

**MEETING MINUTES  
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 8:30 AM  
Berkley Public Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Conference Room**



**I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:31 AM with Chair Andy Gilbert presiding.

**II. ROLL CALL:**

*Present:* Tim Barnes  
Matthew Baumgarten  
Erin Brick  
Scott Francis  
Andy Gilbert  
Chris Gross  
Jenna Hance  
Matteo Passalacqua  
Ashley Poirier  
Ailya Siddiqi  
Garrett Wyatt  
Brian Zifkin

*Absent:* Andrew Agbay – *excused*  
Donna Dirkse – *excused*  
Razur Rahman – *excused*

*Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison (via Zoom)  
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison  
Mike McGuinness, DDA Executive Director  
Tim Murad, Chamber of Commerce Liaison  
Erin Schlutow, Community Development Director

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

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting of October 13, 2021**

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

**V. LIAISON REPORTS**

**A. City Council – Steve Baker**

Via Zoom, Baker reported that at their upcoming meeting on 11/15, Council will recognize retiring Council members and welcome and swear in the new Council. Baker also announced he has petitioned to continue as DDA liaison. Council will also address its calendar and set rules as well as discussing sidewalks and snow removal. The draft Master Plan will be reviewed. Jack Blanchard is the Emergency Manager. Baker congratulated the DDA on the success of Boo!kley! Month.

**B. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner**

Kempner reported the Commission held the public hearing on the revised Master Plan, which was approved and is now being sent to City Council for its review.

**C. Community Development – Erin Schlutow**

Schlutow reported the Master Plan public hearing was held on Oct. 26 and will be reviewed by City Council at its 11/15 meeting. There has been a lot of interest from businesses in façade grants and façade improvements and several meetings with developers, but nothing is scheduled to come before the Planning Commission yet.

**D. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad**

Murad reported the Chamber held its annual State of the City meeting and scheduled their holiday party for the second Wednesday in December upstairs at Berkley Common. They are currently finalizing plans for 2022, again supporting the DDA's Boo!kley nights, and will repeat their Restaurant Weekend that month. It replaces previous years' Pub Crawl. The Street Art Fest is included in their 2022 plans.

**VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

McGuinness included a copy of the financial spreadsheet provided by the Finance Director in the packet sent to the Board.

**VII. ACTION ITEMS:**

**A. Plaza Furniture and Artwork Contribution Approval**

Passalacqua reported that Plaza construction is basically done and at budget (\$180,000). Adding necessary furniture is estimated to cost @\$15,000 (\$5,000 per participating entity). Adding artwork, which includes a large sculpture and/or student art, would bring that cost up to at least \$60,000, or \$20,000 each from the City, School District, and DDA. He recommends putting off purchase of sculpture artwork at this time. Passalacqua noted that making additions/improvements over time will continue public engagement.

Gross suggested a fundraising initiative to pay for the public art or finding sponsors. Passalacqua noted that the DDA is responsible for maintenance once the project is done. After the initial commitment from the backing groups, the 3-party agreement auto renews for 2-year periods. Art could be rotated around the community, especially any large art pieces.

Passalacqua moved to approve an additional \$5,000.00 to be put toward Plaza furniture and art displays, remaining open to discussion about additional artwork in the future, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

On a related issue, Passalacqua reported discussions the Plaza planners have had about naming the park. One suggestion was the "Triangle," and "Tercet" was another. Tercet is defined as a set or group of three lines of verse (a song) rhyming together or connected by rhyme. The Tercet could tell a story, which engages people.

**B. Bike Racks Installation Plan Approval**

McGuinness included quotations for the two styles of rack discussed at the October meeting. The more artistic (and expensive) in the shape of a bicycle would be located strategically around the downtown, and a larger quantity of the more traditional U-shaped racks, especially in locations with smaller sidewalk areas. Installation costs are expected to be minimal. At present, all racks will be installed on sidewalks. Multiple racks could be placed in one location, such as the Plaza, and colors will be compatible with the branding guide's color palette.

