

ANN ARBOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

DDA Office, 150 S. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Place: DDA Office, 150 S. Fifth Avenue, Suite 301, Ann Arbor, 48104

Time: Ms. Gunn called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Newcombe Clark, Russ Collins, Leah Gunn, Roger Hewitt, John Hieftje, Joan Lowenstein, Nader Nassif, Keith Orr, John Splitt

Absent: Robert Guenzel, John Mouat, Sandi Smith

Staff Susan Pollay, Executive Director

Present: Amber Miller, Planning & Research Specialist
Jada Hahlbrock, Management Assistant

Audience: Art Low, Republic Parking System
Dave Askins, *Ann Arbor Chronicle*
Alan Haber
Eli Neiburger, AADL
Andrew Sellinger, Oxford Companies
Mary Stasiak, AATA
Justin Fenwick, AATA
William DeGroot, AATA
Andrew Cluley, 89.1 WEMU
Nancy Shore, getDowntown
Ray Detter, Downtown Area CAC

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Alan Haber said that until a decision is made about the future development on top of the Library Lane parking structure, the parking lot on top should be used for activities, such as a skating rink which would be an easily achievable and affordable option, or events such as an Earth Day gathering.

3. REPORTS FROM CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council. Mr. Detter said that on the previous night the Planning Commission failed by one vote to recommend approval of the 401-413 E. Huron project, but the site plan will now go to City Council for consideration. CAC members took the position that no project should be described as “by right” until it conforms to adopted city plans and does not have a major impact on its neighbors. City departments are now looking into how public participation meetings are held because they are not working as expected; in the case of the 401-413 E. Huron the out-of-town developers ignored much of what was said by the public, and then wrote an inaccurate report. He said that the City’s Design Review Board will also be considering possible changes in their process & guidelines, which must be clearer and more specific.

4. PRESENTATION BY MICHAEL FORD, AATA

Michael Ford from AATA and Nancy Shore from getDowntown co-presented information outlining the success of the getDowntown program, the go!Pass, and the enhanced AATA services including increased service along route #4 and #5 between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, NightRide, and AirRide. The go!pass in particular has become an essential asset for many downtown businesses. Mr. Ford reviewed past and current commitments from the DDA and presented transportation funding requests for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Gunn thanked Mr. Ford and Ms. Shore and said that the information and request would be referred to committee.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM DDA MEMBERS

Mr. Hieftje said that he appreciated AATA's presentation. He said that although some outlying municipalities said no to the County-wide transit initiative, several urban core communities have expressed interest in expanding transit service or creating new service for their communities. Mr. Hieftje said that the workforce coming from the eastern part of the County is very important to Ann Arbor, and working regionally to bolster transit benefits everyone.

Mr. Hieftje said that at the previous day's Downtown Marketing Taskforce meeting they heard a very interesting presentation from a Colliers representative about downtown commercial leasing. For instance, a technology company will be moving into the second floor space at the former Borders building with 70 employees, and it has been predicted that within 4-5 years the State Street Area may see as many as 1,400 I.T. and innovation workers. The DDA was noted has having played a very important role in helping make this possible.

Mr. Hewitt said that the Connector Study group met recently to review feedback from outreach events. They also met with community leaders in an effort to bring them up to speed on the project and get their opinions and ideas.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hewitt moved and Ms. Lowenstein seconded approval of the January 9, 2013 monthly meeting minutes.

A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Clark, Collins, Gunn, Hewitt, Hieftje, Lowenstein, Nassif, Orr, Split

NAYS: none

ABSENT: Guenzel, Mouat, Smith

ABSTAIN:

The motion carried.

7. A. OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Financial Statements. Mr. Hewitt provided an overview of the DDA's monthly financial reports, as well as its monthly, quarterly, and half-year parking reports. He reviewed year-to-year differences in parking numbers, and answered questions. Mr. Hewitt said that the Committee has asked Republic to create new reports to help it in its work overseeing the parking system.

Budget Resolution. Mr. Hewitt moved and Mr. Splitt seconded the following resolution;

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE DDA BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2013/2014 AND 2014/2015

Whereas, The DDA has developed a Ten-Year Financial Plan, including projected income and expenses for debt service, capital improvements projects and parking operations;

Whereas, The DDA Operations Committee has developed a detailed FY 2013/14 and 2014/15 fiscal year budget for the DDA based on the DDA's most recent Ten-Year Plan;

Whereas, The Operations Committee recommends approval of these DDA budgets by the DDA;

RESOLVED, The DDA approves its FY 2013/14 and 2014/15 fiscal year budgets.

Mr. Hewitt said that similar to the City, the DDA approves a two-year budget, which is actually an approved budget for 2013/14 and a recommended budget for 2014/15 which will be approved by the DDA next year. These budgets are taken from the DDA's Ten Year Plan.

He began by explaining that the DDA auditors have requested that the DDA show the \$1.25M loan from Republic Parking for the purchase of new parking equipment as "income", rather than as a liability. In the current fiscal year and in each of the four next years the loan amounts will be reducing by 20% each year. Mr. Hewitt then reviewed line items in the TIF, Parking, Housing, and Parking Maintenance Funds, and noted anticipated year end fund balances, interfund transfers, and potential discretionary dollars for projects.

Mr. Clark asked if there was a schedule of repayment back to the Parking Maintenance fund; Mr. Hewitt said that this has been outlined in the Ten Year Plan. Mr. Hewitt added that an updated parking maintenance report was due soon, and once received the Ten Year Plan would be updated. Mr. Collins observed that generally the budgeted money in the parking maintenance fund is not all spent; Mr. Hewitt said that funds are not all spent in a single year but are often held back in anticipation of upcoming repair projects.

A vote on the resolution showed:

AYES: Clark, Collins, Gunn, Hewitt, Hieftje, Lowenstein, Nassif, Orr, Split

NAYS: none

ABSENT: Guenzel, Mouat, Smith

The resolution passed.

Mr. Hewitt said that the Committee is exploring a possible pilot project in the Forest Avenue area to address the high parking demand in that area.

The next Operations Committee meeting will be February 27th at 11:00am.

Ms. Lowenstein said that the 2011/12 State of the Downtown report has just been released. She outlined some of its content, and said that the Committee hoped that the report would be useful to the CVB, SPARK, commercial brokers, and others. Mr. Collins said that he thought that this was a wonderful report. Mr. Hieftje said that the report had received great reviews at the previous day's Downtown Marketing Taskforce meeting. He noted with a chuckle that Ann Arbor was the fifth "Happiest City in America". Ms. Pollay noted the significant development has taken place in the DDA since its creation, which was an important indicator of the DDA's impact as a catalyst for growth and economic development. She thanked the DDA board members for their efforts in support of a vital and attractive downtown.

The next Partnerships/Economic Development Committee meeting will take place February 13th at 9:00am.

8. OTHER DDA BUSINESS

None

9. OTHER AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Mr. Hewitt moved and Mr. Orr seconded a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gunn declared the meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director