



Charter Township of Meridian
Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
Municipal Building, 5151 Marsh Rd., Okemos, MI 48864
Monday, October 4, 2021 – Minutes

Members

Present: Susan Fulk, Renee Korrey, Bill Cawood, Tom Stanko, and Peter Campbell

Members

Absent: Scott Weaver, Supervisor Ron Styka, Jim Raynak, and Jim Spanos

Staff

Present: Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark and Township Manager Frank L. Walsh

Others

Present: Planning Commissioner Mark Blumer, Trustee Patricia Jackson and Treasurer Deschaine(joined at 8:15am)

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Korrey called the meeting to order at 7:34 am and read the mission statement.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION BY MEMBER CAWOOD TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER FULK. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 25, 2021

MOTION BY MEMBER FULK TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER STANKO. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Monthly Financials

Director Clark reported that the current cash on hand is \$58,345. The DDA mortgage note is \$124,500 and the signatures for the loan termination documents are signed. The total year to date (YTD) is (\$66,155). YTD tax capture is 16,972.

6. AUTHORIZATION OF PAYMENTS

A. Consumers Energy Bill September 2021

MOTION BY MEMBER CAWOOD TO APPROVE THE PAYMENTS OF THE SEPTEMBER 2021 CONSUMERS ENERGY BILL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$189.34 SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CAMPBELL. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Village of Okemos Update

Director Clark began review of the item by clarifying, Village of Okemos LLC will be the formal entity title and moving forward Tru North is no longer associated with the project. Will Randle previously represented Tru North and they are no longer affiliated with the project. Village of Okemos LLC team's memo requests for the Township to commit financial support of the project. The memo indicates that the Village of Okemos development will create about \$8.5 Million dollars in tax increment that can be used by the developer and the DDA body for the project. The developer is requesting the use of \$2.5 Million for infrastructure work on Ardmore, Clinton and Hamilton roads. The developer also requests an additional \$2.3 Million from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund to support additional street infrastructure for the project. The funds from the redevelopment fund will be reimbursed by the DDA TIF funding over time.

Manager Walsh spoke to the DDA members to remind them of the long history of working with this development team. Years ago the same team for the Village of Okemos, came to the Township with a concept for what is the Elevation Apartments project. That is great project that supports employees for Delta Dental and Jackson National Life; almost fully occupied market rate residential development. The same group promised a grocery market in the south of town where the old Value Tire store sits. Before the Elevation project was complete the market concept was removed from the project. Some in the community feel like it is a bait and switch tactic to build residential with higher density and withdraw the commercial elements. The Township has designated the four corners area with the ability to build as dense and as high as feasibly necessary. The development team came in July with a request to reduce the commercial nonresidential space and the Township board would not support the request. The Township has come very far and is committed to assisting a developer with creating a new downtown as long as the intended vision of commercial corridor on Okemos road is met.

Director Stanko thanked Manager Walsh for the overview and appreciated that the facts are being presented.

Director Cawood brought up a concern related to the 18' hole in the complex that is surrounded by fencing. Director Cawood asked how long it can stay that way or what should be done to fill that hole in? What steps should we take to be able to manage that issue?

Director Clark discussed that hole was excavated during the demolition by the State as the property at the time of application for State funding for site cleanup that particular parcel was abandoned and not owned by anyone. The State took on the responsibility for removal of the contamination during demolition. The location of that hole may become the new entrance to the basement level space when the project is completed. Director Clark explained the hole still contains contaminants and to back fill it would mean whatever was used as back fill would have to be removed during construction and cleaned again. Future discussion may have to happen with the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy to determine the future of that hole should things continue to stagnate.

Director Campbell asked how much of the commercial space has been reduced on the project? Director Clark clarified that though the developers requested to reduce the commercial/nonresidential space, the Township board did not approve the reduction. The developers are committed to building commercial along Hamilton roads for approximately 28,800 sq. ft.

Director Clark added the request of the developer is for the TIF payments to come to the developer first and the DDA would not get paid back until year 2033 (11 years) after the development is completed.

Commissioner Blumer asked if the Township has time commitments associated with development approvals. Director Clark stated there are timelines associated with approvals however that comes with a signed development agreement.

B. DDA TIF Application Review

Director Clark suggests with the website changes for the commissioners to review the DDA TIF Application for format so that it can be placed on the website with updated information. The content and requested items of the application are in order Director Clark is requesting a review for misspellings, name changes etc.

Chair Korrey stated how much work went into the application with the work of the current DDA members, Township board members and others. She invites members to look for grammatical errors and keep the content of the application as is.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. DDA Incentives for Retention, Attraction and Expansion Discussion

Director Clark stated as a part of the main street program, thriving DDA's work to establish goals to better improve their districts. Currently there isn't a formal business attraction, expansion and retention program in the DDA. Director Clark included two Mainstreet Michigan articles for members to review, Business Development and Fund Development toolkits. Within the coming months the DDA members will approve a program to better understand the current businesses in the district, create a plan to assist them and help them expand. One program that returns annually is the Match on Main program that helps a business that is new relocate to a DDA or help a business within a DDA expand. No motion necessary as there is nothing to approve just discussion.

9. REPORTS

A. Township Board

Treasurer Deschaine reported the following:

- The Board voted to move forward with the Sparrow rezoning at Jolly and Kansas Road
- Reviewing and approving the Citizen's Survey
- Residents are collecting signatures to put recreational marijuana on the ballot

B. Township Manager

Manager Walsh reported the following:

- Thank you to the DDA for making Mark Kieselbach's retirement party special
- Welcome to Director Schmitt

- 2020 Audit was positive and showed growth in our fund balance to \$10 million
- Assessor is stepping down and working for East Lansing full-time. We have hired Ashley Winstead as the new Assessor beginning on June 28, 2021. She is currently serving as the Assessor for the City of Howell.
- Working on a new building agreement with the City of Mason
- Local road work is underway
- Working on cybersecurity
- Police awards will be on June 24th at 6:00pm at the Marketplace on the Green
- Township is fully re-opened
- Solar program will be underway soon at the Service Center

C. Planning Commission

Planning Commissioner Mark Blumer provided a summary of recent Planning Commission activities.

D. Chair Report

Looking forward to working with Director Clark and the DDA members on external communication regarding the Village of Okemos project changes.

E. Staff Report

Director Schmitt introduced himself. He plans on updating the sign ordinance as one of his first projects.

Director Clark shared that Consumers Energy will be offering two \$250,000 grants to two communities for neighborhood revitalization or arts and culture. The letter of intent is due on June 18, 2021. She is gathering ideas for the grant.

10. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

None.

11. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

- a. November 1, 2021, 7:30am

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned without objection.

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