

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Special Meeting of the DDA Board
January 27, 2021
Zoom Meeting

The special meeting of the DDA Board was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Mayor Brian Turnbull (Emmet County, MI), DJ Boyd, Margene Buckhave, John Casey (Oakland County, MI), Aaron Cozart, Jim Long, Ryan McKindles, Greg Presley, Shawn Riley, Mary Starring*

Absent: *Carolann Ayers, Patrick Sullivan*

Also Present: *Lori Ward/DDA Executive Director, Jeri Johnson/DDA Marketing & Communications Director (Montgomery County, PA), Marilyn Price/City Council, Dave Gutman/Resident, Barbara Morowski-Brown/City Council, Patrick Giesa/City Council, Manfred Schon/Up2Go, Phil Zakaria/Center Street Grill, Laura Genitti/Genitti's Hole in the Wall*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Casey to approve the Agenda. **Motion carries unanimously.**

APPROVAL OF SHARED PURCHASE OF SNOW BOX

Ward said the DDA has been approached by the Department of Public Works to share the cost of a Snow Box/Snow Pusher. The Snow Box will aid the DPW in the removal of snow from the parking lanes in Downtown Northville. With the streets closed to vehicular traffic and the parking lanes occupied by tables, chairs and structures, it has made it more difficult to remove the snow from downtown streets. A Snow Box moves snow by pushing it straight ahead and the sides of the boxes keeps the snow contained. DPW received a quote from Express Steele of Martinsville, IN in the amount of \$1,750 for the Snow Box and \$250 for the mounting bracket for a total cost of \$2,000.

The cost to purchase the Snow Box is \$2,000. The DDA share of the equipment would be \$1,000. This purchase was not previously anticipated so is not included in the DDA's current 2020-21 budget and would require a budget amendment. The purchase would require the use of DDA fund balance.

DDA staff is recommending that the DDA contribute \$1,000 towards the purchase of a Snow Box to assist with the removal of snow from the downtown streets.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Casey to approve the shared purchase with the DPW of the Snow Box. **Motion carries unanimously.**

HEAT IN THE STREET UPDATE

- a. **Update on Survey Plans:** Ward said the survey was open via a weblink from January 6th to January 24th. 2,606 individuals participated. Respondents were allowed to check multiple boxes identifying their relationship to Downtown Northville, so there is some crossover between groups. Participation amongst groups were: 869 or 33% of the respondents were City of Northville residents. 298 or 11% of the respondents were Downtown residents. The largest group of respondents were Northville Township residents, which made up 1,014 respondents accounting for 39% of the participants. Downtown business owners (86) were 3% of the respondents. Of those business owners, 13 owned restaurants, 20 were retail establishments, 39 were service providers and 14 were offices. They were located on East Main Street (29), West Main Street (18), North Center Street (26), South Center Street (4) and 9 indicated "Other" as their location. Downtown property owners (50) were 2% of the respondents. Their properties were located on East Main Street (18), West Main Street (9), North Center Street (5), and South Center Street (4). Eighteen property owners identified "Other" as their location. Downtown business employees (62) and downtown business managers (22) were 2% and 1% of the respondents, respectively. 508 respondents selected "other", accounting for 19% of the respondents. In the responses, they identified themselves mostly as residents of nearby communities or former City of Northville residents or business owners.

Ward went over the survey questions and responses from the participants provided in Attachment 5.a of the Board packet. Ward also said she would be forwarding a document to the Board with all the written participant comments that were made on the survey.

McKindles asked if the DDA had reached out to some of the current event stakeholders to see if the streets remain closed would they consider other locations for their events. Boyd said there is a Ford Field task force that is looking into whether some of the downtown events might be able to relocate to Ford Field in the future. Boyd said given the water table in Ford Field a 3-day high impact event might not be a good fit. Lower impact events will most likely be recommended. Boyd said Cady Street and the park behind City Hall may be an alternate location. Turnbull said there are many areas in the City being looked at to relocate events and parades. Ward said that if you have a Social District selling alcohol the MLCC would not allow events that takes place in the Social District boundaries to sell alcohol. Ward said there are already special event applications in for 2021.

