

The Special Meeting for March 11, 2021 of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was called to order by Chair, Robert Kemper at 9:00 am virtually on Zoom.

Roll Call

Present in New Buffalo, MI, Berrien County: Mayor, John Humphrey; Joe Lindsay (joined after motion to excuse him), Doug Roch, Pete Rahm

Attending from Chicago, IL, Cook County: Chair, Robert Kemper

Attending from Sawyer, MI, Berrien County: Chad Gradowski

Attending from Union Pier, MI, Berrien County: Jodi Sullivan

Attending from Glanyar, Bali, Indonesia: Dee Dee Duhn

Absent – J.V. Peacock

Motion by Roch, seconded by Duhn to excuse J.V. Peacock and Joe Lindsay from the meeting: roll call vote; motion carried 7-0.

Joe Lindsay joined the meeting. Amended the previous motion to remove Joe Lindsay from the motion.

Staff present: Interim City Manager, Rich Killips; Parks Director, Kristen D’Amico; Deputy Clerk, Nancy Griffin

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Rahm, seconded by Mayor Humphrey to approve the agenda; roll call vote; motion carried 8-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion by Roch, seconded by Duhn to approve the minutes of November 12, 2020; roll call vote; motion carried 6-0. Rahm and Mayor Humphrey abstained.

Public comment

Gary – Broadband survey available and closing March 26th

- Mayor Humphrey offered to have it put on the website
- Gradowski offered to inform the school
- Chair Kemper offered to inform the Three Oaks Business Association also.

New Business

- Review of One Whittaker Street Project – presented by Bill McCollum

Bill McCollum presented the drawings showing two alternatives for outside seating on the sidewalk, pushing back the outside wall on the Whittaker Street side and opening up the southwest corner of the building. The building has been purchased and the buyer is looking for tenants. One design would be encroaching on the City sidewalk by 12 feet and approval would be needed by the Liquor Commission if liquor is to be served in the sidewalk area. Revisions and elevations have been sent to Chair Kemper. Possible completion of the project to be in 2022.

Comments from the DDA members include:

Rahm inquired about any plans for the basement? No plans for the basement are in place at this time. Lindsay likes the look of the building and commented a barrier is required between the seating and the street with a minimum height of three feet.

Mayor Humphrey loves the design and has concerns about public safety requiring a 12-foot space on the sidewalk and a potential parking issue sharing the parking lot with Barney's Market.

Roch is excited about the project and questioned if a license was needed to use the sidewalk.

Sullivan and Kemper are excited about the project also.

- Interim City Manager offered to reach out to the City Attorney for clarification if a license is needed to use the sidewalk.

Motion by Duhn, seconded by Gradowski to approve a recommendation to City Council to support the 1 N. Whittaker St. project (Option B) with maintaining the public safety 12-foot clearance; roll call vote; motion carried 8-0.

- City Manager update

Interim City Manager gave an update on the search and reported the top three candidates will be presented to the City Council later in March. The search committee consists of Interim City Manager Killips, Mayor John Humphrey, City Council Member Mark Robertson, City Clerk Amy Fidler and Treasurer Kate Vyskocil.

The DDA gave their condolences to Dave Richards' family and thanked Interim City Manager Killips for stepping into the role.

- Intersection light activation

The electrical work has been completed, reported the Interim City Manager, and the testing may take a couple days. The signal should be operational any day now.

- Marina Expansion Project Grant

The Interim City Manager confirmed the grant has been submitted.

- Permanently change the DDA meeting time from 8:00 am to 9:00 am

No discussion

Motion by Rahm, seconded by Sullivan to approve permanently changing the DDA meeting time from 8:00am to 9:00am; roll call vote; motion carried 8-0.

Old Business

- Request by David's Deli and False Front - temporary heat and wind protection on City property

Chair Kemper remarked the changes made were appropriate and there were no issues.

David's Deli plans to continue outdoor seating this fall and are very happy with it.

Roch is supportive of any business who is open during the winter.

Chair Kemper clarified the outdoor seating in front of David's Deli was not a gift but was a requirement to accommodate the slope of the sidewalk between the two driveways.

Mayor Humphrey has been approached by Rosie's Restaurant to possibly have outdoor seating and is supportive of helping businesses work in the community.

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

None

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

Duhn spoke to Traci Lauricella of the NBBA regarding the Farmer's Market on Thursdays. Interim City Manager confirmed the special event application for the Farmer's Market has been received and the proposal outlines the market will operate as it did two years ago, pre-COVID.

The Interim City Manager also confirmed there are no other special event applications received to date.

- **Operations** – Robert Kemper

- Beach concession update

Chair Kemper heard the New Buffalo Beach Club may not be operating this summer at the Beach.

Interim City Manager reported this will be the third year of a three-year contract for the New Buffalo Beach Club and they are expected to be back but may be under new management. He also commented the City has contingency plans, if something were to happen.

- Landscaping on Whittaker Street contract

Per the Interim City Manager, a decision from the City Council may be needed to continue with Nature's Way for landscaping downtown.

Chair Kemper is concerned with the South Whittaker sidewalk by the parking lot with weed and crack abatement to make it more presentable as the gateway to the community.

The section outside of the Subway was mentioned. The DDA did not take the lead on that project and is waiting to see actions from the City. DDA will keep the City updated on any changes that come through them.

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

- Any updates on AT&T repeaters at the beach?

Interim City Manager communicated a change in contractors. AEP is concentrating on getting the correct poles and are sending pole designs to the City. The project is due to be completed this year.

- EV Charging Station install dates?

The Interim City Manager signed the contract and the stations will be installed soon.

Member Comment

Chair Kemper announced the subcommittees will be reactivated after COVID and the placement of the new City Manager.

Lindsay thanked the Interim City Manager and the City staff on the herculean effort with snow removal last winter. He said it was the best he had ever seen and the City went above and beyond expectations. He also thanked the DDA and others involved who helped with the North Whittaker project in past years making the sidewalks wider. It has made it possible to serve customers during COVID with outdoor seating and space for them to move around.

Roch, Gradowski and Rahm added there is positive commercial property activity.

Chair Kemper reminded the group that positive commercial property activity means funding for the DDA.

Adjournment

Motion by Rahm, seconded by Gradowski to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 am; roll call vote; motion carried 8-0.

Meeting adjourned

10:01 am.

ng.

Robert Kemper, Chair

Nancy Griffin, Deputy Clerk