

Dean Fund Committee Meeting
April 21, 2009
Wheeler Center
4251 Stone School Rd., Ann Arbor
MINUTES

Members Present: Warren Attarian, John Bassett, Chuck Cares, Al Gallup, Don Gray, John Remsberg

Members Absent: Merrill Dudley

Staff Present: Kerry Gray, Kay Sicheneder

Guest: Maura Thomson, Main Street Area Association
Susan Pollay, Ann Arbor DDA

Warren Attarian called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. and welcomed guests.

Susan Pollay with the DDA and **Maura Thomson** with the Main Street Area Association provided the Committee with information on their two organizations. The DDA is a quasi-governmental organization, overseen by a board of 12 volunteers that focuses on infrastructure and revitalization work within the borders of the DDA. DDA is funded through a tax increment financing mechanism that generates taxes from new building construction within the DDA boundaries.

The Main Street Area Association (MSAA) is a non-profit organization who works to keep downtown strong, alive and vibrant. They focus on the aesthetics of downtown. There are 135 businesses that are members of the Main Street Area Association. They receive funding from membership dues, operating the food court during Art Fair and occasionally, from grants.

Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the January 20, 2009 meeting were reviewed. **Al Gallup motioned** to approve the January 20 meeting minutes. **Don Gray seconded**. Committee unanimously approved.

Tree Planting

Spring 09

Kay Sicheneder provided the Committee with an update on the Spring 2009 tree planting. Forestry crew's will be planting trees on Packard across from the Kroger and Georgetown mall, Plymouth Road near the water tower and on Eisenhower Parkway between Boardwalk and S. Industrial. Approximately 50 trees of various species including, Kentucky coffeetree, Elm, Amur corktree and Ginkgo, will be planted in these locations. Planting will occur from now until the end of May.

Chuck Cares asked if the City ever purchases trees from Christensen's nursery. **Ms. Sicheneder** said she uses them for specialty items.

Fall 08

Al Gallup commented that the area on the northwest side of Dexter and Maple roads needs more trees. **Ms. Sicheneder** responded that the area was evaluated during the fall 2008 planting season and that the sites that were suitable to be planted were planted in the fall. The area has a lot of very narrow lawn extensions that are not suitable for growing trees.

Approximately 105 trees were planted in the fall at a cost of \$30,427.81. Elaine Bater in Field Operations has created a spreadsheet of the locations and species planted. **Kerry Gray** will email to Committee after the meeting.

Dean Promenade

Ms. Thomson provided background on the Dean Promenade. Three years ago the MSAA undertook the project of enhancing the 42 planters along Main Street (the Dean Promenade). The planters were planted with annuals and were watered and maintained throughout the growing season. The MSAA used a local Master Gardener to help design, plant and maintain the planters. To help offset the cost of enhancing and maintaining the planters the MSAA sought sponsorship of the planters by local businesses and groups. The first year, there were 13 planters sponsored. This first year was not very successful so last year the MSAA contracted with Heritage Landscaping to design, plant and maintain (water) the planters. Heritage Landscaping is the same company that Republic Parking (DDA) uses to maintain the planters that are within the parking structures. Last year, they had over 28 of the planters sponsored (~\$14,000). This year, sponsorship has been slow coming in and to date 13 of the planters are sponsored. The MSAA is looking to the Dean Fund for assistance in watering the 42 planters within the Dean Promenade, each season it costs approximately \$5000 to water them.

Mr. Attarian asked how often the planters were watered. **Ms. Thomson** responded that the planters are watered 3-4 times per week from June to September with a water truck. The annuals are typically planted at the end of May. Last year, they also planted some perennials in the planters.

Ms. Pollay stated that up to a few years ago the City was watering the trees within the Dean Promenade but about 3 years ago funding was taken away from watering to remove the dead and dying ash trees that lined City streets.

Mr. Attarian asked **Ms. Pollay** about whether it was possible for the DDA to fund the watering of the trees in the Dean Promenade. **Ms. Pollay** responded that the DDA does infrastructure work including tree planting but the maintenance of the infrastructure (including trees) is the responsibility of the City. This year the DDA is funding projects to refurbish the streetscapes on Fifth and Division streets that will include tree planting. The DDA also provided the City with

two- \$50,000 grants a few years ago to remove and replace dead ash trees and over the past several years the DDA has contracted to remove and replace 150 trees in the downtown area.

Mr. Gallup asked if the trees were getting the watering that they needed from the Contractor. According to **Ms. Sicheneder** the trees were not getting adequate water because the Contractor was watering the annuals on top and not deep watering for the tree roots. She commented that any water is good for the trees but that to adequately water the trees (they are rootbound in the planters) a long, deep watering is needed. **Ms. Thomson** said that she can work with the Contractor to find the most effective way to water the trees within the planters.

Mr. Attarian asked about the size of the planter. The planters are approximately at 10 foot by 10 foot square. The depth is not known. **Mr. Attarian** asked **Ms. Gray** if she can find plans or information about the planter boxes when they were installed.

There was a discussion among Committee members about the replacement of the trees in the Dean Promenade. The trees are aging and new trees should be planted intermittently within the area so we don't lose all the trees at the same time. Ms. Pollay stated that the DDA will work with **Ms. Gray** and **Ms. Sicheneder** on developing this plan and it will be shared with the Dean Fund Committee at an upcoming meeting.

Chuck Cares motioned to support watering of Dean Promenade up to \$7500 with the provision that the Contractor will do deep watering. Motion was not seconded. **Motion Failed.**

Mr. Attarian proposed a resolution to support the watering of the Dean Promenade. **Resolution unanimously passed.** Committee asked **Ms. Thomson** to come to the next Committee meeting with a budget from the Contractor and they will vote on a dollar amount to dedicate to the watering of the 42 planters.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 19 at 8:00 a.m. at the Wheeler Center, Conference Room B.

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