

# Downtown Development Authority

## Workshop Minutes

Wednesday, January 7, 2015  
Noon, City Hall Council Chambers



City of South Haven

### Roll Call:

Present: Burr, Marcoux, Frederick, Newton, Olson  
Absent: Braun, Maxwell, Whiteford

Also present: Brian Disette, City Manager; Steve Oosting, Civil Engineer; Wendy Hoschstedler, Finance Director; Deb Davidson, DDA Director

Davidson welcomed Sue Frederick to the DDA Board. Mary Whiteford has also been appointed but could not make today's meeting.

### 1. DDA discussed proposed future projects.

#### Former Baars Building

Davidson noted previous DDA Board discussion regarding the need to expand parking. Option 1 will provide twenty-eight (28) redeveloped public parking spaces at a cost of \$240,000. Option 2 will provide twenty-three (23) redeveloped public parking spaces along with a public restroom at a cost of \$360,000.

Davidson noted that in the past, the DDA has discussed a need for an additional restroom. There is intent to make the added restroom a year round facility. At present, the ice rink in the nearby Huron St parking lot is serviced by two (2) public restrooms in Dyckman Park.

Disette noted that the city is currently underserving the ice rink with only two restrooms available; vandalism to restrooms has occurred several times. With separate men's and separate women's restrooms in one building and multiple stalls, the occurrence of vandalism is greatly decreased. During Farm Market and ice rink hours, service could be improved to the area reducing vandalism issues.

Concerns were voiced that a restroom constructed at the former Baars building property may be too distant for users of the ice rink. Also, a drive currently directs traffic through the parking lot, over the proposed path to new restrooms. However, existing sewer and water hookups are available at the Baar's site. Disette noted that a big part of the expense is eliminated because of the hookups already existing. There is some dead space in either of the layouts which could possibly house restrooms and ice rink storage and rentals.

Newton noted the ice skating rink has a fairly short season and asked if the rentals could be located in a shed structure similar to where the Zamboni is stored. Newton asked what activities occur in the current skate rental site and whether heat is a necessity to which Dissette responded that currently the rental site provides a changing area; storage; rentals; and sales.

It was pointed out that parking spaces are gained with either option. The new restroom could mirror the Huron / Kalamazoo restroom.

It was stated that if the board chose Option 2 the restroom would not have to be done right away. Dissette added, "If you like Option 2 but don't want to spend the money on the restroom, the Engineering Department could get started on the parking engineering."

Marcoux pointed out delaying the restroom might buy some time to figure exactly how the restroom and a potential skate rental/storage could best be laid out; suggested changing the layout to have an entrance from the skate/rental building into the restroom.

It was noted that demolition of the existing building has to occur with either option. Oosting noted that demolition of the existing building could be done concurrently with construction of the new parking lot or it could be done prior.

Dissette explained that city staff will work with Engineering to get the design in place, to get it ready for bidding then bring it back to this board for a motion. The Planning Commission would review the project. Oosting believes that prior to Memorial Day would be too optimistic. Consensus is to target right after Labor Day to begin the project.

### **Center Street**

Davidson noted that the DDA approved a Streetscape Master Plan in 2010 which gave staff a base to follow for all downtown projects. The plan is to continue what was done on Phoenix Street; concrete walks, brick paving, outdoor seating, trash cans and benches. The thought is that now that the intersection of Phoenix and Center is complete, the Center Street project can be done in two (2) phases so traffic could use that intersection. Davidson stated that grant opportunities come up without much prior notice and turnaround is short. Pre-planning gives staff an opportunity to have a plan ready for another DIG grant. Davidson noted that city staff wants to get the DDA board's feedback and future review of the concept plans. Pat Cornelisse, landscape designer on Phoenix Street, has been chosen for the design work to keep plans consistent.

Phase 1 is Center Street south of Phoenix and allows Phoenix to stay open during the construction. This project would be done in two phases over two years' time, with the city applying for a grant each year. Cornelisse will be directed to work with interested property owners to develop outdoor seating.

The number one (1) goal is to get Center Street rebuilt avoiding additional borrowings, using local funds for a local match. Doing this in phases provides convenience and cash flow (no additional borrowings). Marcoux stated that this assumes getting the grants. Dissette said with the DIG grants, the city provides a healthy match, and has been very successful with

Deb and Steve working on this. Dissette noted that the state is using South Haven as an example to others in how to best use the funds.

Phase 2 will be Center Street north of Phoenix and finally Phase 3 will cover Broadway, according to Dissette.

Oosting explained that with the DIG grant the state wants a project ready to go when grant opportunities are announced. A city with a plan and approval in place makes a compelling application.

