

**City of Ypsilanti
Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
SPARK EAST 215 W Michigan Ave
Thursday, January 16, 2019 8:30 a.m.**

The **Mission** of the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) is to undertake district wide improvements that have the greatest impact in strengthening the downtown areas and attracting new business. The primary goal of the YDDA is to implement positive economic, physical, aesthetic, and community changes in each of our four districts.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Beth Bashert	P	Kayia Hinton	P
Ben Harrington	A	Dieter Otto	P
Ylondia Portis	P	Athena Johnson	P
Danielle Milner (C)	P	Andy French	P
Jen Eastridge	P	Paul Ajlouny	P

Introductions

Staff Present:

Christopher Jacobs: DDA Director
Elize Jekabson: DDA Coordinator
Joe Meyers: City of Ypsilanti Economic Development
Bonnie Wessler: City of Ypsilanti Parking and Projects

Approval of Agenda (X*)

Item: Administrative Services Contract to be moved up on the agenda.

Beth Bashert motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.

Approval of December 19th, 2019 Minutes (X*)

Andy French motioned to approve the December 19th, 2019 Minutes. Jen Eastridge supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous

Public Comment (3 minutes each) n/a

Staff Report/Financial Report (X)

After learning about the continued drop in retail sales during 2019, staff reached out to Michigan Economic Developers Association, Michigan Downtown Association, and EMU for recommendations for a retail market analysis.

Staff is considering an RFP and hopes to receive deliverables and data points.

Andy French informed the board that the Depot Town Merchants have a meeting next week with Ron Stevens who is a known name in small business development.

Christopher Jacobs suggested that the board can put this out to bid. How much money would they want to spend on something like this?

Andy French would like to lean on the Small Business Development Center before this goes to bid.

Beth Bashert asked if this is in the DDA budget. Staff reported that there is money for this in the TIF budget.

Ylondia Portis asked if we have data to compare to.

Staff stated that the only data is from the 2009 "Cool Cities" program, which was a one size fits all program and not Ypsi-centric at all.

Jen Eastridge suggested that before we dig in we keep in mind the shift towards online shopping that is hitting all retail. She is not saying bad idea but why spend the money when the answer is there?

Christopher Jacobs stated that other retail districts are thriving despite the shift to online shopping, why is Ypsilanti not thriving?

Beth Bashert motioned for staff to draft up an RFP for \$1,200 for a Retail Market Analysis. Kayia Hinton supported the motion.

Andy French stated concern over the cap on the RFP. He wants to see the scope of the work first.

Staff indicated that they just started looking into this, and do not have enough information to move on this.

Beth Bashert withdrew motion.

Standing Committee Reports

Operations and Finance Committee

Operations and Finance did not have a quorum, so no meeting was held.

New Business

City Administrative Services Contract w/ City of Ypsilanti (X*)

Joe Meyers shared the history of the DDA and the City with the board. This contract is to be renewed every two years.

The contract includes opt out clauses that are four months for the City, and 30 days for the DDA.

Andy French thought the staffing relationship with the city has worked very well.

Staff clarified a question about City Staff vs. DDA Staff.

Dieter Otto has been involved with the DDA for nine years, and can attest that this arrangement is significantly better than in the past.

Dieter Otto motion to approve the City Administrative Services Contract with the City of Ypsilanti. Jen Eastridge supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.

Zonder Tours App Pilot

Harry from Spark East gave a presentation to the board about Zonder Tours.

Zonder uses travel gamification to incentivise people to visit smaller cities generally overlooked by tourists. It turns attractions to collectible game locations.

Information is managed by someone at the city level.

Ypsi is proposed as the first city pilot program.

Discussion about the app ensued. The board thanked Harry for his presentation.

2020 FY Budget Adoption (X*)

Staff reviewed the budget with the board. Notable changes are the elimination of Depot Town facade grants, and \$30,000 allocated from the Depot Town fund to pay for kiosks on the Maple Street Lot.

