

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 8:15 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:24 AM with Chair Matteo Passalacqua presiding.
- II. ROLL CALL:**
- A. Attendance Taken and Quorum Determined**
- Present:* Katie Forte
Nate Geinzer
Chris Gross
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
- Absent:* Donna Dirkse – *excused*
Desiree Dutcher – *excused*
Justin Findling – *excused*
Scott Francis – *excused*
Talia Wittenberg – *excused*
Brian Zifkin – *excused*
- Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Anna Grace, Resident and DDA Board Applicant
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Adam Wozniak, Berkley DPW
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**
Laczkovich moved to approve the agenda, Geinzer seconded, and the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- A. Regular Meeting of May 8, 2024**
On motion by Gross and second by Forte, the minutes of the regular meeting of May 8, 2024 were unanimously approved by the Board.
- V. TREASURER'S REPORT:**
- A. Financial Reports for May 2024**
Gross reported revenues of @\$1,000 in May 2024 and expenses of @\$55,000, (flower program the largest expense). These included back-dated expenses. Year-to-date revenues total @\$425,000 and expenses @\$462,000. The ending fund balance as of May 2024 was @\$253,000. There is catch-up still to be done as the fiscal year ends.
- Laczkovich moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report, Forte seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VI. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Approval of Holiday Lights Contract with LeClerc Display Co. \$40,962 for Winter 2024-25 Installations

McGuinness reported that the color scheme of red-blue-green will predominate around the downtown and at the gazebo near City Hall, which the DDA added last year, large snowflakes added to the City Hall/gazebo area. The snowflakes will also be added to the Library lawn. Passalacqua asked if all the poles will be tested for working electricity, and McGuinness noted there will probably always be some that are not working properly. The DPW has received grant funding to fully upgrade downtown lights, but timing for that is uncertain Passalacqua asked for a July/August report from DPW regarding the upgrade and where it stands with DTE.

There was discussion again about the color scheme, this being the second year of using a red-blue-green combination. McGuinness noted he had been aiming for an inviting appearance with the lights. Monitoring the social media reaction this year will be helpful to decide if that was successful. Passalacqua suggested that mid-February is a little late to take the lights down, but some Board members noted if the weather is still snowy and wintry, the lights add some cheer in February.

Forte moved to approve the Holiday Lights Contract with LeClerc Display for Winter 2024-25 Installations in the amount of \$40,962.00, Poirier seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Adoption of Berkley Downtown Development Authority Committee Action Plan

McGuinness included in the Board packet a Committee Action Plan listing the Board member liaisons and suggesting the focus for each committee in 2024. As the year progresses he asks that Board members, and not just the listed liaisons, provide feedback to him.

The individual committees are:

Art & Design

Board Liaisons: Katie Forte, Desiree Dutcher

2024 Focus: Proactively and consistently getting committee feedback on façade and mural program requests, cohesive streetlight plan of action, and flower program upgrades

Business Development

Board Liaisons: Chris Gross, Desiree Dutcher

2024 Focus: Convene roundtables of stakeholders, revisit and reaffirm or modify identified transformational strategies, through lens of those strategies identify needed new businesses

Downtown Events

Board Liaisons: Uli Laczkovich, Ash Poirier

2024 Focus: Honing the quality of events versus quantity, strengthening the planning and systems for our emerging signature annual events, solidify new sponsors for signature events

Marketing Strategies

Board Liaisons: Ash Poirier, Katie Forts

2024 Focus: Berkley Has heArt collaboration with Berkley Area Chamber, building a volunteer engagement process, leveraging Berkley Has heArt as the branding for it

Organization

Board Liaisons: Scott Francis, Donna Dirkse, Matteo Passalacqua

2024 Focus: Returning Board to full operational membership, conducting annual evaluation process of Executive Director earlier, ensuring Committee Action Plans happens annually

West Twelve Mile

Board Liaison: Brian Zifkin

2024 Focus: Recruiting new West Twelve Mile allies, setting regular outreach meetings, developing a framework for attainable art-focused installations and improvements

Passalacqua noted the importance of keeping the Board advised of how the individual committees are functioning and McGuinness's capacity to manage them. Since fundraising has been discussed, one of the committees could possibly assist McGuinness. McGuinness said that securing sponsors for events is one of the major challenges and that members of all the committees could take part in that effort. Gross suggested that Art and Design be focusing also on the Holiday Lights program.

Forte noted a concern about the importance of scheduling *regular* committee meetings. To his question about structure and strategic direction, McGuinness informed Geinzer that the DDA is guided by the 4-pronged strategy of Main Street America.

Poirier suggested looking into available software to manage volunteers, that could organize and sort them by interest. Francis could provide information because the school system has used software for that. McGuinness stressed focusing on improving the future functionality of the DDA structure.

