

ANN ARBOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 4, 2012
DDA Office, 150 S. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Place: DDA Office, 150 S. Fifth Avenue, Suite 301, Ann Arbor, 48104
Time: Mr. Guenzel called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Robert Guenzel, Leah Gunn, Joan Lowenstein, John Mouat, Nader Nassif, Keith Orr, Sandi Smith, John Splitt

Absent: Newcombe Clark, Russ Collins, Roger Hewitt, John Hieftje

Staff Present: Susan Pollay, Executive Director
Joe Morehouse, Deputy Director
Amber Miller, Planning & Research Specialist
Jada Hahlbrock, Management Assistant

Audience: Dave Askins, *Ann Arbor Chronicle*
George Stankow
Ayeshen Usmani
Art Low, Republic Parking System
Andrew Cluley, WEMU
Ryan Stanton, A2.com
Ray Detter, Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Committee
Josie Parker, Ann Arbor District Library
Sabre Briere, AA City Council

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

3. REPORTS FROM CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council. Mr. Detter said that Ms. Pollay provided CAC with a summary of Connecting William Street survey results. The CAC hopes that that the project will lead to increased downtown vitality and more residential housing. Ms. Pollay also reviewed the ways various agencies have been involved with supporting transportation system improvements. The CAC believes that more and better transportation choices are part of the future success of downtown. Much of the meeting was spent in discussion about the request by the developer of 618 S. Main Street to the DDA for funding assistance. The CAC supports the project, but also supports and respects careful and consistent planning. Mr. Detter shared some examples in the past when the DDA partnered with developers as a way to encourage important downtown goals. The CAC feels that any decisions the DDA makes should be based upon the principles they have always supported, be consistent and not set any unfair precedent. The next CAC meeting will take place on May 1st at 7pm.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM DDA MEMBERS

None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Gunn moved and Mr. Mouat seconded approval of the March 7, 2012 meeting minutes.

A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Guenzel, Gunn, Lowenstein, Mouat, Nassif, Orr, Smith, Split

NAYS: none

Absent: Clark, Collins, Hewitt, Hieftje

The motion carried.

6. BRICKS & MONEY/ TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
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Transportation. Mr. Mouat said that the proposed bike-sharing program appears likely to receive CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) grant funding, and is anticipated to launch in April 2013. The DDA, the University of Michigan and the City are all partners in the project; the DDA commitment is an in-kind contribution of staff time and possibly storage space.

Parking Report. Mr. Splitt shared that February parking revenues were up 16% and patrons were up 5%. Mild weather may have encouraged more activity downtown.

Budget. Mr. Splitt said that the DDA will present its proposed FY 2012/13 budget at a Council work session on April 9th. Mr. Hewitt will make the presentation and all are invited to attend.

New Structure. Mr. Splitt reported that all wall pours are now complete, and surface water proofing has begun. The elevators have been installed. Interior painting will begin soon. The schedule shows Fifth Avenue open by Memorial Day, and the garage opening in late June or early July.

The next Bricks & Money/ Transportation committee meeting will take place April 25th at 11:00am.

7. PARTNERSHIPS/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
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618 S Main Request. Ms. Smith said that Dan Kettlaar attended the Partnerships meeting to provide an overview of his project, and to renew his request that the DDA provide the local match for his Brownfield grant application. The project is a residential development aimed at young professionals, and Mr. Ketelaar has urged DDA support saying that it will activate this section of S. Main Street. The discussion was continued at a special Partnerships meeting on March 28th to enable DDA members to more thoroughly review project financial details. Ms. Smith said that the process will continue at the next Partnerships Committee meeting. All are welcomed to attend.

Connecting William Street. Ms. Lowenstein reported that at the last LOC meeting survey results were discussed. Respondents expressed a clear desire for a more vibrant sidewalk experience in the William Street area, with attention to building quality and design, economic development, housing and open/ plaza space. The DDA is partnering with Concentrate to host a speaker series. The first event was on March 29th at which Dan Gilmartin, Michigan Municipal League, spoke about how a sense of place is an essential ingredient of vibrant downtowns. The session was very well attended.

The next speaker event will be on April 19th at 5:30 at Conor O’Neills, and will focus on successful downtown open space, parks, and plazas. Ms. Lowenstein explained that as part of the project economist Todd Poole (4ward Planning) had been in Ann Arbor to conduct a number of interviews and collect information for the market analysis he is preparing. The information he provides, along with the survey results and focus group meetings, will be used to create the scenarios we will present to and explore with the community.

Downtown Marketing Taskforce. Ms. Lowenstein said that a Taskforce subcommittee has been working on a solution to replace the banner wires that used to span Main Street. Many non-profits use banners as event promotion, so Ms. Pollay, City staff and several City Council members worked quickly to find a possible solution, which would replace two sets of light poles with taller poles from which banner wires could be hung across the street. The approximate cost is \$12,000/site, and the Main Street Area Association and Main Street BIZ may provide funding. Mr. Mouat asked how many total banner wire locations there are in downtown; Ms. Lowenstein said there are seven. Ms. Pollay explained that no one is quite certain when or by whom the wires were installed. Ms. Lowenstein asked if there would be an increased fee to install the banners; Ms. Pollay said yes, the fee increase would be used to reimburse the capital costs.

Ms. Lowenstein said that the Taskforce is also working on solutions to address the problem of downtown panhandling. The area associations are working with Dawn Farm to create an informational poster, postcards, and website, with the goal of educating the public about how they can best assist those in need. Staff from the Washtenaw County PORT program attended the meeting to share information about their outreach efforts and the services they provide individuals with severe mental illness. Interim Police Chief Seto discussed downtown patrols. Everyone was encouraged by the cooperation of all involved, and positive outcomes are expected.

The next Partnerships/ Economic Development committee meeting will take place April 11th at 9am.

8.	OTHER DDA BUSINESS
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None

9.	OTHER AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
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None

10.	ADJOURNMENT
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There being no other business, Ms. Gunn moved and Mr. Mouat seconded a motion to adjourn. Mr. Guenzel declared the meeting adjourned at 12:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director