

The Special Meeting for November 9, 2021 of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was called to order by Chair, Robert Kemper at **9:03am** at City Hall, 224 W. Buffalo St. New Buffalo, MI 49117. **Internet was down in most of Berrien County, therefore, the meeting could not be recorded and the meeting could not be viewed through Zoom.**

Roll Call

Present: Chair, Robert Kemper; Boardmembers; Chad Gradowski, Dee Dee Duhn, Pete Rahm, Joe Lindsay, Mayor, John Humphrey

Absent – Jodi Sullivan, JV Peacock

Staff present: City Manager, Darwin Watson; Deputy Clerk, Nancy Griffin

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Lindsay, seconded by Gradowski to approve the agenda:

Voice vote: motion carried 6-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion by Duhn, seconded by Rahm to approve the minutes of September 9, 2021:

Voice vote: motion carried 5-0.

Abstain: Lindsay

Public comment

Karen Doughty

New Business/City Manager Updates

a. Progress on ongoing projects

Mayor Humphrey provided an update on the seawall.

City Manager, Watson gave an update on dredging including the cost for the last dredging, approximately \$275,000 and the balance in the account currently, approximately \$475,000.

The Dune Walk bids are in and going before the City Council on November 15, 2021.

AT&T is installing three small cell poles in the area along with an extra pole to accommodate first responder communication.

AEP is installing a monopole by the Public Works garage in Spring of 2022.

Chair Kemper asked about the pedestrian bridge and maybe using Pokagon Fund money for it but the seawall is needed first.

Mayor Humphrey stated dredge contributions may become part of boat slip ownership.

b. Any updates on new DDA board member?

No one has applied as of this date. Chair Kemper reviewed the requirements of a DDA board member. Dee Dee Duhn suggested to reach out to Katha Kissman.

Old Business

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

No update provided.

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

No update provided.

- **Operations – Robert Kemper**

a. Winterizing and upkeep

Chair Kemper suggested someone (either Darwin or himself) to reach out to the company where the City purchased the furniture for downtown to see how to winterize or preserve it as they are showing cracks and signs of wear. Chair Kemper asked if there was a better-looking way to winterize the water fountain and dog bowl. Chipping and peeling have been observed outside the Starbucks.

b. Holidays

The Authority was informed the holiday lights will be up the week before Thanksgiving and the NBBA did not have any events planned as of this meeting date.

- **Economic Development – Chad Gradowski, J.V. Peacock**

Chair Kemper remarked that the Authority is not doing their job and the DDA needed to re-activated. He went on to say the DDA needed a list of what they are dealing with, e.g., vacancies in the DDA area and asked for incentive ideas that could be given to keep renters in business. Mayor Humphrey remarked an abatement would be the only thing the City could do. The Mayor also commented that New Buffalo rental costs are double of anywhere else in the county. The Mayor mentioned an organization who could help get businesses into the open commercial spaces. A site for the public restrooms is being explored by the Mayor. Member

Duhn suggested the most important issue for the DDA should be public restrooms. Member Lindsay said the biggest issue should be opportunity.

Focus was shifted to offering prospective business owners the opportunity to discuss issues with existing successful business owners in New Buffalo. Member Duhn offered her view of how to be successful which included a business plan, not to carry too much inventory, personnel and promotion. Member Lindsay also offered his view of how to be successful pointing out giving incentives to new businesses, giving opportunities and having pride in what you are doing are key.

It was mentioned there may be a new project proposed to the City in the downtown area.

Chair Kemper will be sending an email to members to sign up for newly created committees.

City Manager, Watson, commented the DDA must be the driving force behind the Master Plan regarding businesses in the downtown and how the streetscape and facades are to look.

Member Lindsay commented that the ordinances created after the Whittaker Street Downtown Plan was completed pertaining to signage, etc. are not being followed or enforced.

Chair Kemper suggested getting the biographies of successful New Buffalo businesses posted on the website.

Member Comment

None

Adjournment

Motion by Gradowski, seconded by Duhn to adjourn the meeting at 10:12am:

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Lindsay, Rahm, Humphrey, Gradowski, Duhn, Kemper

NAYES :

ABSENT : Sullivan, Peacock

ABSTAINED:

Motion Carried, 6-0.

Meeting adjourned

10:12 am.

ng.

November 9, 2021

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

9:00 am

Robert Kemper, Chair

Nancy Griffin, Deputy Clerk