

**City of Ithaca**  
**Downtown Development Authority**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**April 8, 2019; 12:00 PM**

Called to order at 12:12 p.m. by Chair Janet Strong.

**Members Present:** Marci Browne, Kevin Collison, Rhonda Endter, Kim Hodge & Janet Strong. Shelly Betancourt arrived subsequently.

**Members Absent:** Kristyn Roethlisberger, Lilly Smith and Mayor Alice Schafer

**City Staff Present:** City Manager Chris Yonker and DDA Coordinator Shelly Moffit

**Public Present:** Lexi Endter and Rob Endter

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Motion by Browne, second by Collison to approve the meeting agenda; motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Collison, second by Browne to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on December 10, 2018; motion carried.

**Old Business**

- a. DDA Development Plan. City Manager Yonker is continuing to work on the updated DDA Development Plan.

Manager Yonker met with Jim Wheeler of Greater Gratiot Development and Ryan Smith of Gemni Capital Management to discussed the possibility of allowing ground floor rental apartments at the rear of large retail spaces downtown. Yonker will present 3 options to the Planning Commission at its next meeting: use allowed by right, special use permit and conditional zoning permit. Collison suggested that at least 51% of the ground floor area be used for business purposes. Browne questioned the rules regarding the PRE (principal resident exemption) for someone who owned and lived in a building with a business. Other concerns included whether a rear access to the public parking lots could be retained, and the limited amount of retail shops in the downtown area.

**New Business**

- a. Financial Reports. The Board reviewed the DDA check register from 12/14/18 – 4/5/19, balance sheets, and revenue/expense reports for the period ending 3/31/19. After discussion, motion by Collison, second by Betancourt to approve the financial reports; motion carried.
- b. 2019-2020 Budget. After review and discussion, motion by Collison, second by Betancourt to approve the 2019-2020 Budget as presented; motion carried. The budget will now be presented to the Council for its approval.
- c. Board Member Appointment Applications. Applications were available to Collison and Smith as their terms will be ending June 30, 2019.

- d. Farmers Market Signs. Motion by Browne, second by Collison to approve the expenditure to purchase two new farmers market signs; motion carried.
- e. Welcome Packet for New Businesses. DDA Coordinator Moffit presented the new welcome packets she will be distributing to new businesses/owners. The packets include: welcome letter; City Hall, government officials and municipal services summary; info for the online business directory & website enhanced listing; how to promote their business on our Constant Contact newsletter; schedule for DDA meetings; info on the Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce and Ithaca Promotional Committee; Gratiot County map; and a 2019 Chamber Community Guide. Info on the Small Business Development Center and MEDC will be added to the packet.
- f. Activities/Events Brainstorming. DDA Coordinator asked the board members for any ideas they had for activities or events for 2019. The challenge is a lack of retail businesses in the downtown. Several suggestions were discussed including music and pop-up vendors. Different options for events will be looked into.

### **Staff Updates**

DDA Coordinator Shelly Moffit submitted her DDA Activity Report to the board, which highlighted the new welcome packets, the constant contact newsletter, promoting the website enhanced listing, the Gratiot Downtown Art Expo banners, replacement of the Farmers Market signs and letters welcoming vendors back for the 2019 season.

City Manager Yonker highlighted several items on his most recent City Manager Activity Reports to the City Council dated March 17<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup>, which included: the purchase of the Sav-A-Lot store, which will now be Ellen's Equipment, a family owned business headquartered out of McBain; Town & Country Group has purchased the old Monroe Trucking building on the northwest corner of Industrial Parkway & Center Street & they intend to tear down that structure and build a new facility; and the O'Brien building located at 1326 E. Center St. is being renovated and will possibly be occupied in the near future.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

Browne informed the board that the car wash has new owners and they have updated some of the equipment.

The Endters are still doing renovations at The County Seat Coffeehouse and Gifts and are missed by the locals.

### **Public Comments**

Lexi Endter added to the idea of having pop-up vendors one evening a month as an event, possibly the first Thursday of the month during the summer. Strong added that having Michigan-Made products available is very popular right now.

### **Adjournment**

Being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Strong adjourned the meeting at 1:17 p.m. The next DDA meeting will be June 10, 2019.

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Marci Browne, Secretary/Treasurer

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Shelly Moffit, Recording Secretary