

MEETING MINUTES
Berkley Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, February 8, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM with Chair Alan Semonian presiding.

II. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:

Present: Matthew Baumgarten
Bridget Dean
Diane Farrington
Lawrence Gallagher
Ross Gavin
Alanda Knox
Karen Koerber
Matteo Passalacqua
Alan Semonian

Absent: Kathy Abrahamian
Rob Onesko – *excused*

Also present: Vivian Carmody, Berkley DDA Director
Doug Deeds, Beautification Advisory Committee
Zack Dunlap, Berkley First United Methodist Church
RoseAnn Nicolai, Chamber of Commerce Liaison/Nicolai Events
Doug Penney, Resident
Dottie Popp, Planning Commission Liaison

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of January 11, 2017: On motion by Passalacqua and second by Farrington, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Reverend Dunlap introduced himself as the new pastor of the re-launched Berkley First United Methodist Church. He is interested in what is going on with the downtown and the DDA.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE: Semonian introduced Vivian Carmody, Berkley's new DDA Director. She said she and her husband came to the Detroit area 10 years ago. She's thrilled to be a part of the Berkley DDA. She's very interested and experienced in "placemaking," tourism, marketing, and the Main Street program and is eager to use her enthusiasm working with the Berkley community. Semonian is looking forward to the progress she'll bring to the DDA agenda.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS:

A. City Council Liaison: Absent. Baker e-mailed a report that Semonian read at the meeting. Council met Monday and welcomed Carmody to the community. He also thanked everyone who had worked to make Winterfest a success. The budget process for the 2017/18 year is beginning for both the Council and the DDA, and he is looking forward to that and more placemaking ideas in 2016/17.

B. Planning Commission Liaison: Popp reported that the last meeting dealt with the changes to the 2015 Amendment about rezoning certain areas of the city. A front page article on the meeting appeared in the most recent *Woodward Talk* newspaper. There were citizen comments about how rapid transit could impact zoning certain areas near main corridors, but there is misunderstanding that the ballot defeat of the transit plan makes that issue moot for the time being.

She also announced that the bridal shop on Woodward will be moving into a renovated space on Coolidge where the auto parts store was located. Their plans were approved by the Planning Commission, and Popp described it as “a beautiful Parisian boutique” and a great addition to the Coolidge area of downtown.

Chief Eshman also spoke at length about changes to State law regarding medical marijuana.

C. Chamber of Commerce Liaison: Nicolai reported the February 17 Chamber Chat will be held at the Twisted Shamrock. A State of Your Business joint meeting with City officials, school district representatives, and the Chamber will be held February 22 at the High School Collaborative Center. The meeting is open to all. It's an opportunity to find out about some of the City initiatives and to ask questions of City officials as well as opportunities for businesses to partner with the schools. Baumgarten said he's invited Carmody to attend as well. The Chamber is working on the plans for Art Bash in June and the Street Art Fest in July.

D. Beautification Advisory Committee: Deeds reported that the next meeting of the committee will be in March. There have been no meetings for the last couple of months.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. 2017/18 DDA Budget: Gavin is chair of the budget committee and Gallagher and Baumgarten are the other two members. Baumgarten noted that the Board currently lacks a Treasurer with Simmons' resignation, and Semonian asked Gavin if he would be interested in taking the position. He said he was. Knox moved to approve Gavin as the replacement Treasurer, Gallagher seconded, and the motion was unanimously by the Board.

Semonian urged Board members with ideas about projects to be funded in the upcoming fiscal year to contact Budget committee members. Baumgarten noted that the new Finance Director will be working closely with the committee on the line items and available funding.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Board Member Vacancies: Semonian noted there are still two vacancies to fill on the Board, and they should be business people from Coolidge. Carmody will be visiting Coolidge businesses to find owners who are interested. She also suggested having motivated high school students as non-voting members of the Board and will work with Gallagher to recruit them.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Coolidge Action Task Force – The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for February 9. Gavin noted that Councilperson Blanchard has gotten some updated numbers on the cost, which may be @\$150,000 (spread over three years). Baumgarten wants to see the updated design and costs. Passalacqua noted that scheduling the implementation over two years rather than three is a better idea because it's immediately noticeable. Koerber would like to see a split of the costs less than 50/50 (City and DDA), with the DDA paying for a smaller percentage. Semonian noted that driving through Clawson he sees lots of extra crosswalks on 14 Mile Road. Baumgarten reported that the city is investigating micro-surfacing on Coolidge, and that would be a good opportunity to add crosswalks and other elements that might slow drivers' speed.

Baumgarten is considering ways to add “street art” to the downtown, not just at traffic lights. Passalacqua noted that the tall yellow stands that line Clawson's streets warning about pedestrians look awful and shouldn't be imitated. Farrington said she wondered if crosswalks without traffic signals are safe. Koerber noted that downtown Royal Oak has lots of crosswalks without traffic lights and that simple “stop for pedestrians” signs there seem to work well without being intrusive. She also noted that drivers just passing through will find another route if the slower traffic bothers them. To counter that, Semonian said that people who avoid the area won't ever get to see what's here.

It was decided that Carmody should attend all DDA committee meetings. Her e-mail is vcarmody@berkleymich.net. She has worked with other cities on the Main Street program and suggested Berkley could adopt their four-committee model without pursuing status as a Main Street Community at this time. Those four Main Street committees are design, business development (economic restructuring), organization, and promotion. She would like to see the Board have a strategic planning session to set goals for the next year or two.

B. Maintenance/Beautification Committee – Farrington reported that they had met with Frank’s Landscaping about the different hanging flower baskets (to be installed along Coolidge) as well as expanding the 12 Mile plantings, and will be getting proposals from them. There will be reservoirs in the baskets to reduce the number of times they will need watering. Semonian said they will also decide whether to rent or purchase the baskets.

The committee also agreed to donate \$150.00 to the Berkley Beautification Advisory Committee (Deeds) for the plantings he’ll be doing in the district, which will be in addition to what the landscaping company takes care of. Farrington moved to approve the donation of \$150.00, Baumgarten seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Passalacqua reiterated his support for a template to be created that can be used when someone is asking for funding from the Board for activities.

C. Promotions Committee: Nicolai reported that the first Ladies Night will be held March 30. The focus of the February campaign is wedding services in Berkley (jewelry, clothing, restaurants, flowers, etc.), and they’re contacting businesses that might fit the wedding ad.

She’s also been contacting businesses to see if the advertising seems to have any measurable effect on their business, and is getting the impression that business was best on the weekend after one of the ads runs.

D. Budget/Finance: No additional report or discussion.

There is nothing to report about the Robina Plaza project.

Semonian asked for suggestions about what new committees should be added and has been discussing this with Carmody.

Carmody gave out her phone number, and Semonian said she should be copied on e-mail for all DDA business or e-mailed directly, copying him.

Baumgarten reported that the city is considering a project to adopt the utility boxes and paint them artistically. Carmody suggested enlisting art students from the high school, perhaps a competition. Vansen should be contacted.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 AM on motion by Farrington and second by Koerber.