

The Regular Meeting for March 12, 2020 of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board was called to order by Chair, Robert Kemper at 8:10 am in the City Council Chambers at New Buffalo City Hall, 224 W. Buffalo Street, New Buffalo, MI 49117.

Roll Call

Chair, Robert Kemper; Boardmembers; Dee Dee Dunn, Joe Lindsay, J.V. Peacock, Pete Rahm, Doug Roch, Chad Gradowski

Absent: Mayor, Lou O'Donnell, Boardmember Jodi Sullivan

Motion by Boardmember Roch, seconded by Boardmember Dunn to excuse Mayor, Lou O'Donnell and Boardmember Jodi Sullivan from the meeting.

Unanimous 7-0, Motion Carried

Staff present: City Manager, David Richards; Deputy Clerk, Nancy Griffin

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Boardmember Lindsay, seconded by Boardmember Peacock to approve the agenda.

Unanimous 7-0, Motion Carried

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion by Boardmember Roch, seconded by Boardmember Lindsay to approve the minutes of November 14, 2019 and November 22, 2019.

6-0, Motion Carried, Boardmember Peacock abstained.

New Business

- Public comments and submittals

None

Old Business

- Little Free Library – Kate Mell

Kate Mell, representing the Friends of the Library, presented an example of the Little Free Library in natural tone seeking approval of the box color.

All boardmembers approved the color with a clear coat and the look of the box.

This box is the 98,136th Little Free Library in existence. Boardmember Roch inquired if there will be a sign on the Little Free Library pointing to the New Buffalo Library. Ms. Mell will check with the Friends of the Library regarding the sign pointing to the New Buffalo Library.

City Manager, Richards, confirmed there will be a gravel pad between the Little Free Library and the sidewalk.

- **Communication** – Joe Lindsay, Pete Rahm

None

- **Community Outreach** – Dee Dee Duhn, Jodi Sullivan

Boardmember Dunn mentioned the NBBA (New Buffalo Business Association) has changed with new board members and president.

Boardmember Lindsay commented there has been new interest in being involved in the NBBA.

- **Operations** – Robert Kemper

- General maintenance this growing season

Chair Kemper informed the Board that general maintenance is included on the City's agenda for 2020 and the City sprayed for sidewalk weeds downtown last year.

- Beach clean-up's scheduled on March 21 and April 18

Chair Kemper informed the Board of the Beach clean-up days starting at 9:00am on both days and encouraged participation from the businesses represented on the Board to spread the word to the public.

- Informational meetings in 2020 and other requirements

Chair Kemper explained the DDA is required to communicate and share accomplishments with Berrien County at two meetings per year. Chair Kemper proposed the two meetings be May and November 2020. All boardmembers agreed.

- City to inform the County of the meetings selected for 2020.

- Boardmember Lindsay informed the Board the Communication Committee will provide a list of accomplishments.

- Chair Kemper requested for all other committees to provide a list of accomplishments.

- Treasurer Report

Comment was made that the DDA has not received money in three years.

Motion by Boardmember Lindsay, seconded by Boardmember Gradowski to approve the Treasurer Report.

Unanimous 7-0, Motion Carried

- Economic Development – David Richards, Chad Gradowski, J.V. Peacock

- What can we do to help prospective renters?

Discussion including what commercial properties in the downtown area have been sold and/or rented recently and what properties are still available. Discussion also included businesses that are closing.

City Manager, Richards informed the Board of City Code allowing empty building (cold storage) in the City with the understanding the buildings must be maintained on the exterior.

Chair, Kemper asked if there are any incentives/penalties given to renters/buyers?

Boardmember, Peacock stated it doesn't encourage investment if a business rents for three months at a time.

Boardmember, Roch has shared with the NBBA what is on the MLS and stated Zillow has the most rental information online.

- Any updates on AT&T repeaters at the beach

Chair, Kemper stated AT&T is working on it.

- Beach Plan Update

Boardmember, Roch provided an update from the meeting he attended. The tone of the meeting was "less is more", Phase 1 is to build a seawall. Grant applications need to be submitted by April 1, 2020.

City Manager, Richards provided an update on the temporary water solution/flood control. Comment was shared regarding the importance of Phase 1/seawall to protect the infrastructure of Whittaker Street.

- Comments

In response to Boardmember Peacock's request, City Manager, Richards gave an update stating commercial assessments (values) are rising.

Member Comment

Boardmember Lindsay thanked the City for the hard work put in on the St. Patrick's Day Parade. He estimated his business lost approximately 10-15% of business when the street closed.

Boardmember Dunn said it was good for her business and encouraged Board members to look at the big picture of building popularity of New Buffalo and that 10-15% of one-day's business is a small price to pay for the big picture.

Boardmember Roch was pleasantly surprised by the St. Patrick's Day Parade turnout and encouraged the parade committee to reach out to local businesses for support next year.

Chair Kemper commented his business was not asked to support the parade until two weeks before the event. Boardmember Lindsay responded that his business was not asked by the parade committee for support and it was a nice event.

Boardmember Dunn informed the board there is a Verizon booster at her store to increase the Verizon signal and Verizon will put a booster in any store who wants one.

Boardmember Lindsay switched to Mint Mobile (with T-Mobile) which is much less expensive.

Boardmember Lindsay plugged the 10th Annual Corned Beef off at David's Deli on Sunday, March 15, 2020.

Chair Kemper gave an update on the Harbor Grand. The planned opening is June 24, 2020 and the exterior work is starting next week.

City Manager, Richards suggested the DDA move to quarterly meetings and an as-needed basis. The remaining quarterly meetings for 2020 will be in May, September and November.

Motion by Boardmember Rahm, seconded by Boardmember Roch move to quarterly meetings.

Unanimous 7-0, Motion Carried

Adjournment

Motion by Boardmember Lindsay, seconded by Boardmember Peacock to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 am.

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Future Goals and discussion items

Committee mission statements reminder

Speed Limit on Highway 12/Buffalo St - MDOT assessment – being done this week again

Robert Kemper, Chair

Nancy Griffin, Deputy Clerk