

MEETING MINUTES
Berkley Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, September 14, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:06 AM with Chair Alan Semonian presiding.

II. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:

Present: Kathy Abrahamian
Bridget Dean
Lawrence Gallagher
Alanda Knox
Keith Logsdon
Matteo Passalacqua
Alan Semonian

Absent: Matthew Baumgarten – *excused*
Diane Farrington
Ross Gavin – *excused*
Karen Koerber – *excused*
Rob Onesko

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Dottie Popp, Planning Commission Liaison

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of August 10, 2016: On motion by Logsdon and second by Gallagher, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE: Semonian reported that Simmons had stepped down from her position on the Board because of work commitments. Onesko had moved from the Berkley bank branch because it closed, and so he was no longer eligible to sit on the Board. Semonian asked for suggestions about replacements, noting that they should be Coolidge business people. Dean suggested approaching again the owners of Tootie and Tallulah's, who have two stores on Coolidge.

Semonian said he would be out of the country for the October meeting, and he would ask Baumgarten to chair the meeting in his place.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS:

A. City Council Liaison: Baker congratulated the Board for their involvement in the previous Saturday's Irish Fest on 12 Mile and reported that the committee behind the fest was reviewing the event in anticipation of holding it again in 2017.

The West 12 Mile merchants were to meet again on September 22 and planned to "stroll" the area in search of good event venues. A meeting about the Robina Plaza project was held the previous Monday led by Michigan Municipal League staff. Baumgarten and Baker were going to be attending the MML annual convention that started that same day, and Baker would be speaking about social media. The next Council meeting is Monday, September 19.

B. Planning Commission Liaison: Popp reported on the open house the Planning Commission held at the Community Center a few weeks prior, noting that the anger level was high at the beginning, but as the meeting progressed, the tone calmed. Those who attended seemed more willing to listen to Commission members explain proposed changes to the Master Plan and form-

based codes than they had been previously. People are demanding that Berkley stay a “single family” community. Popp also spoke to the C&G newspaper representative about the story in *Woodward Talk* because she wanted him to know that his article seemed too one-sided and that he should have gotten more information from Commission members. Passalacqua noted that Berkley’s not the only city dealing with the issue of smaller homes being demolished and much larger houses taking their place. He wondered if there had been any cross-communication with other cities like Royal Oak and Clawson about how they are dealing with it. Popp said she didn’t know but would check. The building trend has been going on for quite some time.

Baker said he had spoken to a resident who attended the open house and felt that the session wasn’t conducive to residents who wanted more input on their issues. So they did a “survey monkey” on their issues and asked if they should bring printouts of their responses to the next Council meeting. He told that person that the issue would not be on the Council agenda but that it would be appropriate to present in the citizens’ comments part of the meeting. He said the more proper approach was to bring that to the Planning Commission so that they could put it on the agenda for an upcoming meeting. Then when a recommendation is made by the Planning Commission, that would go to Council and be on City Council’s agenda.

Logsdon asked Popp what was going on with the Adler Condominium project on Harvard, and she said it was a “go” and believed it had been started. She added that there has been no movement on the apartment proposal for Greenfield and Catalpa.

C. Chamber of Commerce Liaison: Semonian reported that the Chamber Golf Outing would be held September 16 and that the next Chamber Chat would be on September 23 at the Village in the Woods in Oak Park. There was also a taste fest scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 18, at Everyone’s Garden.

D. Beautification Advisory Committee: Absent – no report.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Board Vacancies: Logsdon announced that after almost 16 years on the Board, this would be his last meeting so that he could concentrate on his School Board and work obligations and family. Semonian noted that his were big shoes to fill and thanked him for his many years of service, adding that the City owed a huge debt to him.

Semonian noted that the three Board vacancies should be filled with businesspeople from Coolidge as the priority, as Koerber was now the only Board member with a Coolidge business. There should be an attempt to balance equally the number of seats on 12 Mile and Coolidge. Passalacqua suggested approaching restaurant owners on Coolidge: Republica, Bagger Dave’s, Atomic Dog, and Papa’s Pizza. Baker offered to go door-to-door with Semonian to talk to business owners about joining the Board.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Robina/12 Mile Project: Traffic Study Test – In Baumgarten’s absence, Baker reported that the temporary closure of Robina, both north and south of 12 Mile, would begin the following week and that it was important to put the space to good use during the time the street is closed. Sarah Craft of MML led a workshop the previous Monday where various ideas were discussed and activities suggested. Parks and Recreation is already programming for the space and will keep a calendar of scheduled events. MML has material in storage that can be used, and Parks and Rec will bring picnic tables over. Signage is absolutely necessary, especially for the Robina businesses that won’t have vehicle traffic. Semonian noted that the DDA’s marketing campaign should specifically feature Robina businesses and how to access them.

Dean stressed that for her the jury is still out about whether closure will bring her (and other Robina businesses) more customers, and her bottom line is what will ultimately determine for her whether it is a good or bad idea. The area needs to be “prettied up” with more than cement barriers. Logsdon expressed his concern that the DDA is funding the whole closure, but as a member of the committee, he had received no communication about the previous meeting with MML. The DDA needs to have better communication with the City about the project.

MML is asking for \$3,000.00 for their support services throughout the closure, and Abrahamian moved to make a provisional allocation to MML not to exceed \$3,000.00, with details to be supplied about what that covers. Dean seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

There was discussion about postponing the closing until 2017 so as to make more effective use of the space when the weather is nice and also to make sure that appropriate signage is in place. Passalacqua brought up the point that it might be better to find out sooner rather than later that closure would cause traffic problems.

Logsdon noted that there are signs and images previously produced that should be blown up to display. He also suggested the 60-day closure would make more sense the month before and after Art Bash. He asked who is responsible for signage and coordination. Baker said that Baumgarten’s office and DPW are coordinating.

Logsdon moved to postpone the closure for an amount of time and date to be determined, Dean seconded, and all Board members present except for Passalacqua voted in favor, with Passalacqua in opposition.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. DDA Manager Search Committee – The job description for the DDA Manager position had not been finalized at meeting time, and in Baumgarten’s absence, noting the importance of that person to deal with such issues as the Robina Plaza, Passalacqua moved to give Baumgarten the authority to finalize the job description, e-mail it to Board members, and limit the amount of time to seven days for them to request any changes so that the position can be posted as soon as possible. Dean seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Coolidge Action Task Force – Logsdon reported that the task force had met twice and reviewed prior studies. He said he didn’t see a lot of support for traffic calming on Coolidge, and Chief Eshman seems to be opposed to changes. Logsdon said that Berkley needs to make a choice about what Coolidge should be and whether to be concerned about traffic backing up north of 12 Mile and south of 11 Mile.

C. Maintenance/Beautification Committee – No report.

D. Promotions Committee: No report.

E. Budget/Finance: No report.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 AM on motion by Dean and second by Abrahamian.