



CITY OF WALLED LAKE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017

The Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Ackley, Allen, Ambrose, Blair, Lublin, Marshall, Shuman, Wlodarczyk

ABSENT: Easter, Maurer

There being a quorum present, the meeting was declared in session.

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Director Whitt, DDA Managing Director Rodgers, Police Chief Shakinas, Council Member Robertson, Council Member Owsinek, Council Member Helke

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

DDA 05-01-17 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 11, 2017 MEETING

Motion by Blair, supported by Ackley: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the minutes from the April 11, 2017 meeting.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Kathy Kubik – spoke about the Community Education Center (CEC) building and the school district plans on tearing it down. Ms. Kubik said she had presented something to DDA last month and she had not heard anything from the DDA or the school district. Ms. Kubik said Bob Donohue discussed development in South Lyon and made a presentation to the board about saving the building. Ms. Kubik said there is someone who wants to buy the CEC building to make it into condominiums but there are other ways to save the building if we can get a real rich person and do it as a nonprofit.

Chairman Ambrose explained that there will be a group touring the CEC building tonight and he had spoken with Mark Menuck, who did a Plymouth development and Mr. Menuck is very interested in the CEC building.

Kathy Kubik said Bob Donohue is representing Mark Menuck and asked if the DDA might be able to have the school board members change their minds because they won't talk to her.

Chairman Ambrose stated that he is hopeful there is some fiscally responsibility over there at the School Board in regards to spending money, because from a City of Walled Lake stand point the

city controls the zoning of the property. Chairman Ambrose stated, it would be advantageous to get someone involved who can use the property and to market it based on what they do if the city will get tax revenue.

Kathy Kubik asked if the DDA has any plan for the land. Chairman Ambrose explained that the DDA may take an idea to the school board but the DDA does not have any association or influence with the school board. Executive Director Whitt talked about changes that maximize the development and how it might increase about tax revenues with a development that the school board would accept. Executive Director Whitt said that no one is objecting to rehabbing the CEC building. Executive Director Whitt said discussions will have to be done at the school board level as they are an independent body and the DDA does not have any influence. Executive Director Whitt explained that if there is a development at the CEC property it brings in tax revenues, it would also bring tax revenues to the school board. Executive Director Whitt explained that if there was a feasible development offer that may change the school board's position, as the school board members are elected officials who deal with reality.

Executive Director Whitt explained that the DDA does not have a vote but that the school board staff have already had a meeting with city representatives, including him and the mayor, when they expressed the school board's intent is to move out of the building. Executive Director Whitt said he heard the school board administration was in the position to demolish the building and that is where the administration appears to be headed.

Kathy Kubik said she wants the DDA board to have a vision and make this town grow and be a cool little town. Ms. Kubik said she came from Plymouth it was nothing and now it is a big deal town. Chairman Ambrose opined that it was not a matter of vision, but it was about getting people to come and invest. Chairman Ambrose said the DDA can roll out the red carpet and opening all doors but investors have to come to the city. Chairman Ambrose said if someone comes to the DDA board there are different avenues the DDA can use to accommodate their development needs so it makes sense. The school board members, being fiscally responsible, are going to do the right thing.

Kathy Kubik asked if the DDA would be interested in a nonprofit if Bob Donohue did not work out. Mayor Ackley explained that she had spoken with Bob Donohue and she believes that the school board administration does not want to sell the CEC building because they do not want to it become a charter school.

Council Member Helke – said that she was sorry that Ms. Coogan was not present at the meeting today because this is mostly addressed to Ms. Coogan's performance. Council Member Helke began her diatribe by stating, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank Finance Director Coogan for her fun-filled, informative presentation at the last DDA meeting. It was packed full of DDA financial information, which Ms. Coogan was generous and patient enough to share with all of us." Council Member Helke said even though Coogan pointed out that this information had already been given in the past she did recall that once over a year ago Ms. Coogan had gone over one section of last year's proposed budget with her when she had been on council for all of a few months.

Council Member Helke said at last month's DDA meeting Ms. Coogan generously shared her opinion that it appeared to her that Council Member Helke was unable to understand said facts because she asked pesky questions even though it is a duty and responsibility of elected officials such as herself to ask questions. Council Member Helke said that Ms. Coogan stated she takes said questions as a personal affront to her competence and integrity. Council Member Helke said, "I have been attending as many DDA meetings as possible since the near destruction of the DDA in 2012. Over the years I have heard repeatedly that the DDA has no money."

