

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, June 8, 2022, 8:30 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:33 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.
- II. ROLL CALL:**
- Present:* Andrew Agbay (arrived 9:00 AM, notified)
Matthew Baumgarten
Erin Brick
Donna Dirkse
Scott Francis
Andy Gilbert
Chris Gross
Jenna Hance
Ashley Poirier
Razur Rahman
Garrett Wyatt
Brian Zifkin
- Absent:* Ailya Siddiqi – *excused*
Tim Barnes
Matteo Passalacqua – *excused*
- Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director
Megan Masson-Minock, Community Development Liaison
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** On motion by Dirkse and second by Baumgarten, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- A. Regular Meeting of May 11, 2022**
On motion by Francis and second by Dirkse, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.
- V. LIAISON REPORTS**
- A. City Council – Steve Baker**
Baker reported that he had been out of town when the meeting was held, but Council approved some capital equipment purchases and approved a change in the professional firm that the City employs to audit its finances. They also approved eliminating fines for overdue children’s books.
- Almost unanimously, Council also approved the DDA sponsored June 26 Berkley Pride Block Party and closing Robina Avenue North at 12 Mile Road at the request of DDA Executive Director Mike McGuinness, who addressed Council and thanked them for their support. Community members who spoke at the meeting were also in support of the event.

B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner reported the Commission had held two meetings and approved two applications from cannabis businesses and reviewed a sketch plan from a third.

Community Development – Megan Masson-Minock

Masson-Minock reported working with the developers for the planned apartment building behind the LaSalette school building. There will be a public hearing on 6/28 about the distillery at Dorothea and Coolidge and their request to have special use outdoor seating. There was also discussion about the planned Coolidge clothing store and coffee roaster on 12 Mile (former Berkley Laundry). Aqua Tots will seek a sign variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

C. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Murad reported that the upcoming Art Bash has accepted 150 artists, and the event can use more volunteers, especially at set up and shut down times. Planning for the Coolidge Art Fest and Restaurant Weekend is ongoing. They've distributed the school passes to use at Chamber businesses and plan to make them available to the general public. The annual multi-Chamber meeting will be held Sept. 23.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Gross reported available revenues for the remainder of 2020/21 are \$52,000.00; net monthly expenditures were \$56,000.00 (\$7,000.00 MSOC technical assistance grant funds for branding refresh, \$26,000.00 on the Berkley Plaza, \$15,000.00 for flowers, \$10,000 on Streetscape Improvements, and normal benefits).

Poirier moved to receive and accept the Treasurer's report, Baumgarten seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Ashley Poirier Board Reappointment Recommendation to City Council

McGuinness noted Poirier filled the seat of Jennifer Finney when Finney became Executive Director, and that term expires at the end of June. The Organization Committee recommended that Poirier be reappointed to a full term, to be approved by the Board and City Council. There will be two additional seats to fill as soon as qualified candidates are identified and are reviewed and recommended by the committee.

Dirkse moved to approve Poirier's' Board Reappointment, Brick seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. June and December Mural Program Request

McGuinness submitted renderings of the proposed mural to the Board for their review. The application requests a DDA contribution of \$850.00 to the cost of the mural, which will be painted on the rear of the building at 2670 Coolidge, facing the high school practice field and visible from Catalpa and the high school. The artist is a Berkley High student (and daughter of the business owners). Samples from her portfolio were also included in the application.

There is a strong possibility that the mural can be finished in time for Berkley Street Art Test in July.

Zifkin moved to approve June and December's Mural Program Request, Dirkse seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. Nova Chiropractic Mural Program Request

McGuinness submitted renderings of the proposed mural to the Board for their review. The original mural at 2745 Coolidge, approved by the Board years prior, had been damaged when a vehicle struck the building. Cost to replace the mural on the side of the building is estimated to exceed \$5,000.00, the usual maximum allowed DDA contribution.

It is not known at this time if any insurance, either the vehicle owner's or the building owner's, will cover any costs of the mural replacement.

Baumgarten moved to approve Nova Chiropractic's Mural Program Request in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00, Hance seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

D. Downtown Development Authority Bylaws Revision Adoption

McGuinness included for the Board's consideration a red-lined version of the bylaws, reviewed by the DDA's attorney with suggested changes included, that was submitted to the Board approximately one year ago about the time of the transition from the past Executive Director to the Interim Director who is now permanent Executive Director. McGuinness suggested also considering revisions to the section dealing with standing committees to merge the former Public Art Committee and Design Committee into Art and Design and splitting Marketing/Promotions into two, Marketing Strategies and Downtown Events. Upon adoption by the Board, the bylaws will also need City Council approval.

