

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

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 19, 2020**

The Oshtemo Charter Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors held a virtual meeting via tele-conference on Thursday, November 19, 2020. The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:04 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairperson Taylor asked Ms. Lubbert to call the roll by voice.

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

Members absent: Bill Cekola, Mike Lutke, Rich MacDonald and Jack Siegel.

Also present: Iris Lubbert, Planning Director and Martha Coash, Meeting Transcriptionist.

**Approval of Agenda**

Chairperson Taylor asked if there were additions or corrections to the agenda.

Ms. Lubbert said she would like to add an item under “New Business” to consider whether the DDA Covid-19 Emergency Assistance Grant Program should be reactivated. The group had decided to revisit the program in the Fall. Given the steep increase in Covid cases occurring now and the Governor’s recent ‘shut down’ order, it is timely to do so.

Mr. Wieber moved to approve the agenda as presented with the addition of the grant program under “New Business” as suggested. Mr. Corakis seconded the motion. The motion passed 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 September 17, 2020.

Mr. Corakis referred to his question in the third paragraph of the minutes of September 17 under “Approval of Minutes” regarding his question of whether design work on the sidewalk project had been billed incorrectly by Prein & Newhof, charging

Township work to the DDA. Chairperson Taylor indicated at that time that he had not had time to do that, but that he would explore it. Mr. Corakis said Prein & Newhof billed the DDA for work on the retaining wall that was outside of the DDA and since it has not yet been corrected he would vote no on the September 17 minutes as well as the September – October Financial Reports.

Chairperson Taylor said he was told by Prein & Newhof that the billing error was not for work done on the retaining wall, but rather for design work initially done east of the DDA line corridor. He will obtain the explanation in writing from Prein & Newhof and will ask for two different contract numbers for the Township and the DDA in order to avoid billing confusion moving forward.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said staff will look back at the billing and correct the records if needed. She added that Township staff has spent time talking with owners regarding acquiring easements within the DDA as well as within the Township and said there is no intention to short the DDA.

Mr. Corakis said contracts for the two entities should never be combined again.

The Chair said he had already informed Prein & Newhof of that request and will have an answer in writing from them addressing the situation at the next meeting.

Mr. Wieber moved to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of September 17, 2020 as presented. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-1 by roll call vote, with Mr. Corakis dissenting.

**Treasurer's Report:** September - October, 2020 (unaudited)

Ms. Lubbert presented the Treasurer's Report for September - October, 2020.

She reported no revenue increases this cycle. Expenditures from this cycle include payments totaling \$62,950.72 towards the corner site improvement project, \$536.00 for maintenance costs, and \$150.00 for accounting and auditing fees.

Mr. Corakis noted problems at the corner site with screw heads that were sticking up and reported that conduits had been lowered.

Mr. Skalski said he would be sure the screw heads are ground down and said the expansion mat that was a tripping hazard has been replaced with one that was rubberized.

Mr. Skalski said he thinks the only incurred expense yet due for the corner site is for \$5,000.00.

The Chair pointed out expenses for the corner site are at about 41% of budget. He also noted there have been no inquiries regarding the façade grant program this year.

Ms. Lubbart said the expenses for the virtual park event and annual staff payment will appear on the next round of financial reports.

Mr. Corakis reported the holiday banners are in place.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion to approve the financial reports.

Mr. Skalski moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for September - October 2020 as presented. Mr. Wieber seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-1 by roll call vote, with Mr. Corakis dissenting.

### **Project Updates**

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

Ms. Lubbart noted landscaping has been installed and also provided a copy of the agreement for close to \$5,000 to install an elaborate exhibit holiday decorations at the corner site.

Mr. Corakis was very pleased with the fall flowers planted at the corner lot, felt they provided a finishing touch and that they made the sign "pop."

The Chair said he is excited to see the holiday decorations.

Mr. Corakis agreed and felt with all that is going on they will provide some cheer.