Council Member Helke confirmed that indeed DDA finances were the subject of an informal discussion at a prior meeting. Council Member Helke stated the meeting was "here last year which turned out to be a non-meeting because for the fourth month in a row there was no quorum. During this discussion, Mr. Ambrose stated 'Well maybe when we get some money we can get people to come to meetings, it's hard to get people to come when we don't have any money.' At that point, I asked Ms. Coogan how much money does the DDA had. She answered there was \$1.2 million dollars in that account."

Council Member Helke said that it was because of this information that, "I paid a visit to another member of the board, who had been absence from several meetings, when I asked this person why the attendance at meeting was so bad the answer was, "Well why bother we don't have any money so we can't do anything.' I informed this person that the DDA had \$1.2 million dollars there was great shock and surprise in response."

Council Member Helke said that "Ms. Coogan asserts that she has always been completely clear and transparent in disseminating DDA financial information and if we are laboring under the impression the DDA has no money it must be our inability to understand. However, I would like to suggest that perhaps there is a breakdown in communication somewhere. At any rate, as a result of Ms. Coogan's presentation at the last meeting I am resolved to double down on my questions. Ms. Coogan can agree to answer them or not as she sees fit."

Council Member Helke began a personal diatribe stating, "I regret this additional posing of questions may cause Ms. Coogan to feel even more personally affronted but perhaps if she answers in a loud and condescending tone of voice as she did at the last meeting who know maybe that will make her feel better. Council Member Helke began a personal diatribe against another DDA member stating, "Just as a side note, Jason Easter who was appointed to the DDA in November has been absence for five out of the last seven meetings including today that could have something to do with lack of a quorum. I am just saying." (**Clerk Note: there has been a quorum of the DDA board for seven months*).

Dennis Burks, 206 Spring Park – said all the stuff about the junior high school is a mess and that he had talked to the supervisor and there will be a follow up. Mr. Burks opined that in the DDA programs there are provisions for employee's retirement, medical and insurance and other things to be offered. Mr. Burks demanded to know, "Is there now or in the future going to be anybody using those?" Mr. Burks said that he has three minutes and he can stand there for his three

minutes. Chairman Ambrose explained to Mr. Burks that without a crystal ball no one can predict what will happen in the future.

Mr. Burks said his understanding that city hall, city police however they do it, the city charged the DDA fund for patrolling that area which was patrolled for years before you got the DDA. So you are “robbing the DDA fund.”

Mr. Burks said for fire rescue in the DDA area, is there anybody charging the DDA fund for those services. Mr. Burks said many citizens he had talked to said it sounds like you are robbing the DDA fund.

Mr. Burks said he had been in some of the subdivisions and agreed the roads are bad and they need to be fixed and there is also a drainage problem which complicates it because the ditch lines have not been dug out in forty years. Mr. Burks said some of those culverts have been filled in so how is the water going to flow through a ditch line and culvert when the culvert is filled in and ditch has been filled for forty years.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Update – Commerce, Walled Lake, Wixom Trailway Renegotiation

Executive Whitt said the Mayor met with the Mayor of Wixom, their City Manager, and the new incoming City Manager, and Commerce Township Supervisor and put on the table the issues that are of concern. The Mayor was ready to lay out the issues that needed to be dealt with, about the equity and interlocal agreement. Mr. Whitt said before she put it on the table the City Manager of Wixom put it on the table explaining that the other cities’ officials had the same concern Walled Lake does about the provision in the contract that says each individual entity, local government would be responsible for their maintenance. Mr. Whitt said in Section 9 of the Interlocal agreement says that if any entity pulled out and it dissolved, whatever the Trailway built would become the responsibility of that entity. Mr. Whitt explained that in our case, Walled Lake has the depot and if the Trailway council turns it into a large entity or develops it in such a way that it is a perpetual maintenance cost and then they pull away from us, the City of Walled Lake the smallest of the communities and smallest expanding tax base, would be responsible to take care of the depot in perpetuity. Mr. Whitt stated that it could be good business for the bigger communities because they still have their trail and the depot that serves all of the trail but Walled Lake would have to maintain the building because there is always going to be a trail. Mr. Whitt explained that the Mayor and city representatives had come up with some language, which was the beginning of the discussion whether the city should be in it as a trail council and language added would protect Walled Lake’s and Wixom’s interest. Mr. Whitt said the proposed new language states if the Trailway council dissolves that the maintenance on that facility or any other facility that may be developed on the trail would be maintained in perpetuity of all three communities. Mr. Whitt said Wixom’s representatives had the same concerns as Walled Lake. Mr. Whitt said there has never been discussions about there not being a Trailway. Mr. Whitt explained the problem was if there is something built that requires substantial maintenance, security, restrooms, and ADA compliance, and then one of the communities walks

