

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 8:15 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:15 AM with Chair Matteo Passalacqua presiding.

A. Roll Call Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Desiree Dutcher
Katie Forte
Lucas Gonzalez
Katie Goodwin
Anna Grace
Chris Gross
Shawn Heath-Lee
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Todd Schaefer
Crystal VanVleck
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Scott Francis – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Andrew Creal, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Nate Mack, DDA Executive Director
Adam Wozniak, DPW Liaison

Passalacqua welcomed new DDA Executive Director Nate Mack.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Grace moved to approve the Agenda, Dutcher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2025

Zifkin moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 13, 2025, Grace seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Passalacqua apologized for having to miss the August meeting and thanked the Board for their decision making and Vice-Chair Dutcher for her timely and efficient handling of the meeting in his absence.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Financial Reports for August 2025

Gross reported an increase in revenue to spend of @\$100,000, with expenditures projected at @\$456,000 and revenues projected @\$556,000. For August 2025, she reported no revenues allocated yet and expenditures of @\$18,000.00 (normal benefits, salaries, flowers, marketing, and

BOOKley). The ending fund balance after August 2025 was @\$223,000. The yearly audit will begin next week.

Laczovich moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report for September 2025, Schaefer seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. Winter Barrels/Planters

Mack reported Board consensus that the barrel decorations in the west 12 Mile section of downtown last year was a positive addition to the winter season landscape. The cost paid to Frank's Landscaping wasn't immediately available, and a guesstimate was made that it was under \$10,000.

Passalacqua moved to approve the winter barrels decorations at a cost not to exceed \$6,500.00 Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Executive Director 90-Day Plan

Mack included in the Board packet an outline of his plans for the first three months of his tenure. He described his plan as mostly learning, listening, and getting to know people, then synthesizing that information and presenting it to the Board to develop a work plan. Those plans include meeting with downtown building owners/managers, creating an inclusive building inventory, and business recruitment.

He plans to review the façade and mural grant program guidelines with the Board and decide about moving forward. Poirier noted that there are tools on the DDA Web site that help locate buildings that might be available for sale/rent. Passalacqua noted he hopes Mack keeps the Board updated as soon as he can about unexpected/unbudgeted issues that arise. He also hopes to refocus on the DDA plan and strategic plan.

Forte has taken the bylaws and broken them down into goals for individual committees and what their responsibilities are. Passalacqua added that it also breaks down the Board's objectives and mission statement, both of those needing to be updated.

B. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Application Update

VanVleck reported on the program and how it can impact Berkley. The developer for the Coolidge/Columbia PUD has formally submitted an application for the program, and Council recently passed an ordinance governing it. The PILOT program is a negotiated agreement between a developer and a local government that provides a property tax incentive to encourage specific types of development, such as workforce housing.

Instead of paying traditional property taxes, the developer makes an agreed-upon flat rate payment to the municipality (Berkley), based on a predetermined formula, for a number of years. There is a 15-year cap on the payment, but the developer can ask for an extension. There is a work session to review the Columbia's application and hear their presentation on Sept. 22. The DDA Board can advise on the application but has no decision making authority.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported that Council's last meeting dealt mostly with procedural issues such as cleaning up the language in the City's codes. They will be conducting 10-year City building assessments and a City building space study: What do we have now and what's needed over the next 10 years. Baker passed around the annual report from Main Street Oakland County. He also reported that the Berkley Historical Commission and Royal Oak Historical Society are together fundraising in Berkley and Royal Oak to create a memorial wall in honor of former District Judge Jaimie Wittenberg.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Absent – no report.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner reported they are also going through the ordinances to clean them up. The former gas station at 2114 11 Mile is seeking a zoning ordinance variance to reopen as a gas station only (no vehicle repair).

D. Public Works – Adam Wozniak

Wozniak reported that “Touch a Truck,” a Parks and Recreation event, will be held at the Community Center on Sept. 20. He also reported that leaf removal season is beginning and that DPW has been approved to purchase a new chipper.

E. Chamber of Commerce – Andrew Creal

Creal introduced himself as the new Chamber President and DDA liaison. He reported the Chamber will be making some internal changes to update the organization professionally. His hopes to continue the synergy and cooperation between the DDA and Chamber.

VIII. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Gonzalez reported receiving the e-mail address(es) for the NHS advisors and will pass them on to the Board. Goodwin thanked the Board for welcoming them back and the opportunity to volunteer.

IX. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Art & Design Committee

The Committee did not meet.

1. Subcommittee West 12 Mile

Zifkin reported the committee is discussing revamping the entire flower program, considerations being getting sponsors and using banners rather than flower baskets on the light poles. The committee will discuss their ideas with Mack and get more specifics and quotes.

B. Business Development Committee

The Committee did not meet.

C. Events Committee

Kempner reported that last year BOO!kley had a budget line item of \$10,000 and spent @\$30,000. She thinks there are savings by cutting back on the window art and buying candy in bulk. She found a local artist who is willing to do the window painting, and participating business share the cost with the DDA. After consulting the budget it was determined that the 2025/26 budget has allocated \$20,000 for the month-long events. Kempner is already working on sponsors. Passalacqua stressed the importance of tracking and evaluating all the DDA events.

D. Marketing Committee

Grace reported that Board members will soon receive a survey the Committee has prepared asking for their individual goals and future hopes for the DDA.

E. Organization Committee

The Committee did not meet.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mack thanked everyone for their assistance and especially Interim Director Finney. He met with the owner of the new Beverly restaurant about their façade grant application. They are still hoping to

open in November. He met with MSOC and learned again that the County's portion of the Robina project funds must be spent by September 2026.

XI. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Gross asked about the Dorothea Park, which will shut down for BOOKley from 9/26 through 11/3. Kempner reported there will be a free skeleton decorating event and the park seasonally decorated. There is no budget for activities.

VanVleck reported there is a meeting to review Parks and Recreation plans, including pocket parks, on Sept. 16 with a survey following.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The opportunity for public comment was offered. No 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.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Poirier.