

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD JANUARY 21, 2021**

The Oshtemo Charter Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors held a meeting via tele-conference on Thursday, January 21, 2021. The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:02 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Members present: Grant Taylor, Bruce Betzler, Bill Cekola, Themis Corakis, Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Rich MacDonald, Dick Skalski and Ryan Wieber.

Members absent: Mike Lutke, and Jack Siegel.

Also present: Iris Lubbert, Planning Director and Martha Coash, Recording Secretary.

Guest: Tom Wheat, Prein & Newhof

**Approval of Agenda**

Chairperson Taylor asked if there were additions or corrections to the agenda. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Mr. Corakis moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Wieber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**Election of Officers**

The current officers indicated they were willing to continue in their same capacities for 2021. Hearing no other nominations, the Chair asked for a motion.

Mr. Skalski moved to elect the following current officers to continue for 2021:

Mr. Taylor, Chair  
Mr. MacDonald, Vice Chair  
Mr. Betzler, Secretary  
Mr. Corakis, Treasurer

Mr. Wieber supported the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The Chair asked if there were additions or corrections to the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of December 3, 2020. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Mr. Wieber moved to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of December 3, 2020 as presented. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

## **Treasurer's Report:**

### **a. November – December 2020 (unaudited)**

Ms. Lubbert reported there were no revenue increases during this cycle.

Expenditures totaled \$49,690.85. Payments included general operating expenditures, the annual Music in the Park contribution, holiday décor at the corner site, finalizing the corner site improvement project, and the second round of Small Business Emergency Assistance Grants

She noted an invoice for a \$120.00 legal fee was double charged and the appropriate account was reimbursed. A \$156.46 electric fee in question was found to be accurate and will be paid when an invoice is received. In addition a retaining wall fee questioned by Mr. Corakis was found to be improperly charged to the DDA and will be corrected. She thanked Mr. Corakis for bringing that to the group's attention.

Mr. Wieber moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for November – December 2020 as presented. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **b. 2021 Budget**

Ms. Lubbert reported there were no charges currently to the approved, unaudited 2021 budget.

Chairperson Grant noted after settlement the DDA is expected to capture approximately \$830,000. Last year \$170,000 was captured. \$450,000 is estimated to be spent on the shared use path, but that amount could increase. Last year \$60,000 was budgeted for design and engineering for the Stadium Drive path; only \$7,500 was used. It will be used in 2021, which will require a budget amendment.

Ms. Lubbert reported there is a jump in the maintenance fee in 2021 since the corner lot will be included this year.

The Chair noted \$4,500 of the budgeted \$8,000 was spent from the maintenance budget last year.

Ms. Lubbert said she would expand the maintenance item on the chart for next month to show how the budget is broken up.

Ms. Lubbert said a letter from the Happy Trails Boarding Kennel was received thanking the DDA for the grant received through the Emergency Assistance Program.

Chairperson Grant said he was glad a second round of the grant program was approved to assist DDA businesses.

## **Project Updates**

### **a. Gateway Project at Stadium and 9<sup>th</sup> Update**

Mr. Skalski reported the construction work at the Gateway Project has been substantially completed. Problems discussed at the last meeting have been addressed. He will address a couple more small problems likely to result in a small charge, if any.

The group was pleased with the holiday décor and looks forward to an even better display for 2021 when there will be more lead time for planning.

### **b. Stadium Drive Sidewalks and Contract**

Ms. Lubbert said during the budget discussion late last year, the DDA Board unanimously agreed their main and largest project for 2021 would be the installation of a shared use path along the north side of Stadium Drive within their boundaries.

Mr. Russell, of Prein & Newhof, was unable to be present at the meeting. Mr. Tom Wheat was in attendance in his place.

Chairperson Taylor noted there was a carryover of \$52-53,000 from last year's budget. An amendment will be needed to provide a budget of \$63,800 for 2021. An estimate for landscaping was included in the contract, with OCBA as the subcontractor.

He indicated design work for both the north and south sides of Stadium Drive will be done in 2021. Construction will be done only on the north side this year. The design work will need to be done by March 26 in order to begin construction this spring. OCBA will provide streetscape work, trees and landscaping after construction. Board approval to sign an approved design contract will be needed. We will have a good idea of construction cost in March. The DDA can approve the construction budget at that time.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell asked whether there needed to be an amendment to the contract to include OCBA.

