

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kendra Jickling at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Kendra Jickling, Robert Lentz, Charlie Bush, Dennis Cargill, Julia Robbins, Scott Keys, Meg Guzman, and Neal Bishop.

Also Present: City Manager, Corey Schmidt .

Audience Members: None

It was moved by Charlie Bush and seconded by Scott Keys to approve the February 20, 2018 minutes as presented. Motion Carried.

Audience Participation: None.

New Business:

A. Farmers Market Proposal

B. First Impressions Grant Proposal

C. Acceptance of Rural Partners of Michigan Grant for Farmers Market Equipment

Rob Lentz, chair of the Farmers Market subcommittee, presented a proposal to the DDA Board for funding of a Farmers Market. The subcommittee requests \$3,000 from the DDA Fund operating budget and to utilize \$2,000 from the First Impressions grant to be used to develop and implement a Farmers Market on the vacant lot at the northwest corner of Main Street and Morris Street ("the Sulaty lot").

Manager Schmidt commented that he supports the request of the Farmers Market subcommittee as it pertains to the use of the First Impressions grant. He said the grantors would like a proposal by the end of March for how we intend to spend the grant. While it is a grant to the City, he felt it was best to have a decision from the DDA since the DDA's reformation has been tied to the same goals of the First Impressions assessment, and the Farmers Market would meet the criteria of the grant.

Rob Lentz also noted that a \$775 grant was received from the Rural Partners of Michigan to assist with the purchase of equipment to launch a Farmers Market, specifically five canopy tents and five folding tables. A request was made of the DDA Board to accept the grant.

It was moved by Julia Robbins and seconded by Neal Bishop to provide the Farmers Market subcommittee with \$3,000 from the DDA Fund operating budget, \$2,000 from the First Impressions grant, and to accept the \$775 Rural Partners of Michigan grant for Farmers Market equipment . Motion carried.

D. Sulaty Lot Lease Agreement

Manager Schmidt stated that staff is working on a lease agreement with Mr. Launce Sulaty for use of his vacant lot at the northwest corner of Main Street and Morris Street. Mr. Sulaty appears eager to allow use of this lot for a Farmers Market. The City Attorney has been asked to draft a lease agreement for Mr. Sulaty and the DDA Board to review. No action was requested at this time.

E. Electrical Upgrades at the Fenner/Marlette Street Lot

Manager Schmidt provided two quotes to provide an upgrade to the electricity available at the municipal parking lot at Fenner Street and Marlette Street. The quotes would upgrade the service from 100 amp to 200 amp service, to better provide service for events such as the Farmers Market.

It was moved by Charlie Bush and seconded by Rob Lentz to accept a proposal from Adamczyk Electric totaling \$2,440 to upgrade the electrical service at the parking lot site.

Julia Robbins stated she would like to see the Board require the work to be completed by June 1.

Motion carried.

F. Refurbishment of Trash Receptacles/Benches

Manager Schmidt confirmed that the previous quote submitted by RCA Trucking for sandblasting and painting of the trash receptacles and benches was for painting only, not powdercoating. He contacted two powdercoating companies for quotes: JAS Steel and TJ's Powdercoating. Both companies use a third-party for sandblasting. As of the meeting, he had not heard back from JAS Steel or their third-party sandblaster. TJ's Powdercoating submitted a quote of \$225 per trash receptacle for sandblasting and powdercoating. TJ's stated they could not powdercoat the benches because they are too long to fit into their machine.

Neal Bishop asked if there is a warranty on the powdercoating. Manager Schmidt was not aware. Kendra Jickling said she was discussing the project with a customer, who noted that there is a process that would provide a protective layer around the equipment similar to a "Yeti" container, which would be very durable. Scott Keys asked if the other company could do the benches if TJ's Powdercoating could not.

Consensus was for staff to look into the questions asked. If information is available before the next DDA meeting, staff can email the Board.

G. Decorative Banner Designs

The Board reviewed proposed designs for the downtown street light pole banners. Consensus was reached to remove the “Welcome to” language in front of “Welcome to Red Raider Country” so the banner states: “Red Raider Country.” The Board asked if the designs on the fronts and backs of the banners could be mixed-and-match. Manager Schmidt said the quote was for the same design on the front and back, but that he would check if there is an additional charge to mix-and-match the designs.

It was moved by Julia Robbins and seconded by Neal Bishop to approve the designs, with one change by removing “Welcome to” in the “Welcome to Red Raider Country” so the banner states: “Red Raider Country.” Motion carried.

H. Business Incubation Program

The Board reviewed information from the City of Bessemer’s DDA regarding their business incubation program. Their program offers up to \$500 per month for six months to subsidize the lease/rent payments for a start-up business. Manager Schmidt commented that the Board has discussed a building **façade/signage** improvement grant/loan program and a lease assistance program. He was looking for direction on which program the Board felt was more viable and practical in Marlette, before pursuing the creation of either program.

Neal Bishop commented that he would like to see the program help businesses who are looking for space outside of their home, such as a co-working space in an office setting. The “mini-mall” on Main Street was mentioned as a possible location. Charlie Bush said there may be a property owner who could get involved in such a program, but he was not yet convinced the Board should fund a co-working space.

Manager Schmidt asked the Board to consider the end goal of any program, which is to increase investment in the DDA District to grow tax revenue. The discussion started around filling vacant storefronts or increasing investments in existing storefronts to help with that goal. He stated it appears the Board is considering three different types of programs: 1) a traditional grant/loan assistance program for investment in the building **façade** and signage, 2) a rent/lease assistance program to fill vacant storefronts, and 3) a rent/lease assistance program to fill a co-working setting.

Rob Lentz stated that he felt the Board needed to have a breakout meeting dedicated to just this topic, since there are a lot of variables to consider.

It was moved by Rob Lentz and seconded by Charlie Bush to schedule a breakout meeting of the Board to discuss business incubation programs. Motion carried.

Other Business

Neal Bishop mentioned the possibility of acquiring large window clings to put on the windows of vacant storefronts. He said this has been done in Detroit to make vacant storefronts look more inviting and clean.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corey Schmidt