

**City of Ypsilanti**  
**Downtown Development Authority**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**  
**Ypsi Auto Museum 100 E. Cross**  
**Thursday, February 20 , 2020 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	A
Ben Harrington	P	Dieter Otto	P
Ylondia Portis	P	Athena Johnson	P
Danielle Milner (C)	P	Andy French	P
Jen Eastridge	P	Paul Ajlouny	P
Brian Jones Chance	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  
Ron Akers: DPS Director

**Approval of Agenda (X\*)**

*Andy French motioned to approve the agenda. Jen Eastridge supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.*

**Approval of January 16th, 2020 Minutes (X\*)**

*Andy French motioned to approve the January 16, 2020 Minutes. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous*

**Public Comment (3 minutes each)**

Brian Geringer - Vice Chair of City of Ypsilantis' Board of Ethics. Brian spoke about concerns with putting a camera on the N. Adams dumpster corral. He believes that citizens should not be monitored by the city. He urged the DDA board to consider other options before installing a camera.

Richard Prolicus- Karen and Paul Group. Introduced himself to the DDA Board.

**Staff Report/Financial Report (X)**

Staff updated the board about grant projects and the incentive program. Update: The city approved the DDA staffing contract.

## **Standing Committee Reports**

### **Operations and Finance Committee**

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

Andy French stated that the group is struggling to get committee members to come to meetings.

Danielle Milner reiterated that committee work is important to the efficiency of the board. She thanked Andy for his commitment.

## **New Business**

### **101 W. Michigan Redevelopment Liquor License (X\*)**

Applicant is not present. The space is slated to be a high end restaurant/lounge.

Dieter Otto suggested that in general for one of these applications, the amount spent should be documented.

Joe Meyers responded that everything is documented, the former DDA board had asked staff to narrow down applications and staff review before it comes to the board.

Beth Bashert commented that it will be a nice addition to Downtown.

Brian Jones-Chance questioned the price point of this restaurant.

Ylondia Portis was looking forward to the addition.

*Dieter Otto motioned to approve the Redevelopment Liquor License for 101 W. Michigan Ave.*

*Brian Jones-Chance supported the motion. Motion passed – unanimous.*

### **133 W. Michigan Ave Grant Extension (X\*)**

The grant recipient at 133 W. Michigan informed staff that they would not have their project complete by the end of February when staff did their routine check-in with the project at the beginning of the month.

Beth Bashert said that the lack of communication is disappointing.

Staff explained the process of the contract and the reimbursement.

The board agreed that the ownership of communication of construction delays should be on the grant recipient, not the staff.

*Beth Bashert motioned for a 60 day grant extension (finish date April 29, 2020) for 133 W.*

*Michigan. Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.*

### **Snow Removal Discussion (X)**

This is on the agenda today because DAY is concerned about plowing in the lots.

Ron Akers described changes to the snow removal policy.

A concern is how to deal with overnight parking. A good solution is to figure out a better way to shift cars to different lots before a snow emergency.

Ylondia Portis asked about warning policies in place.

Ron Akers said that none are in place, but it is possible to create them.

Jen Eastridge brought attention to the alleys that businesses and residents rely on to access their buildings.

Ron Akers responded that there may be a way for DPS to prioritize alleyways.

Beth Bashert asked about the historical mechanism of dealing with a snow event.

Ron Akers confirmed that signs and towing policies have been in place.

In the future, the city could utilize social media, and permit holders can get emails about planned car shifts.

Beth Bashert commended Mr. Akers for all his work.

Beth Bashert doesn't know another solution from towing cars that do not move.

Andy French asked about a third party contract.

Ron Akers replied that the parking manager is in DPS. There may be communication and union challenges. It makes sense for the city to continue plowing those lots.

Best way to give feedback to DPS is to Email Ron or Bonnie.

Christopher Jacobs stressed that he doesn't want to kick this down the road. Someone in Ann Arbor died slipping on a plowed in curb cut.

Ylondia Portis asked for an estimate from WHCanon for clearing curb cuts.

Paul Ajlouny suggested we communicate to other cities so we don't reinvent the wheel.