Kayia Hinton motioned to approve and adopt the 2020 FY Budget. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.

Road Diet Resolution (X*)

In 2011 speed limits went up, and made the MDOT streets less pedestrian friendly.

Bonnie Wessler gave the board a presentation about traffic calming on N. Huron, Hamilton, and Cross St.

Beth Bashert stated that this project fits the goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Beth Bashert and supported by Dieter Otto

WHEREAS, The City of Ypsilanti and the Downtown Development Authority of Ypsilanti have the health, safety, and welfare of Ypsilanti's residents, employees, and guests as their driving concern:

WHEREAS, the design of Washtenaw from Normal to Hamilton; Hamilton from Washtenaw to Harriet; and Huron from Harriet to Cross encourages drivers to travel at speeds unsafe for pedestrians;

WHEREAS, the proposed lane reduction would improve safety by reducing speeds, and also provides much needed bicycle lanes and safer pedestrian crossings;

WHEREAS, the proposed lane reduction would coordinate with the planned non-motorized connection over I-94;

WHEREAS, we understand that the following intersections, per 2038 projections in the 2019 feasibility study, may see excessive delays due to the lane reduction:

- Hamilton/Michigan (southbound, through/right approach, PM peak),
- Hamilton/Ferris (eastbound and westbound, PM peak),
- Hamilton/Harriet (westbound, left and approach, PM peak),

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the YDDA supports the City of Ypsilanti's proposed M-17 lane reduction project.

Motion passed. 9 yes, 0 no, 1 absent (Harrington)

Old Business

RAC Negotiations

Staff updated the board that the next round of negotiations with the RAC board is this afternoon.

Staff has asked board member Kayia Hinton to give insight of the Riverside Arts Center from a commercial real estate standpoint.

Kayia Hinton deferred to her Commercial Real Estate Agent, Brian Jones-Chance.

Brian Jones-Chance gave a presentation of his assessment of RAC. He recommends net lease if the tenant stays, to charge a base rent of 6.32 per sq. ft. and 1.31 to cover expenses you incur. This would cost 131,022.36 per year.

His assessment is that the value the building to the city is 1.25 million.

Food Cooperative Grant (X)

Corrine Sikorski spoke about the progress and standing of her project.

Staff explained that the issue with this grant is that the board approved a \$60,000 project for new ADA doors with electrical ADA buttons. The Co/op did not get any electrical work done for these doors, and did not notify the DDA of the change as they were required to by contract.

Corrine Sikorski said that the pricing changed it was well over even without electric work. Their quotes were older quotes and not updated when they turned in the application.

Beth Bashert stressed that as someone who guides her vision impaired mother often, she really prefers ADA buttons, and really wanted to see them for this project.

The board directed staff to reimburse \$22,500 to the Ypsilanti Food Co/op for the updated doors when paid invoices are received.

\$7,500 will be made available to the co/op if they decide to move forward with this project by putting ADA buttons on the doors.

Staff Updates: n/a

Public Comment (3 minutes each)

Alice Elliot, Ypsi Gathering Space: Stated that she doesn't understand why RAC is for sale. She doesn't want to see it sold and is worried how this will look for the DDA. She wants more transparency. Wants to be in on the negotiations.

John Newman, BOS : One of his companies is moving to Ann Arbor because of concerns walking to and from cars. Wants to keep safety top of of the DDA's mind. It affects his business.

Todd Girtis, Spark East: Pointed out the brand new lights in the meeting room, thus finishing the project. Next Wednesday is the Ypsi 9th hour at back office studio. Also next Wednesday is a STTR federal grant for machines bbc etc.informational.

Shawn Cool, Red Rock: Asked everyone to respect the dumpster corrals. He found all the lightbulbs from the Spark East project contaminating the cardboard recycling bin. Asked for staff to find ways to hold WM accountable for leaving doors open by creating a special contract with them.

Announcements/Comments: n/a

Next Meeting: February 20th, 8:30 a.m., SPARK

Key: (*) = items requiring Board action

(X) = documents attached in board packet