Ms. Lubbert explained the DDA requested that invoices from Prein & Newhof for DDA work and Township work be separated to provide invoices that clearly show DDA expenses only. She believed that was not the case for 2020.

Mr. Wheat will clarify with Mr. Russell whether the 2020 work contract was separately calculated or as a total of Township and DDA work.

Ms. Libby-Cogswell wondered whether the contract should be run through attorney review.

Mr. Wheat noted Township Attorney Porter had reviewed the contract.

Chairperson Taylor indicated the contract needed to be changed to 1) update the client information to list him as Chair of the DDA rather than Treasurer and change his email to his personal account, 2) indicate the contract is with the DDA rather than Oshtemo Township, and 3) to scratch out ownership.

Mr. Corakis confirmed Prein & Newhof plans to slope the retaining wall next to affected apartments.

The group agreed to provide landscaping at the small corner (about 10 ft. x 10 ft.) at Stadium and 9<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the Subway shop, realizing it would be a small expenditure and being mindful of careful stewardship of funds and possible public criticism.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell noted construction observation was not included in the contract and felt everything should be lined up now.

Mr. Skalski said that is typically done as a separate contract.

Chairperson Taylor indicated a separate contract could be completed later and that he could meet with Mr. Russell on that, but they should get the contract signed and the project underway now.

Mr. Corakis agreed they should move forward now. He thought everything necessary could be done at the next DDA meeting in March so the project could still be put out for bid in March.

Mr. Corakis moved to approve the contract as presented in the amount of \$63,800, with the three amendments discussed: 1) update the client information to list him as Chair of the DDA rather than Treasurer and change his email to his personal account, 2) indicate the contract is with the DDA rather than Oshtemo Township, and 3) to scratch out ownership, and that Chairperson Taylor be authorized to sign the document. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

## **Contract Renewal for DDA Seasonal Banners**

Ms. Lubbert indicated the DDA Board has contracted with SignArt in past years to store and rotate the DDA's seasonal banners. A proposed contract, for the same work at the same cost, \$380 per banner swap for a total of \$1,520, needed approval.

Mr. Corakis said he felt other contractors should be considered for 2022 and volunteered to contact a few.

The group agreed and thanked him for taking on that work.

Mr. Skalski moved to approve the SignArt contract for 2021 at the cost of \$1,520. Mr. Betzler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

## **DDA Survey Results Discussion**

Ms. Lubbert reported that from November through December last year an anonymous online survey was posted on the DDA's website, Facebook and Nextdoor. 63 responses were received and compiled in a report for the Board.

She indicated most respondents were customers; followed by property owners. She felt the angst regarding the sewer debate impacted some responses and said she thought there was a misconception regarding the purpose of DDA funds.

Ms. Lubbert felt there were three main takeaways from the responses:

- 1) There was enough confusion regarding the sunburst on the corner property sign to consider removing it.
- 2) A lot of confusion about the term "Village" was evident.
- 3) Sidewalks were the biggest improvement respondents were excited about.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell expressed regret the DDA was politicized as a result of the sewer debate last year.

Mr. MacDonald agreed the starburst was confusing and should be removed from the sign. He felt comments confirmed they were right in refraining from a more elaborate gateway, that their decisions were based on the right reasoning.

Mr. Skalski said the area may be perceived more as a village five or ten years down the road than it is currently.

Chairperson Grant was pleased comments reflected confirmation they are moving in the right direction with sidewalk plans.

Mr. Corakis moved to approve an expenditure of up to \$500 from the maintenance budget to remove the starburst from the gateway sign. Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Other Board Items/Updates**

Mr. MacDonald commended Ms. Lubbert for her work administering the Small Business Grants, which was above and beyond the call of duty.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said by State law a resident is required to be a member of the DDA. Turnover has resulted in needing to find a resident to serve and asked that members email her with ideas.

### **Public Comment**

As there were no members of the public present, the Chair moved to the next item on the agenda.

### **Announcements and Adjournment**

Hearing none, the Chairperson adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:04 p.m.

Oshtemo Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority

Minutes Prepared: January 22, 2021

Minutes Approved: April 7, 2021