Dieter Otto wants to offer services and knowledge from EMU parking. He is more than happy to talk with DPS.

#### **N. Adams Dumpster Enclosure**

Staff reported that there has been recent vandalism on the enclosure door that will cost up to \$1,500 to fix.

This adds up to at least \$8,000 in extra expenses on this enclosure alone in the last 18 months. This includes door repairs, dumping clean up, and cardboard recycling contamination fees from loads of cardboard having to be diverted to the landfill.

This does not include staff time of cleaning the enclosures.

Beth Bashert commented that messy dumpsters bring vermin and disease to communities.

Andy French agreed with Beth, but wants to be sensitive to comments about unnecessary surveillance.

Jen Eastridge stated that a solution to this problem is not just for business but for community safety and health.

Joe Meyers spoke about how restaurants are required to have a dumpster plan per health code, and this particular dumpster has been a headache since 2006. If the DDA gets rid of the dumpsters, restaurants might have to leave.

Staff was asked what businesses and residents who pay into the system want. Staff reported that everyone they've spoken to that pays into the system has been supportive and desperate for a solution, might that even be a camera.

DDA can pass a privacy policy to ensure concerns of surveillance are heard.

Ben Harrington stated that he is the second longest serving other than Dieter. There have been issues with surveillance before. Before the dumpsters, business took trash to the street. The fact that there is no enforcement mechanism is the issue. Loose ends need to be tied up.

Wouldn't support surveillance unless enforcement is tied into it.

Ylondia Portis commented that when she lived in Indianapolis, there were rodents. She's never seen vermin in Ypsi, and wants to keep it that way.

Danielle Milner requested that staff come to the next meeting with a privacy policy and an enforcement plan.

#### **YDDA Summer Movie Series (X)**

Richard Prolicus from the Karen and Paul group that installed the movie projection at October's movie in the park. He handed out material explaining services. Businesses can advertise before the movies. He also provides other entertainment for kids including a Lego man and a bubble guy.

#### **Holiday Decorations (X)**

All of the DDA's holiday decorations are aging and degrading.

It would cost 30-40k to replace all these decorations from Bronners.

Ron Akers noted efficiency and safety issues this year, wreaths have caught on fire because they're so degraded.

Danielle would like samples of proposed new decorations.

The executive committee favored snowflakes vs. wreaths.

Brian Jones-Chance asked if decorations are necessary.

In response, Ylondia Portis spoke about how consumers expect to feel exuberance during the holiday season. It adds appeal to downtown and realistically, we are competing with communities like Detroit and Ann Arbor for holiday shoppers.

Jen Eastridge said as a business owner, she depends on the holiday season to survive and Ypsilanti for being welcoming. She likes the snowflakes as they are inclusive, festive, and LED efficient.

### **Old Business**

#### **Zonder Tours App Pilot (X\*)**

The board is being asked to approve a pilot of the program for six months.

Staff is apprehensive about paying for the app month to month unless there are clear and positive measurables attached. After six months there is no obligation to \$200 a month.

*Beth Bashert motioned to approve a six month pilot for the Zonder App. Ben Harrington supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.*

#### **Riverside Arts Center Agreement (X\*)**

Brian Jones-Chance stated that this is a steal of a deal. Why was the decision to do a land contract vs. another way?

Christopher Jacobs stated that this deal closely resembles what RAC offered. The attitude of our negotiation team was that our priority was to come to a price that would allow RAC to thrive.

Ben Harrington stated that the DDA should consider what program will this money be allocated.

*Ben Harrington motioned to approve the lease agreement with the Riverside Arts Center. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.*

**Staff Updates:** n/a

**Public Comment (3 minutes each)**

Todd Girtis- Spark East thanked the board for approving Zonder. This is exciting news for entrepreneurs, and one step closer for a new office opening in the City. Updated events: Ypsi 9th Hour and the women's empowerment event. Encouraged businesses to apply for the summer works program.

**Announcements/Comments:**

Beth Bashert encouraged staff not to give up on the EMU passport after one try.  
Hope to jump the amount of teens that get placed in the city with Michigan Works.

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

Key: (\*) = items requiring Board action

(X) = documents attached in board packet