away that then leaves Walled Lake still paying for the maintenance so that is the equity issue that has been on the table from the beginning. Mr. Whitt said all the parties involved were on the same page and it is very possible that we can have the deal done by next month since everyone in the room agreed that the issue at hand needed to be fixed and everyone's interest needed to be protected. Mr. Whitt said that the Trailway ribbon cutting is on the 30th and that the city had cleaned up of the depot to get ready for rehab. Mr. Whitt explained that the city will be working closely with Friends of the Trail to get our section looking good.

Mayor Ackley said the thing council was concerned with over the years was the way some of the administration was handled and amounts paid out for contracts. Mayor Ackley said the other communities' representatives understood our concern and they understood why the city held the public hearing.

Executive Director Whitt said again he was surprised that they walked in with their own concerns with the trail council. Mr. Whitt said that other community representatives brought up that the trail council is paying too much in legal fees \$350 an hour, when municipal rate varies from \$110 to \$130. Mr. Whitt supported Commerce Supervisor Dave Scott's suggestions that the Trailway bid specs were specifically written to exclude people, which some believed increased the price and that what came of that discussion was at the next trail meeting the Trail council will void the bids and rebid to clean the slate, get rid of the stigma and to start over in a manner that won't exclude anyone.

Mayor Ackley explained that the new Commerce Township's Supervisor clearly understands what had been going on with the trail before he was elected. Mayor Ackley said council has discussed the trail ever since 2009 and then John Owsinek became a rep. Mayor Ackley reminded the board that Council Member Owsinek would regularly report back to the city council of what was occurring at the meetings and the Council Member Owsinek did not agree with the way the Trailway Council was operating. Mayor Ackley said there had been incorrect comments that Walled Lake never discussed the trail and that is why the city held a public hearing on spending tax dollars on the trail. Mayor Ackley reminded everyone that if people read the minutes and pay attention they would know the city council had been trying to get the trail to operate correctly for a while.

Executive Director Whitt said Mayor Hinkley said he is not running for mayor so there will be a new mayor for Wixom.

DDA Board Member Lublin asked if there was discussion about Walled Lake only being 11% of the population and 6% of the tax base. Executive Director Whitt said Wixom brought up the length of the trail since they have the shortest length of the trail. Mr. Whitt said there are options to look into the equity of the trail between the length, population, or tax base. Mr. Whitt said any grants found should be able to fund construction of the trail. Mr. Whitt said there has never been talk about not having a Trail, the discussions have been about what is equitable and fair for the perpetual maintenance cost to the Walled Lake taxpayers.

DDA Board Member Blair asked about the depot and if there has been any talk about renting it out. Mayor Ackley there are restrictions within the grants from the state to buy it and we must deal with first things first to make sure the city can rent it out.

Executive Director Whitt said it is a good question but it has to be rehabbed first and that the grant application and the whole process from the beginning has restricted use of the depot. Mr. Whitt said people think now that we own the depot that people can just move in and that is part of the public discussion that the depot is going to be a big money maker. Mr. Whitt explained that it is not going to be used for that but what can be built around it and that may be when the DDA kicks in. Mr. Whitt explained that it becomes a hub and DDA supports the businesses around the depot and the DDA might facilitate a trail type of business.