Poirier moved to approve the Bike Rack Installation based on the quotes submitted, Barnes seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**C. Anticipate Façade Enhancement Grant Application**

Passalacqua noted the proposed façade enhancement application at this time isn't applicable to the types of grant awarded, and the Design committee will work with the owner to refine the details before she re-submits her application.

**VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. Downtown Design Guidelines – Erin Schlutow**

Included in the Board packet were notes about proposed revisions to the guidelines, including a summary of the process to this point and design review checklists to be used by property developers prior to discussions with Planning. Schlutow noted that the earlier Design Review Board concept has been scrapped because it unnecessarily delayed the approval process, especially for simple improvements. She explained that in the new process, the DDA Director and Community Development Director will review the design submitted to see if/how it aligns with the Design Overlay and Design Guidelines. Then the proposed project can be submitted to Planning to compare it with the guidelines and make decisions about moving forward. The goal is to avoid stifling creative expression.

The Architectural Design Review checklist scores points for the project and is part of the site plan application. Those points are yet to be established. Once finalized, the checklist can be used by the applicant to see how their project aligns with the guidelines prior to administrative/Planning Commission review. Schlutow asked for Board member comments on the proposed process by the following Monday.

**B. BOO!KLEY Nights Initiatives, Media Coverage**

McGuinness thanked everyone who participated, including several business owners on the Board who were actively involved. On the Trick or Treat stroll alone, there were 66 stops. The extensive media coverage was estimated to be worth @\$116,000. Crowds visited the downtown district, sometimes repeatedly, on a daily bases in spite of several inclement weather days. Gilbert noted that more volunteers are needed for all popular events, and creating a volunteer pool is a goal.

**C. Upcoming MerriMonth Initiatives**

McGuinness reported a merry band of marauding downtown elves will be patrolling downtown during MerriMonth. The artist responsible for BOO!KLEY month window painting is gearing up for December and beyond decorations. The new DIA mural on the Robina theater wall will be unveiled and celebrated before the Holiday Parade. Baumgarten also announced that the museum will be open and selling commemorative Berkley ornaments.

**IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Wyatt reported that most Fall sports have ended after successful seasons. Siddiqi reported that students are starting to work on the yearbook and they're soliciting ads for it.

**X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**A. Business Development Committee – Open**

Hance indicated her interest in joining the committee and helping new businesses interested in setting up in Berkley. McGuinness reported that a record store will be moving into the White Cleaners space on Coolidge.

**B. Art & Design Committee – Matteo Passalacqua**

Passalacqua reported again that they'll work with Deb Kobayashi to revise her façade grant application. Baumgarten applauded the committee and Passalacqua's work with the DIA on the large Robina wall mural, a project that's taken several years to bring to completion. Passalacqua noted the next step is physical improvements to the area.

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

Poirier reported they're focusing on MerriMonth activities.

**D. Organization Committee – Scott Francis**

Francis noted there is nothing further to report.

**E. West 12-Mile Improvements – Tim Barnes**

Barnes reported they're working on art installations in the gateway but need to get in contact with the architect. The Articipate owner is embellishing "Berkley B's" (wood cut-outs) to display in the area, and McGuinness brought a sample to show off.

**XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

**A. Transition from Interim to Permanent Director Status**

McGuinness's hiring was approved by City Council. It was also covered by local news media. He welcomed any questions from the Board about his background. Board members expressed their support and stressed the importance of transparency throughout the process. McGuinness also announced he had been elected to Pontiac City Council and has worked in that city in a variety of positions, including the Historical Society and School Board.

**B. Michigan Downtowns Annual Conference Participation**

McGuinness attended the conference the week of November 1.

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

Zifkin noted the west end of 12 Mile needs to be included in events and promotions, and McGuinness added that they need more businesses on that end of 12 Mile to sign up and participate. The trolley has been covering that end of 12 Mile. Zifkin asked that Sunday events be considered on weekends keeping in mind the Jewish population in the area. Window painting during Boo!kley nights was a great success with many businesses taking part, and the west 12 Mile businesses are encouraged to join in for MerriMonth window painting.

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** 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 was adjourned at 10:17 AM on motion by Passalacqua and second by Zifkin.