Forte moved to approve the Berkley DDA Committee Action Plan, Geinzer seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. Discussion Items

A. Berkley Outdoor Social Scene (B.O.S.S.) Social District Rolled Out

B.O.S.S. was rolled out on Friday, the day before the Art Bash, and was a success for participating businesses, particularly Amici's Pizza, that had their busiest day ever Saturday. Berkley Common and 24 Seconds have submitted their applications to the MLCC. Berkley's DPW painted the boundary markers on the walkways, and the DDA paid for signage. McGuinness received helpful feedback from other representatives at the Michigan Downtown Association workshop he had just attended about how they handle their B.O.S.S. challenges. McGuinness noted the roll-out received TV media coverage where he and other Berkley public figures were interviewed. He thanked the City Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski and Communications Director Caitlin Flora for their assistance in launching the Social District.

B. Downtown Berkley Farmers Markets for 2024 Launched, Continuing Weekly Through October

June marked the start of this season's Farmers Market initiative, drawing more vendors and shoppers.

C. Berkley Art Bash Concluded, Berkley Pride and Street Art Fest Come Next

The Art Bash was well attended with more booths sold than ever. The weather was great for shoppers and exhibitors, with rain holding off until after close. The next big downtown events are Berkley Pride on June 23 and the Street Art Fest on July 13.

D. Funding Requests Submitted to Oakland County, SEMCOG, Michigan Department of Transportation

McGuinness reported both entities have received Berkley's funding request and he would keep the Board informed of their status.

E. Grant Funding Awarded to Berkley Downtown Development Authority by AARP for Walkability Audit

McGuinness reported they received the \$2,500 grant funding from AARP and the audit can be done by volunteers.

F. Landscaping Enhancement Opportunities for our Downtown, Status of Downtown Flower Installations

McGuinness reported this is one of the big expenses for the DDA, the cost for expansion of the downtown flower program approved last year. Franks notified him of a situation where the flowers they had installed became diseased and had to be replanted in the 12 Mile West beds. Passalacqua suggested that it would be desirable for only one entity, rather than a contractor and their subcontractor splitting responsibility. According to Wozniak, when Franks removed the flowers in the fall, they should have leveled the bed and instead left it mounded, at the height of the sprinkler head.

Passalacqua would like to have a better plan for managing landscaping in the downtown, better coordination between the entities and responsibilities clearly delineated. The DPW will be communicating with Franks about the current issues.

G. Parklet Opportunity for Downtown Businesses Through the City of Berkley

Kapelanski reported that “parklets” are now covered in the ordinance and several businesses have indicated their interest.

VIII. LIAISON REPORTS

City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported that at their June 3 meeting Council approved joining Oak Park as an early voting partner, with Berkley providing personnel to help staff the facility. They also discussed putting a millage on the Fall ballot and decided to hold off this fall. June 19 will be formally recognized as Juneteenth. The City will host a Volunteer Appreciation Lunch June 12 (that day). He attended the Art Bash and described it as a successful and fun event for the city.

A. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Kapelanski reported the Planning Commission recommended approval of the PUD on Coolidge, which now goes to Council for their approval. There has been discussion about having overnight on-street residential parking, with a temporary permit, single family homes only. More information is available on the website. Council and the Planning Commission will hold a joint meeting July 9 to review the zoning ordinance. They are talking with developers for a new restaurant at Beverly and Coolidge. Permitting will go online July 1. Oak Park got media coverage because they are no longer a “dry” city.

B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Absent – no additional report.

C. Public Works – Adam Wozniak

Wozniak reported having additional plugs available for the Farmers Market. The department will do additional tree trimming prior to the Pride Fest.

D. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported the Art Bash was very successful and vendors appreciated the coffee and scones they received from organizers. The July Street Art Fest is their next sponsored event. The Kit Home Tour is being planned again. They are holding joint meetings with Oak Park.

On a separate note, McGuinness introduced Anna Grace, volunteer and community member who has applied to join the DDA Board. She spoke briefly about her excitement with Berkley’s direction and how she loves living in the city. McGuinness also reported that the owner of America’s Stamp Shop, who lives in the newly renovated business, has also applied for a seat on the Board, important because the State will require DDAs to have a district resident on their Boards.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

This is students’ last day of school, and both Findling and Wittenberg had excused absences.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee

No report.

B. Business Development Committee

1. *Peninsulas*. McGuinness reported the owners are closing their Berkley business and moving up north but will retain ownership of the Berkley building.
2. *EMRI*. McGuinness reported their ribbon cutting is June 12. It is a women's clothing boutique.
3. *Naka*. McGuinness reported this popular former Ferndale indie gift shop will be moving to Berkley.
4. *New Restaurant*. McGuinness reported this new French-inspired restaurant concept will be moving into the former auto parts store space on Coolidge.

C. Downtown Events Committee

No report.

D. Marketing Strategies Committee

No report.

E. Organization Committee

No report.

F. West 12-Mile Committee

No report.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. McGuinness attended the Michigan Downtown Association Summer Workshop May 31 in Harbor Springs.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

Geinzer reported meeting with the Holiday Lights committee (as Interim City Manager) regarding upcoming costs to be imposed on organizations holding events in the city. More details need to be worked out.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS: The opportunity for public comment was offered, and Murad reported that there would be a Red Cross blood drive June 11. No additional requests to comment were made at the meeting. Anyone with comments or questions is asked to e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

XIV. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM on motion by Forte and second by Geinzer.