



CITY OF WALLED LAKE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2017

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

ROLL CALL: Ackley, Allen, Ambrose, Blair, Easter, Fernandes, Lublin,
Marshal, Wlodarczyk

ABSENT: Easter

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Director Whitt, DDA Managing Director Pesta, Finance
Director Coogan, Police Chief Shakinas, Mayor Pro Tem Owsinek,
Council Member Costanzo, Council Member Helke

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:

DDA Board Member Allen asked to discuss zoning and building process under new business.

DDA 11-01-17 MOTION TO EXCUSE DDA BOARD MEMBER EASTER

Motion by Ambrose, seconded by Lublin, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse
DDA Board Member Easter.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**DDA 11-02-17 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 10, 2017
MEETING**

Motion by Lublin, supported by Ackley: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the
minutes from the October 10, 2017 meeting.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Council Member Helke asked if there is someone in this group or in the city in general who is
responsible for or charged with the task of recruiting new business or being an outreach person
for new business.

DDA Chairman Ambrose said it is on an income basis. Mr. Ambrose explained when a person
comes to the board with a proposal the DDA listens and then directs the person to the appropriate
board.

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. 239 E. Walled Lake Drive – Dan Martin – Façade Grant

**DDA 11-03-17 MOTION TO APPROVE THE FAÇADE GRANT FOR DANIEL
MARTIN AT 239 E. WALLED LAKE DRIVE IN THE AMOUNT
OF \$1,500.00**

Motion by Allen, supported by Lublin: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the façade grant for Daniel Martin at 239 E. Walled Lake Drive in the amount of \$1,500.00.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

1. DDA Board Member Allen – Discussion Zoning and Building process

DDA Board Member Allen said he did not realize until he got involved with this exactly what the city's procedure was for building permits and it has come to Mr. Allen's attention it is quite complicated obtaining any building permit in the city. Mr. Allen said he came to the city and asked for a roof permit and he got a roof permit and then was told it needed an open roof inspection which Mr. Allen had never heard of. Mr. Allen said when you take shingles off a roof and then call the city waiting for inspector to come out before you can put shingles back on. Mr. Allen said how are you going to do this and then Mr. Allen said he was told he can take a picture and e-mail the pictures. Mr. Allen said that is not practical. Mr. Allen said the other thing is the time and involvement in obtaining a permit for any kind of development in the city. Mr. Allen has been on this board for 27 years and the board is always trying to help businesses and bring development in the city and the DDA does what they can to help, and it seems the procedures in place and are being dictated by whoever is penalizing for those trying to improve the city or trying to make improvements or invest in the city. Mr. Allen said the DDA has tried to encourage investment in the city of walled lake. Mr. Allen said he does not want to get into particulars but the items he has been involved in trying to pull a permit for a single-family house is just atrocious. Mr. Allen stated he has been building for many, many years and were not involved with this type of process. Mr. Allen thinks and feels something should be done and looked at. Mr. Allen stated he does not know if council is aware of what is going on, but the expense and the amount of money and time bring involved trying to get anything approved in the city is not user friendly. Mr. Allen thinks it needs to be as user friendly as possible. Mr. Allen said getting the information that need to be obtained and getting it documented and recorded so he has it in the future is an absolute. Mr. Allen said some of the things being asked of him is unheard of. Mr. Allen said he does not know what the DDA has to do but it needs to be looked at in detail at the city in the building permit process.

DDA Chairman Ambrose said he will take it back to council and ask it to be put on for discussion. Chairman Ambrose said it can be turned over to the Mayor and maybe a building committee together and see what the neighboring communities are doing.

DDA Board Member Lublin said the city needs to be friendly to the builder and developers and try to help them. Mr. Lublin said on the other side communities all around are making it difficult but Walled Lake needs to be different.

OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Planning and Development Report

Executive Director Whitt said to Mr. Allen's remarks there are issues about the cost and fees. Mr. Whitt said the city has been collecting fees for consultants to respond. Mr. Whitt said there is a cost associated with doing it that way. Mr. Whitt said there is an attempt by legislation that the city level to get that back. Mr. Whitt said the city can reduce or eliminate the fees which is generally what the complaints are, the fees for various things are too high. Mr. Whitt said if the city reduces that and the city can but the cost of that would be picked up by the taxpayers, in general, which may or may not be a good idea. Mr. Whitt said the other issue is the building codes the city adopted. Mr. Whitt explained that when the state building codes are adopted the state is more stringent than Mr. Allen's 27 years, that is one of the issues. Mr. Whitt said the city does not have on staff engineers or building officials so when one hires outside consultants they can interpret the codes based on reading the state laws the city adopted and that also can be anal. Mr. Whitt said the reverse of this is to hire your engineer which would come costly for the city, there are some issues and it does need to be reviewed by council. Mr. Whitt said he does not know that Mr. Allen's complaint is about his particular issue, in general, it is all true. Mr. Whitt said in his seven years often time the person doing the process do not know the process when they come to the city and it causes some challenges. Mr. Whitt said it is a good idea to review the fees if council wants to reduce them but remember before that happens the city has to obey certain state laws. Mr. Whitt said one of the issues is requiring an escrow but generally when the developer puts something up they get it back as long as the developer finishes the project. Mr. Whitt explained the other side of the issue when one is not paying attention is a place like East Bay, everybody pretty much acknowledges no one was in charge in there and it has been a legal and political mess.

