

MEETING MINUTES
Berkley Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, October 12, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:09 AM with Secretary Matthew Baumgarten presiding.

II. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:

Present: Kathy Abrahamian
Matthew Baumgarten
Bridget Dean
Diane Farrington
Ross Gavin
Rob Onesko
Matteo Passalacqua

Absent: Lawrence Gallagher – *excused*
Alanda Knox
Karen Koerber – *excused*
Alan Semonian – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Sarah Craft, Michigan Municipal League
Doug Penney, resident
Dottie Popp, Planning Commission Liaison

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: On motion by Gavin and second by Farrington, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of September 14, 2016: On motion by Passalacqua and second by Farrington, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE: None.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS:

A. City Council Liaison: Baker reported that at the last Council meeting, the rezoning request from Vinsetta Garage for properties they own adjacent to the restaurant (from residential to parking) was turned down, on the recommendation from the Planning Commission. He also noted receiving quality, helpful feedback from visitors on the Robina Plaza since the street has been closed and some events taking place. Finally, he noted that the upcoming election would be held prior to the next DDA Board meeting in November and that the Regional Transit Authority tax proposal was an important issue on the ballot. Anyone interested in learning more can find information at rtamichigan.org.

B. Planning Commission Liaison: Popp reported that at their last meeting, representatives from Vinsetta Garage made a presentation to the Commission requesting zoning changes on property they own adjacent to the restaurant that is now zoned residential, asking that the zoning be changed to parking. She said that their request reflected “wants” rather than “needs,” and that the Commission recommended that City Council reject the rezoning request, which they did (see VII.A. above).

They also held election of officers, and all are continuing in their current positions.

For the last two hours, they listened to residents' continued questions about the proposed Master Plan amendment and form-based codes. The City Clerk had called her asking for hard copies of minutes from Commission meetings in connection with the investigation into the Planning Commission currently being conducted.

C. Chamber of Commerce Liaison: Absent – no report.

D. Beautification Advisory Committee: Absent – no report. Baumgarten reported that Deeds had approached him to ask for a \$150.00 donation to support the Garden Club, a match to the \$150.00 donated by the Rotary Club. That will be an agenda item for an upcoming Board meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Holiday Decorations Approval – Baumgarten passed around a memo from DPW Director Schueller regarding the 2016-17 Holiday Lights Decorations program. LeClerc Display, the company that was awarded the contract the previous two years, submitted a proposal for a total of \$22,740.00 (which is \$2,740.00 over the budgeted amount). Schueller said that the company had done a great job previously and he recommended that the Board approve the proposal, which would be submitted then for Council approval on October 17.

DTE added dozens of power outlets since the 2015/16 holidays, which will allow for more lights and decorations along 12 Mile and Coolidge.

Farrington moved to approve the LeClerc proposal in the amount of \$22,740.00, Passalacqua seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. A budget amendment for the \$2,740.00 over the budgeted amount will be required.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

B. Robina/12 Mile Project: Traffic Study Test – Baumgarten passed around the Robina Plaza Update handout he had prepared October 12. On the update were four areas of feedback listed: local business performance, signage, traffic flows, and plaza use and appearance.

Business reports were mixed and there was good traffic during events, though there was little return business. Traffic control signs and pedestrian signage are installed as are parking indicators and indicators of businesses open. There are issues with PNC drive-thru access, handicap parking not clearly marked, alley traffic, access to residential portions of Robina, and delivery vehicle coordination.

Regarding appearance, decorations have been well received but there is not enough seating at times. There have been complaints about the barricades. Event participation has been growing.

The city is continuing to install signage to direct customers to businesses. Two-way traffic through the northern alley has resulted in bottlenecks, and delivery trucks have hindered the flow of traffic. Mandating one-way traffic is a possible solution. Robina residents have complained about their access to businesses but note that traffic in the residential area is much lower.

Board members with businesses close to the plaza offered views on the closing so far. Dean, whose business is located on Robina, noted maintenance and loitering issues. There seems to be "dead space" in the blocked areas. She is spending too much time cleaning up the area and explaining to people who come into her shop what's going on, as well listening to complaints. Signage could be improved, and access is also an issue.

Farrington said she expected more substantial furniture and noted that smoking and discarded cigarette butts are unpleasant.

Abrahamian, on the south side of 12 Mile, had a different opinion about maintenance and said that she mostly is getting questions from customers about how she feels about the project. She did note that access for the elderly and handicapped needed to be improved and that John Hannah, the shoe repair business owner, felt the same. Baumgarten said he had measured the area and that parking spots could be added. Passalacqua stressed the need for a crosswalk across 12 Mile at Robina.

Everyone suggested that some sort of survey on site is a good idea, and Baumgarten said that a survey is being developed that can also go on the web site. Farrington suggested the area businesses have surveys to give their customers, but Dean was opposed to that idea. It was suggested that information be placed in the front windows of the marquee. Abrahamian has tried in the past to update the window sections but noted how difficult it was to get the key. That issue will be taken up by the Beautification Committee at their next meeting.

C. Board Member Vacancies: Baumgarten reported that the three vacancies should be filled with business people from Coolidge to re-establish that balance with 12 Mile.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. DDA Manager Search Committee – Baumgarten reported that the position has been posted, he has received several applications, and that so far five are very promising. The posting will close on the 26th and then the subcommittee will meet to review applications with the goal of bringing the top candidates to the November Board meeting.

B. Coolidge Action Task Force – Gavin reported that the group would be meeting the next day (10/13) and that he hadn't been able to attend the last meeting. Baumgarten suggested that it would be a good idea to combine all the committees dealing with Coolidge issues.

C. Maintenance/Beautification Committee – Farrington said they're pleased with this year's flowers and hope for an even better display next year.

D. Promotions Committee: The Ladies Night funding was well spent. They were able to advertise in the local paper and put out a postcard, including incentives for shopping and raffle ticket. Popp said 17 people visited her shop, including a woman who told her she hadn't picked up her wedding dress from five years earlier. Popp still had it, and everyone had a laugh. Abrahamian reported that a bridal event that will involve several Berkley businesses is being planned for January. Hiring a trolley is being considered.

E. Budget/Finance: No report. Baumgarten announced that the city has hired a new Finance Director, formerly from Novi.

Baumgarten announced that there was a conflict for the meeting room for the November meeting. He asked for opinions about moving the meeting back a week or finding an alternative space. Someone mentioned that the Board had met at the Library when that happened before, and he said he would check to see if that would be available on the regular meeting date.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 AM on motion by Passalacqua and second by Farrington.