### **Wi-Fi / Broadway**

Davidson stated that at the Board's May meeting wi-fi was discussed and it was pointed out that not all DDA area was covered. Thirsty Perch, the Vineyard, Joe's Bar & Grill and others were underserved and city staff was directed to look at expanding coverage. Dissette explained that Secant has been working with the city on this and apologized for not responding more rapidly. Dissette noted that the city could go low-cost with antennas on top of the Warren Center but he feels the ideal is to mirror what has been done on Quaker Street and elsewhere, using street lights as bases for wi-fi components. Since 2006 the City's Department of Public Works has been planning to expand on the street lights going along Broadway to the bridge. The wi-fi expansion should be packaged with the street lighting, which would mean work with the Board of Public Utilities, the Electric Fund and Secant to be sure lighting installed is equipped with wi-fi sending units. City staff has planning in place but not yet executed. Broadway can look like an extension of Phoenix. Over the next two (2) to three (3) years this is very do-able.

Davidson pointed out the conceptual drawing with the streetscape and outdoor seating included in the agenda packet, noting that Thirsty Perch and Lakeshore Patio have looked at this drawing and agreed with the plan. This proposal is part of the whole bundle of rebuilding Broadway.

Dissette said the plan is to have the green service area available to the entire Central Business District on the streets, sidewalks and outdoor cafés. Marcoux noted businesses will still need to have their own system. Dissette said the city does encourage people to use the city-provided wi-fi but an inside signal is not guaranteed.

Burr noted that the beach was added which Dissette pointed out was done to get the marinas fully serviced.

### **Broadway**

See discussion above.

### **Water Street**

Dissette pointed out that Water Street looks great if you look west but if you look the other way it is a hodge-podge with no theme. Dissette's biggest issue is that because there has not been a plan, city staff has been adding pine trees which are blocking views. Dissette wants, over the next five (5) years, to work to make landscape improvements; to have one

overall theme. Contracted with Pat Cornelisse to make a plan adding in stairs, so it's easier for people on the bluff to get down to Water Street. Dissette said people are walking down that hillside, naturally making foot paths. Dissette would like to have a stairway executed and planned so people do not walk through new landscaping. Staff will be looking for funding from various sources including the DDA, perhaps even Housing and Urban Development through River Terrace, and by spring, plans will be starting to take shape. Dissette intends to bring plans to the DDA for board review and present estimated costs. The property is a mix of privately and city owned.

Marcoux asked if the city will try to get private owners to buy in and spend some money toward the project. Dissette said the contract with the landscaper will include having her meet with the private owners and get their input; then the city will work with the Parks Commission and DDA board and begin putting aside money on an annual basis to have approx. twenty-five (25) to fifty (50) thousand per year to make these improvements. Marcoux stated it sounds like a plan.

Hochstedler reported on financials. The debt related to the DDA 1 is paid off in 2015 so school taxes will no longer be captured which reduces that figure from the \$950,000 to the \$768,000. Hochstedler stated there are no new property tax values, nothing will change, and the financials will be updated when figures become available.

Hochstedler pointed out that DDA 2 has been adjusted in accord with new plan adopted, which reduces taxes from five hundred forty (540) thousand to five hundred twenty-eight (528) thousand. Expenses are relatively stable throughout for operating expenses; one change is "other" under operating expenses. The 2015 approved budget is higher than where it has been; that is to begin repayment to the Electric Fund for the downtown portion of the wi-fi installed so far. Hochstedler noted that is about a five (5) year payback which explains why that increased.

Hochstedler said everything else is quite stable. Marcoux asked what he is missing on personal property taxes. Discussion ensued regarding how the personal property tax rules have changed. Hochstedler said when she gets updated numbers she will update these figures. For now, Hochstedler explained that she has included them, as there is only eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) captured total; as they fall off we will follow the state assessor's office's lead.

Hochstedler pointed out the five (5) year payments from the drain commission for the amount the city paid for the Peterson Drain ends in 2016.

Debt and transfers out, per Hochstedler, DDA Bonds drops off after 2015, so that's an amount not paid in debt service any longer. Looking at what is budgeted for 2015, Hochstedler noted that the Kentucky Avenue Reconstruction was estimated at three-hundred eighty-three thousand (\$383,000) and also downtown paving, Woodman, was estimated at twenty-seven thousand (\$27,000). In the past, DDA funding towards the rehabilitation of the bridge was kept lower because the city was having fund balance issues. In 2014, the DDA put in two hundred ninety thousand (\$290,000). Recently some additional costs over and above budget were discovered so the DDA was sitting on a fund balance and actually put in more towards the bridge. The Street Fund and the DDA have put in the extra for engineering and other expenses.

Dissette noted that the DDA is sitting on half a million dollars. Hochstedler explained this is how the city can maintain operations and still do projects. According to Hochstedler, the city has come a long way since 2012.

Dissette said staff will get the numbers for the demolition of the parking lot.

## **2. Board Member Comments**

Marcoux: Spoke about his sadness to see Foundry Hall sold, noting that this board needs to look at the potential down the road of having a center where a lot of these groups could be pulled together. It would add a lot to the community.

Discussion ensued regarding the DDA board's mission. Marcoux noted that the Film Festival is looking for a permanent home.

Meeting adjourned 1:15 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom  
Recording Secretary