Executive Director Whitt said the question asked by Council Member Helke about who recruits new business, he is surprised that question was asked because the DDA Board works with all new businesses that want to come into the city. Mr. Whitt said that is what DDA does, everyone is trying to get new businesses in. Mr. Whitt said the last business he helped and spent over a year working with and also went to Kentucky to get businesses in that plaza was with the Salvation Army moving into the new plaza. Mr. Whitt said he was involved with bringing in Easter Seals into the city. Mr. Whitt said the questions was asked implying that no one was doing their job and that is not true. Mr. Whitt said the economy drives business.

Executive Director Whitt said the system where people get paid to come back and inspect there seems to be a miss in that process. Mr. Whitt explained the other option is to hire full-time inspectors. Mr. Whitt said it is time to review the process in the first of the year.

DDA Board Member Lublin said when it comes to business recruitment, when a developer wants to come they will come. Mr. Lublin said a lot of times going out and trying to get developers there is a lot of jumping around.

Executive Director Whitt said the economy will drive development. Mr. Whitt said small businesses can be recruited if the city cuts a deal in the unoccupied stores and the DDA can do that. Mr. Whitt said for the bigger development with whatever the city has left it comes down to the economy and the money and financing is right the developers will come.

B. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Whitt said the City had a great year, in terms of saving money. Mr. Whitt said the DDA can get back in the business of fixing things that DDAs are supposed to be addressing. Mr. Whitt said his recommendation is that the DDA start with serious infrastructure issues downtown. Mr. Whitt explained that if the DDA had not done what was needed for the last seven years, the DDA would still have no money in the bank. Mr. Whitt said the first of the year the DDA will start making improvements. Mr. Whitt said the city had a good year and saved over a million dollars for the year and that did not happen by accident, that is called management and the DDA gets to spend some of the money.

DDA Board Member Shuman asked if there is any new information about the trailway?

Executive Director Whitt said the city council has supported the trail the whole time. Mr. Whitt said the issue has always been the fairness of how the trail council works. Mr. Whitt explained when he arrived the trail was operating without a budget, even though the trail council is supposed to have an operating budget. Mr. Whitt said it was all being run by Commerce Township and that was by design. Mr. Whitt said there was no budget, no transparency. Mr. Whitt said the City of Walled Lake was heading towards paying one-third of the Commerce Township bridge. Mr. Whitt explained that was the fight city council was ready to fight for. Mr. Whitt further explained it was always fair to pay our part of the trail. Mr. Whitt said it was not fair having Walled Lake residents pay a half a million of one-third for Commerce Township's bridge cause the bridge will say welcome to Commerce Township. Mr. Whitt said the match amount for the grant that the City of Walled Lake will be paying is \$420,000. Mr. Whitt said Walled Lake is going to have a good trail at the end of this.

DDA Board Member Shuman said his customers are asking him questions about the trail.

Executive Director Whitt said it is about keeping it fair. Mr. Whitt said Commerce Supervisor, Dave Scott, is having issues with his board and how fast it is going and the amount the trail is going to cost. Mr. Whitt said Walled Lake raised the questions early. Mr. Whitt said Walled Lake is ready and has the money funded. Mr. Whitt said Walled Lake is ready and has the money and has saved the money. Mr. Whitt stated he saved over a million dollars last year out of last year budget that meant the city did not do a lot of stuff, he did not hire people and still held the city all together. Mr. Whitt said the city only have to pay \$420,000 one time and then it is maintenance.

DDA Chairman Ambrose said the city was always going to have a trail.

Executive Director Whitt said it is unknown when the trail will be opened to the public.

DDA Board Member Fernandes asked about the CEC

Executive Director Whitt said the 29th of this month there is a hearing for a motion for injunction to stop demolition of the community education building. Mr. Whitt said there was an excavator on the property doing remedial work for the old tanks that were underground. Mr. Whitt explained the school board has no authority to tear the building down. Mr. Whitt explained that is not repugnant to the city's process the school board is trying to save it. Mr. Whitt said it makes no sense for the school board to tear down the building to save more money because by the school boards own documents the CEC building is worth more than a vacant piece of land. Mr. Whitt said he heard it come from the school boards own mouths, the school board does not want a charter school. Mr. Whitt said first of all, the city nor the DDA are trying to buy the building. Mr. Whitt explained all the DDA is trying to get is discussion to delay the destruction to try to broker up a public/private partnership by bringing in people who think they can develop it. Mr. Whitt explained then the DDA may try to assist and help develop it as a partnership. Mr. Whitt said the city is asking the court to give us some time. Mr. Whitt explained if the courts do not grant the injunction, the case may be loss right there.

DDA Board Member Fernandes asked about Bayside.

Executive Director Whitt said Bayside was shut down by Oakland County Health Department. Mr. Whitt said Bayside's food service was revoked. Mr. Whitt said it is about good management and ownership has changed several times. Mr. Whitt said Bayside has also been shut down for liquor issues.

DDA Chairman Ambrose said Bayside has been an ongoing issue. Mr. Ambrose said Bayside had several opportunities to fix the numerous violations. Mr. Ambrose said the health department gave Bayside plenty of time to address the health issues and finally was fed up and said that is enough time and shut them down.

C. Promotion Committee

3. CORRESPONDENCE: None

4. CONSIDERATION OF WARRANT:

DDA 11-04-17 APPROVAL OF THE WARRANT FOR OCTOBER 2017

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

5. ADJOURNMENT:

DDA 11-05-17 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Easter, seconded by Lublin; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 4:46 p.m.



Chelsea Festa
DDA Managing Director



Casey Ambrose
DDA Chairman