streets to include businesses. It is about stimulating the business district. Designated business hours will allow customers to bring drinks inside the businesses. This will help involve retail, rather than favoring bars and restaurants. We need to make it visible that we are taking action and promotion, especially through the holiday season.

Director Stevens clarified if the overall opinion of the board is to put the event on hold through the fall and winter seasons.

Member Blake Scheer stated his feelings are the same as the previous discussion. The points of safety, the homeless community, the cost factor, the management of mask-wearing, and squatters are all still relevant. There is a lot of questionable factors regarding safety of the staff and people there. Member Scheer also asked if the license applications are for bar and restaurants only.

Director Stevens confirmed that it must be a bar or restaurant, with a minimum of two establishments, to apply for a liquor license.

Member PJ Jacokes expressed his interest in forming a committee. He asked if Member Raska could confirm the City of Holly's social districts were in front of businesses.

Member Raska stated his understanding is any jurisdiction can create the area as it fits for their community. Mayor Piana confirmed that the City of Cadillac is allowing people to drink on their public sidewalks.

Chair Jacki Smith supported the idea of a committee and that this topic needs further review. Furthermore, the DDA should provide a document to the public of everything accomplished during COVID-19. This should be a bullet-pointed article posted on social media and the website, including current projects and previous struggles and limitations. People in the Downtown are not aware of everything that is being done.

Director Stevens stated that there is a lot coming up within the next six months. An annual report, the budget planning process, the Downtown Vision Plan, and the Downtown Development TIF Plan with Hamilton Anderson are all in progress. Board recruitment also needs to be facilitated to reach maximum participation of twelve members. Fall and winter events season is coming up, including Halloween window decorating, online Small Business Saturday, and Holiday Lights. Marketing and advertising are a top priority for the DDA. Community Economic Development Director Jordan Twardy may have resources from the Open in Ferndale campaign to assist with this. Director Stevens requested additional board assistance on the tasks mentioned.

Member PJ Jacokes agreed to remain engaged with board recruitment and Member Raska agreed to help lead the committee for social districts.

Director Stevens stated it is important to have a regular discussion of what the DDA's vision is. The last several months have been difficult and different than usual. We are in a better place than we were last year. The job is to respond to concerns of the business community and the DDA have allowed that to be true.

4. COMMUNITY REPORTS

Reports from community organization representatives in attendance, including but not limited to Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce, Ferndale Area District Library, 8 Mile Boulevard Association, etc.

City Manager Joseph Gacioch provided a more detailed update on The dot. The opening goal of September will not be achievable, as related to delivery and state inspection of the elevator, which is a component of opening requirements. Many inspectors have been laid off due to COVID-19 which has slowed down the process. The focus will shift to reopening and restoring West Troy Street by returning the sidewalk and half of the street to the businesses. Once the paver is completed, the zone can be condensed to free space.

Chair Jacki Smith asked if the first floor can be used without the elevator.

City Manager Gacioch stated he has asked the state to operate floor-by-floor amid the elevator inspection. This is not confirmed yet. Restoring the basement level would also restore the previous supply about 100 spaces.

Executive Director Lena Stevens asked if there is an updated timeline.

City Manager Gacioch stated he is unsure of a date estimate, however, some type of message should be communicated for the time being. Confirming the restoration of Troy Street would help move the messaging forward.

5. CALL TO AUDIENCE

- a. No call to audience

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. No consent necessary

7. REGULAR AGENDA

- a. Approval of Contract for Social Media Management Services in the Amount of \$9,000
Executive Director Lena Stevens introduced Social Media Manager Sadie Quagliotto. She is responsible for managing the DDA's social media platforms and has become a valuable member of the team. She is great at anticipating communication issues and has crafted many strategies over the last few months. She also facilitated takeovers in collaboration with local businesses. Social media reports have increased, including followers, post reach, and overall levels of engagement. The previous line item of \$6,500 was a general number. The proposed increase of \$9,000 would bring the total budget to \$13,500. This adjustment will help the DDA think long-term. This is not just marketing, but engagement with businesses and giving them a communication channel.

Social Media Manager Sadie Quagliotto shared she has over ten years of experience with social media management. She has worked with a lot of Ferndale businesses over the years and loves the city. The process of social media was day-to-day as that has been the nature of COVID-19. The positive attention was due to us being a source for information, including parking, logistics, social distancing, new parks, reopening of stores, and more. She is more interested in providing an experience of Ferndale, rather than just showing them what is in the City. The growth is great in this situation.

Member Nathan Martin requested to see analytics in numbers not percentages over the next few months to ensure the budget increase has proven useful.

*Motion by Member Jerome Raska seconded by Member Nathan Martin to approve the social media management contract in the amount of \$9,000. **All ayes, motion carries.***

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

- a. No comments

9. ADJOURNMENT

*Motion by Member Jerome Raska, seconded by PJ Jacokes to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 A.M. **All ayes, motion carries.***