Francis moved to approve the Downtown Development Authority Bylaws Revision Adoption, Brick seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Thank You to Departing Board Members Andrew Agbay and Razur Rahman

Gilbert thanked Agbay and Rahman for their time and service to the DDA over their terms. Agbay noted the progress the organization has made during his term, and Rahman added it has been a great experience for him and is exciting to see the direction of the downtown. Both signed resignation letters delivered to them.

B. Next Downtown Block Party (Berkley Pride) on June 26 – Hard Luck Barbershop Grand Opening in Conjunction with Block Party

McGuinness reported that closure of Robina Avenue North had been approved by Council. Dr. Benson of Be Well Medical signed on as sponsor with a \$2,000.00 donation. Poirier said there would be at least 10 vendors, and volunteers were needed. The New Hard Luck Barbershop will hold its grand opening celebration, and businesses close to the party location will be open.

C. American Flags Installed on Streetlights Along Coolidge, Twelve Mile

McGuinness reported that the DPW had installed American flags throughout the city, and the DDA provided financial support for putting up the flags in the district along 12 Mile and Coolidge. The Streetscape line item also included ordering bike racks.

D. Downtown Design Guidelines Progress

Masson-Minock reported that the group had been very busy working on new cannabis business applications, and she expressed optimism about making progress on the guidelines in July to be followed by public hearings.

E. Coolidge Crosswalks Activation, Enhancements Progress

McGuinness reported meetings with the mayor and City Manager, and noted that the Coolidge road diet issues had been decoupled from the reopening the crosswalks. Action to move forward can be an administrative decision, and the next step is for engineering professionals to work with public safety on moving forward. McGuinness also reported he's working on lining up the necessary elements needed for reopening. Poirier suggested having social media posts promoting the crosswalks re-launch.

F. Public Space at Coolidge and Catalpa Progress, Naming Determination

McGuinness reported the three entities (City, School District, and DDA) were working together on the art installation details at the Plaza and around the downtown and renaming the Plaza space. A survey about renaming has been sent to Board members.

G. Grant Applications Submitted for Design Firm Technical Assistance

McGuinness reported seeking funding for an Oakland County technical service grant for \$7,000.00 for design firm PEA.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Wyatt reported school would be ending the following week. Sports for all the teams has been going well. He offered to reach out to the NHS to recruit event volunteers. Poirier said she would create and send him a link to use for recruiting. He noted students use the Plaza area for lunch, especially if they're walking rather than driving. Brick noted that the Plaza needs a garbage can.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua

- 1. Acupuncture Institute of Michigan Mural Completion**
- 2. Berkley Public Library Door Mural Completion**

In Passalacqua's absence, McGuinness reported both murals have been completed.

B. Business Development Committee – Jenna Hance

In Hance's absence, McGuinness reported a lot of interest from prospective new businesses.

C. Marketing & Promotions Committee – Ashley Poirier

Poirier reported the committee would be meeting that night. Inflatable flamingos marked participating businesses at the last Ladies Night Out. Reduex Antiques had its ribbon cutting as well, and Monger's Provisions was a full participant. McGuinness would like to bolster Coolidge business participation. Reusable banners have been ordered for the next Ladies Night Out.

D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis

Francis reported the committee needs applications from those who have expressed interest in joining the Board. They're also working on restructuring the various committees.

E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Brian Zifkin

Zifkin reported the committee did not meet. He installed better parking barriers in his lot and is discussing redoing landscaping with McGuinness. He's also following up on the idea of the DDA leasing the vacant property near his building.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Downtown Berkley Business and Real Estate Updates

McGuinness reported Artsy Umbrella had a ribbon cutting. Casa Amato would like to host a belated grand opening. Owners of a Mixology School on 12 Mile are moving forward for approval. Developers of the Veterans Building property are interested in having a mural done.

B. Downtown Berkley Recent Media Coverage

McGuinness reported the Pride Block Party has gotten some media coverage. Brick asked about having a social media manager and if it could have a budget as part of Marketing. McGuinness said that could be put on the July Board meeting agenda.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:

Zifkin noted that a kosher eatery at the former Berkley Laundromat would create an entirely new demographic of customers.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS: The opportunity for public comment was offered, and there were no in-person requests to address the body. Gilbert asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

XIV. Adjournment:
The meeting adjourned at 9:49 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Agbay.