

Douglas Downtown Development Authority Meeting Minutes from March 12, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm and roll call was taken. Present were Josh Albrecht, Linda Anderson, Patricia Lion, Erik Pennebaker, and Patsy Ramsey. A quorum was established. Also attending were Lisa Imus, Marcia Bradley, and Neal Seabert. Absent was Michael Alto, John Burmeister, Jerry Donovan, and Bill Underdown.

Agenda items added were the downtown business newsletter, discussion about the App, a CVB report from Josh Albrecht, and terms of office. The agenda was approved as amended.

The minutes from the last DDA meeting on January 8, 2019 were approved.

Marcia Bradley reported the monthly business newsletter for January had been sent out, but several email addresses were unable to open the Publisher file format in which it was sent. Erik Pennebaker agreed to work with Marcia using MailChimp format and help build an email list which can be linked to the main website for additional subscriptions. Patsy Ramsey volunteered to proofread the newsletter for accuracy before distribution.

Patsy Ramsey gave the financial update from an EXCEL report prepared to reflect year-to-date (YTD) January 31, 2019 results compared with the DDA's amended budget. YTD revenues totaled \$28,360.63; YTD expenses totaled \$11,499.12, resulting in YTD net income of \$16,861.51. Ramsey cautioned everyone that the \$5,020 payment to the city to repay the DDA's streetscape loan has not yet been recorded; plus, a first-draft application for the Business Incentive Program has been presented to the Executive Committee. It is pending additional work from the applicant. That application could result in the award of up to \$5,000 from the program. Ramsey also mentioned that bills related to the original enhancement of the sign (the arrow and new decorative panel) and the rebuilding of the sign after the original sign fell were recorded in Promotions/Marketing and Promotions Merchants. In addition, bills related to the Christmas light event were recorded in Promotions/Events. She will ask the City Treasurer to record the bills in the correct accounts. This is especially important since we built responsibility for the budget by committee.

To finalize unfinished business from the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, the Board was reminded the goals and priorities set at the January DDA meeting were to be considered in future activity decisions realizing the Board operates on a limited budget.

The feasibility of maintaining the App was considered and Marcia Bradley reported that usage was minimal at best. After discussion, the Board agreed to honor the month-to-month contract with JabberDesign Website Design & Development through March 31 and then terminate the contract. The Board agreed the existing website requires streamlining to make it more user-friendly. Lisa Imus will inform Julie Abel of JabberDesign concerning the decision. The Board discussed strategic action for expanding the email database of the website to include residents, businesses, building owners, and interested parties beyond the Douglas city limits. Marcia Bradley agreed to visit businesses inside and outside of Douglas in an ambassador capacity and

establish a comprehensive communication link intended to encourage a broader presence of Douglas as a vibrant, progressive community.

New business discussed concerned the terms of office for Board members according to state mandate. Bill Underdown and Michael Alto were identified as outgoing members and the Board voted unanimously to invite Bill and Michael to re-up their membership.

Josh Albrecht, CVB Director and DDA Board member, reported an open house/press conference was scheduled on February 25th at the CVB in association with Pure Michigan representatives regarding a strong media push for the Douglas/Saugatuck tourism season. In addition, Josh outlined a comprehensive June Expo of events the CVB plans to highlight the diverse arts available in the area. Events planned include a culinary “kick-off” featuring area restaurants and bars, an SCA opening of fine arts and area artist through a gallery stroll, musical arts throughout the area in parks, bars, and musical venues, comedic art shows, and performing arts in cooperation with the start of Mason Street Warehouse’s summer season and the art of Shakespeare presented by the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company with several performances in Douglas and Saugatuck. Josh also announced a Visitor’s Guide update and a new video being produced for website distribution.

Pat Lion reported for Michael Alto that he will be stepping down from duties related to the Kid’s Entrepreneurial Fair to be sponsored by the Douglas Elementary School due to time restrictions. Patsy Ramsey suggested recruiting a committee called “Friends of the DDA” to handle specific events to relieve individual Board members of full responsibility. Erik Pennebaker suggested posting a sign in the Douglas Library seeing help.

Pat Lion reported the Executive Committee has agreed to allow Lisa Imus to accept fewer responsibilities connected with the DDA to allow time for her Community Planning duties by delegating the newsletter, projects, Douglas Socials, subcommittees and meeting attendance to others among the Board. Marcia Bradley was asked to manage emails and newsletters to merchants and business owners. Lisa was asked to inform the DDA of whatever other support she needs.

Pat Lion reported for Bill Underdown that the Public Relations Committee met on February 5th to review goals and finances. It was announced a DDA advertisement would be printed in the CVB booklet and the Mason Street Warehouse Playbill advertisement would be discontinued.

The Events Committee announced the Douglas sign committee had spoken with a consultant and a full report would be forthcoming in the March DDA meeting. Greg Horvath as a volunteer member of the signage committee has requested the DDA consider incorporating a rainbow flag emblem in the permanent sign to acknowledge Douglas’s LGBTQ-friendly position. Patsy Ramsey and Neal Seabert volunteered to be part of the signage committee. The Signage Committee was recognized for their exemplary work on developing new signage to encourage visitors to patronize Douglas businesses, events and amenities.

Erik Pennebaker reported the DDA had been approved for a \$1,000 grant from Love Your Neighborhood to sponsor Adirondack chairs for local artists to paint and display in Douglas this

summer season and then auction in the fall. This project is planned to hopefully be an annual event for Douglas and suggestions were made to form a committee and meet to specifically define details of how the Adirondack chairs should be purchased, assigned, where placed, advertised, rules for painting, etc.

Lisa Imus reported the grant to fund street performers suffered a technological glitch and was not able to be submitted by the deadline. She said when speaking with the Department Director an alternate request for discretionary funding could be submitted upon approval from the DDA. The DDA voted to table submitting a grant application until next year. A suggestion was made that the DDA could perhaps solicit volunteer street performers for this summer season since the city ordinances are already set.

The next DDA Board meeting will be held at 5:00 pm on March 12, 2019 at the Rosemont Inn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.