Mayor Ackley said the City of Walled Lake plus the trail council has to protect everyone's interest in that trail. These Friends of the Trail want to go in the depot and start cleaning it up and throwing stuff out but that building is not safe and the original part doesn't even have a foundation. Mayor Ackley said Supervisor Dave Scott told them to slow down and that the depot is in Walled Lake and not just anyone can walk in there. Mayor Ackley said it must be a licensed contractor who has an insurance policy through the city and not volunteers, alone going inside. Mayor Ackley expressed concerns about a lawsuit if someone gets hurt.

Council Member Helke said that is pathetic.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Recommendation of Award for storm Sewer Inspection

DDA Managing Director Rodgers said there was discussion about videoing the storm sewer lines in the downtown area. She said several bids have come in from the consulting engineering company. She said Metro Environmental is a local company who came in with the low bid.

Chairman Ambrose said it makes sense to use the local company for business in the city. He said we have other contracts with the company.

DDA 05-02-17 MOTION TO AWARD BID TO METRO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FOR WALLED LAKE DOWNTOWN STORM SEWER VIDEO INSPECTION AND NOT TO EXCEED \$24,992.50

Motion by Blair, supported by Allen: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To award bid to Metro Environmental Services for Walled Lake downtown storm sewer video inspection and not to exceed \$24,992.50.

2. Mayor nomination for review by board & for recommendation for DDA Board

Mayor Ackley said she has received two applications and said her original intention was to provide DDA with both applications and say which person would the board prefer. She said because of recent actions and comments against the city council and the fact we are an embarrassment to the city, we are not doing what we are supposed to do, and the DDA has no vision. She said even though she was not at last month's meeting she did listen to the tape. She said she doesn't know what the DDA's choice is going to be but her only recommendation is Mindy Fernandez. She said she also must think about what can be approved by her city council and she believes there is the only one person she could get four votes for. She doesn't want to nominate someone she knows is going to fail because then she would be an embarrassment.

**DDA 05-03-17 MOTION TO APPROVE MELINDA FERNANDES' DDA
APPLICATION TO GO TO CITY COUNCIL FOR
APPOINTMENT**

Motion by Ambrose, supported by Wlodarczyck: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve Melinda Fernandez' DDA application to go to City Council for appointment.

3. Presentation -- Dave & Amy's at their request (acquisition of the old Big Boys)

DDA Managing Director Rodgers said she has spoken with several people who were looking into acquiring the old Big Boys. She said they dropped off a lot of information last week and thought someone would be at the meeting to discuss the acquisition.

Mayor Ackley said she was approached by a commercial broker asking her questions about getting a liquor license in the DDA district. She said they wanted to make a presentation.

DDA Executive Director Whitt said the record should show that there is no acquisition that it would be an attempt and they are in negotiations. He said they are trying and not sure that it is a done deal. He said they sent in paperwork that was not filled out and was blank.

OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Planning and Development Report

DDA Executive Director Whitt said the DDA needs to be in the position to recommend to city council and planning commission to maximize the rezoning of the CEC building. He said if the DDA decides to help to get it developed and if we are trying to bring in more tax dollar. He does not think the school board would oppose that.

B. Executive Director Report

None

C. Promotion Committee – June 24, 2017 Market Day & Beach party

DDA Board Member Wlodarczyck said the committee is meeting every 2 weeks and market day applications are coming in. She said the committee is getting sponsors and still looking to get more. She said the committee is focused on making this event a success. She said rotary and hospitality house will be operating the beer tent and will be sharing that responsibility. She said also the rotary will sponsor a children's activity area during the event. She invited people to participate and join the promotion committee.

Chairman Ambrose said this is the first printing and once we get more sponsors we will put them on there. He said there is entertainment booked for the event with the stage and bleachers booked.

DDA Member Lublin said he went to Parks and Recreation and they are excited for the event too.

DDA Member Maurer asked about the Adirondack chairs. He said perhaps his company can donate the material to make the chairs.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: None

5. CONSIDERATION OF WARRANT:


DDA 05-04-17 APPROVAL RECEIVE AND FILE THE WARRANT FOR APRIL 2017


Motion by Lublin, supported by Blair: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the warrant for April 2017

6. ADJOURNMENT:

DDA 05-05-17 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ambrose, seconded by Blair; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 5:08 p.m.


Chelsea Rodgers
DDA Managing Director


Casey Ambrose
Chairman