#### **b. Stadium Drive Sidewalks**

Mr. Russell of Prein & Newhof was not able to attend the meeting.

Mr. Skalski reported it was discovered the Kalamazoo County Road Commission owns about three feet of the church property where it passes through the entry way. It is unclear when the street was widened whether it was done under MDOT or KCRC. A meeting was held with church representatives to let them know there is enough room to maintain existing access under ADA requirements. The church has no objections, especially since there is some remaining area in order to maintain some landscaping.

Once the exact property line west of the church is determined, Mr. Skalski said he will meet with the owners of that land to discuss filling in the low spots.

Chairperson Taylor said the listing agent for the property was enthusiastic about that possibility as it will increase the value of the property. It sounds like the agent will greenlight an easement when that is discussed.

### **Open House – November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Ms. Lubbart said PA 57 of 2018 requires DDAs to hold at least two informational meetings each year. These meetings can be designed as open houses to inform the public of the goals of the Board and the projects the DDA is financing. Due to Covid-19, the plans to hold these open houses in the spring and summer were cancelled. However, to meet state requirements and with increased knowledge about Covid-19, two open houses were planned for November 19 and December 2. The December 2 date is also when SoDA will hold its required meeting, so the two meetings were planned to be held at the same time.

She indicated the meetings will be held virtually on Zoom given current Covid restrictions, the first one from 3-5 p.m. after this meeting. She will provide a five-ten minute presentation at both 3:00 and 4:15 p.m. and will spend the rest of the time responding to any questions from attendees. The second meeting will be also held virtually from 3-5 p.m. on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

She will provide a handout, and a survey which will be posted online. She will collect comments and feedback through the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and post them on the website. She asked if there were comments on the draft survey.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell suggested, and Ms. Lubbart will add a question to determine if the respondent is a resident of the DDA.

Mr. Corakis urged that the project to collect contact information for DDA business owners continue to be a priority.

Ms. Lubbart said they will continue to work on that.

Chairperson Taylor said it will be interesting to see what other projects people may suggest for the DDA.

Ms. Lubbart said she will finalize the survey with the input received and use Survey Monkey to distribute it.

### **2010 Meeting Dates**

Ms. Lubbart provided a draft of the 2021 DDA Meeting Date Schedule for consideration:

**Downtown Development Authority (DDA)  
Third Thursday – every other month @ noon  
At the Oshtemo Community Center or Virtually**

**2021 Meeting Dates**

**January 21  
March 18  
May 20  
July 15  
September 16  
November 18**

The group confirmed they wished to keep the meetings to six times a year, with the option of adding meetings if needed, and to keep the start time at noon.

Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion.

Mr. Skalski moved to approve the 2021 Meeting Date Schedule as presented. Mr. Corakis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**Public Comment**

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

**Covid-19 Emergency Assistance Grant Program**

The group agreed that with the increase in Covid cases it is time to bring back the grant program. A number of communications have been received indicating interest in applying for a second round of the grant.

Chairperson Taylor indicated the amount originally budgeted for this program was \$90,000. \$42,500 was allocated to businesses in the Spring; \$47,500 remains available for a second round of grants. A letter will be sent to DDA businesses announcing the reopening of the grant program for awards up to \$2,500 on a first come, first served basis.

Criteria for the first round was reviewed and it was decided they would remain much the same with awards to be made by the end of the fiscal year or until all funds are expended. Ms. Lubbert was given latitude to tweak dates on the application form as reasonable to allow awards to be made by the end of the fiscal year.

The sub-committee established last spring will meet to approve or deny requests, with approved funds to be released through the Township's accounts payable system.

Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion.

Mr. Corakis moved to initiate a second round of the Covid-19 Emergency Assistance Grant Program as discussed so that awards can be made by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Announcements and Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Oshtemo Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority

Minutes Prepared: November 21, 2020

Minutes Approved: December 3, 2020