

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM with Vice-Chair Andrew Agbay presiding.

II. **ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Andrew Agbay (from Beverly Hills)  
Matthew Baumgarten (from Berkley)  
Petro Drakopoulos (from Berkley)  
Scott Francis (from Oak Park)  
Chris Gross (from Berkley)  
Mitchell Moses (from Huntington Woods)  
Matteo Passalacqua (from Berkley)  
Ashley Poirier (from Berkley)  
Ailya Siddiqi (from Lathrup Village)  
Garrett Wyatt (from Huntington Woods)  
Brian Zifkin (from Berkley)

*Absent:* Donna Dirkse  
Andy Gilbert – *excused*  
Razur Rahman – *excused*  
Wayne Wudyka – *excused*

*Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison  
Jennifer Finney, DDA Executive Director  
Lisa Howard, Chamber of Commerce Liaison  
Erin Schlutow, Community Development Director, City of Berkley

III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** On motion by Passalacqua and second by Francis, the agenda was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting of April 14, 2021**

On motion by Passalacqua and second by Gross, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Moses reported the financial standing is similar to previous months in that less than \$100,000 has been expended so far and he projects this fiscal year ending balance will be @\$400,000. With several projects planned for the 2021/22 year, that fund balance should be spent down as originally projected, to @\$70,000-\$80,000.

Francis moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report, Poirier seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VI. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**A. Franks Landscaping Update & Contract Renewal for 2022**

Finney had sent a memo regarding Frank's contract to the Board prior to the meeting where she recommended planning to bid the contract out after discussion. Frank's is currently in the process of

cleaning up the beds and will be planting flowers in them as well as the hanging baskets on Coolidge. This is the Frank's last contract year with the DDA.

She noted that since the last contract renewal, there is more competition in the landscaping business, and this is an advantageous time to put the contract out for bid for 2022. Passalacqua noted that it's also a good time to re-envision/redefine the scope of the DDA's landscaping efforts. Finney advised the Board to choose next year's contractor by December/January. Board members did not vote but agreed with Finney's recommendation. She will take the lead and have discussions with DPW about downtown landscaping.

**VII. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Wyatt announced that Francis was chosen as the new Superintendent for the Berkley School District. Francis said he would like to continue as a DDA Board member, if possible, and Passalacqua said the relationship between the DDA and School District was longstanding and important to maintain.

**VIII. STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**A. Business Development Committee – Mitchell Moses**

Moses asked Finney to report as she had been involved more recently than he had. Finney reported working with Schlutow and Mathes of City administration to finalize instructions on opening a business in Berkley. Those will soon be posted on the Web sites.

**B. Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua**

Passalacqua reported working with the committee chair and Finney to re-form the committee and have discussions with current members to gauge their interest in moving forward. He said there is one façade grant application in the pipeline as well as the ongoing DIA mural project (Robina). He asked for an update on Berkley's Design Guidelines. Schlutow reported those are moving forward and the internal group working on them will be reconvening soon prior to sending them out to the public and Berkley businesses for review and comment.

**C. Marketing & Promotions Committee – Ashley Poirier**

Poirier reported the committee finalized dates for Berkley Nights Out, July 15 and October 7. They also discussed having in-person pop-up music events once a month starting in July as well as a virtual concert at Berkley First on July 28.

**D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis**

Francis reported finalizing the contract for the new DDA attorney, with his first project reviewing the by-laws. They also discussed upcoming DDA Board vacancies this summer. Organization and Marketing are discussing holding a Volunteer Appreciation event, somewhat informally this year.

**E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Brian Zifkin**

Zifkin reported talking with Theresa at Parks & Recreation about a dog park near A&W. She is very enthusiastic about the idea and is researching who the property owner is. She's also researching the costs to develop a dog park, noting there are no funds in the current budget, so that will be a possible project for 2022-23. He should have more details at the next Board meeting. The dog park idea has gotten the most support from the people he's talked to. He also asked Finney if any trash containers will be placed on the west end of 12 Mile, and she said there would be, and she's working with Schueller and his staff on placement as well as placement of benches.