- b. **DDA COVID-19 Expenses to Date / Deferred Expenses:** Ward provided a list of Covid-19 expenses to date. Ward said from March of 2019 to June of 2020 the DDA spent approximately \$18,000. From June 2020 to current 2021 the DDA has spent \$73,000, the biggest amount was the \$30,000 contribution to Heat in the Street structures. Another big expense was the \$20,000 for the additional music in the downtown over the summer and fall months. Ward highlighted the deferred costs for 2021-22 (\$95,000) that will need to be put off in order to make up for the increased street closure budget.
- c. **Discussion of Financing and Staffing ongoing Street Closures:** Boyd said the DDA has been walking around hosing off fires related to the street closure expenses which is not sustainable moving forward. Boyd said additional staffing will be needed to keep the street closures viable for the longer term. The DDA is recommending a ½ time clerical office staff person and another ½ time maintenance person adding approximately \$50,000 to the DDA budget. The revenue sources to offset the additional expenses will be largely made up from the new TIF revenue generated from the projects at Griswold and Cady, former McGuire Fine Art Project, 150-156 N. Center project and the expansion of Pooles. Boyd believes there may be some additional revenue from Covid-19 relief grants available at some point in the future. Also, the DDA is expecting to increase sponsorship revenue this next fiscal year. Boyd said there is also potential for additional income if the DDA would begin charging a nominal fee for the restaurants to use the Stands and if the DDA would be able to capture some of the revenue generated from the expanded outdoor dining permits. Boyd believes it would not be unreasonable to ask the City for support to help fund some of the street closures expenses as well.

Schoen believes the Social District should not be thought of as a special event but more of permanent park that needs park services to maintain the designated area. Schoen also believes it is necessary to figure out how to sell alcoholic beverages out of the Stands. This will require the MLCC to change its rules. Casey says we should increase outdoor square footage charges for dining in the streets. Ward said we need to be cautious with fees so the restaurants will continue to use the Stands on a regular basis. Genitti believes the DDA needs to get a firm commitment from all the shops and restaurants to be open more often if the City commits to keeping the streets closed all year and therefore forgoing annual events. Genitti believes we need outside vendors in order to keep the Stands operational all year. The DDA could generate extra income by charging the outside vendors for using the Stands. Zakaria from Center Street Grill believes strongly that the restaurants using the Stands should be only downtown restaurants or merchants since they pay Northville taxes. Zakaria suggested using the Stands for something other than food like retail businesses or sponsor booths. Zakaria believes warmer weather will encourage more downtown restaurants to use the Stands. Buckhave said she heard from retailers that they would appreciate the restaurants to be open during lunch when they are open for business. Buckhave feels the restaurants and retailers need to better coordinate hours that work during the day and in the evening. Starring suggested letting

artists and retailers into the Stands. Presley suggested stringing Tivoli lights throughout the downtown, they will provide great ambience.

Ward wanted to publicly thank Schoen for his commitment to Heat in the Street and for being the driving force behind its success. Schoen has committed so much time and effort to this event and frequently jokes that he is retiring from public service. Schoen believes we need a manager overseeing the Pods and Stands providing information to participants.

Boyd said he had a conversation with Ayers about the role the DDA plays in the Social District. Boyd said that the Social District is not generating any income revenue for the DDA. Boyd and Ayers believe the DDA needs to be more than the party planner and have a renewed focus on generating new development to increase the downtown footprint.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by McKindles to recommend to City Council the continued closure of E. Main and N. Center Streets to vehicular traffic, fund the expanded Social District with the 5 revenue sources identified in the communication, increase staffing for a part time clerical and part time Social District staff, issue permits for expanded retail and restaurant use of sidewalks and street's from March 1, 2021 to February 28, 2022, unless extended by City Council, and establish a Social District Committee to support the Social District Initiative. **Motion carries unanimously.**

BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The next DDA Board meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2021.

Motion by McKindles, seconded by Turnbull to adjourn the DDA Board meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 am

Respectfully submitted,
Jeri Johnson, Marketing and Communications Director
Northville DDA