**IX. STAFF & COMMUNITY UPDATES:**

**A. Executive Director – Jennifer Finney**

**1. Wayfinding Signs**

She touched base with the fabricator, Toledo Signs, and installation is scheduled. When the signs are installed, she'll e-mail the Board and a walking tour can be arranged. She'll be meeting with Baumgarten and Corbin to plan Phase 2 soon.

**2. Berkley Plaza Project**

Finney reached out to the lowest bidder, WCI, to get updated numbers to bring back to the planning team and discuss next steps. Passalacqua asked if construction might start this year, and Francis said the School District was definitely in favor of that. Francis recommended that the student Board members, Wyatt and Siddiqui, join the team and give a student perspective.

**3. Coolidge Crosswalks**

Finney reported that barriers have been taken down and signs put up. Zifkin asked about the speed indicator sign that was removed from 12 Mile near the Dairy Queen, and Baumgarten said someone from the Road Commission informed them that the signs are not allowed on Road Commission roads. It's now on Catalpa near Anderson Middle School and could be moved to Coolidge near the crosswalks.

**4. DDA Attorney**

Finney said his first project is reviewing the DDA by-laws, and she hoped they would be available for Board approval at the next meeting.

**5. Virtual Meeting Update**

Finney reported that in-person meetings would start in July, assuming no change in guidelines. Location will be determined once Library status is known.

**6. ED Update**

Finney thanked Board members and City staff for their help in keeping DDA business moving during her absence. She announced that she would be stepping down as Executive Director and plans to work part-time until a full-time replacement is hired. She'll work with the new Director to familiarize him or her with the position and ongoing projects to keep momentum moving forward. The job will be posted May 14. Francis will work with the Organization Committee to restart the hiring process. Instead of salary, Finney will be working hourly.

**B. City Council – Steve Baker**

Baker congratulated Francis and Finney and reported Council is in Budget work sessions. Regarding the dog park idea, he noted Schlutow might be able to help identifying the property owner of the parcel under consideration. A crowdfunding campaign might be started to gauge public support and interest. Vaccination rates will determine next steps in terms of guidelines for schools and businesses fully reopening. He urged everyone to work against vaccine misinformation being spread.

**C. Planning Commission – Matt Trotto**

In Trotto's absence, Schlutow reported that they're discussing ordinance amendments expanding permitted uses in the downtown district such as entertainment uses, office placements, and outdoor dining. The LaSalette project is first and foremost and is moving forward with minor tweaks to be addressed with HRC and DPW. Other Coolidge projects being addressed by the Planning Commission include Aqua-Tots and the long-vacant building at 3180 Coolidge that went through site plan approval. The community engagement process for the Master Plan is finished, and the Plan will be going to the Planning Commission soon. A newly created land use matrix is being posted on the Web site to help businesses and developers make location decisions.

Moses asked if there was any update on the delay with marijuana businesses opening, and Schlutow said litigation is still pending.

**Citizens Engagement Committee – Absent. No report.**

**D. Chamber of Commerce – Lisa Howard**

Howard reported the next Chamber Chat will be Friday, May 14, at 8:00 AM. The Art Fest will be held August 7, and they hope to expand the footprint. The Art Bash is scheduled for Sept. 9, and she suggested promoting the dog park idea then.

**X. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS:**

Gross asked about the rebranding firm that was approved by the Board earlier, and Finney said New Moon was finalizing the brand statement and will be working on creative. She hopes to have a report soon.

Poirier asked about diversity initiatives when sending out requests for bids from contractors. She has many contacts in the trades that would appreciate being included. Baumgarten said they make an effort to expand advertising bid requests in areas to recruit more diverse and minority owned businesses while not specifically targeting any group. Poirier volunteered to be a channel for sharing bidding information.

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Finney asked that anyone with comments or questions e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

**XII. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Moses.