



The December 5, 2018 meeting was called to order by Todd Craft at 6:05 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Tom Buck, Stephanie Clement, Todd Craft, Sean Murphy (arrived late at 6:16 p.m.), Tom Pascaris, Steve Schneemann, and Micki Skrzycki

ABSENT: Kathy Griswold, Rachel Gallagher

OTHERS PRESENT: Kate Knight, DDA Executive Director  
Lydia Macklin-Camel, DDA staff  
David Murphy, City Manager  
Bill Galvin, City Council

**2. APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion by** Buck, seconded by Skrzycki to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- a. Financial Report
- b. Minutes: November 7, 2018 Meeting

**Motion carried 6-0-3.**

**3. APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA**

**Motion by** Skrzycki seconded by Buck to approve the December 5, 2018 agenda as presented.

**Motion carried 6-0-3.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Call to the Public at 6:07 p.m.

Bill Galvin, City Council member and Farmington resident (35697 Briar Ridge Lane) commented on the recent Council ruling to approve moving the all of the annual Founders Festival activities to Shiawassee Park. Galvin mentioned he had received both positive and negative feedback regarding the decision and addressed these with the DDA. Due to the reduced presence of the festivities within the downtown district, Galvin encouraged the DDA Board to support the downtown businesses in this change and to look at the void as an opportunity to do something special within the downtown area during the event.

Call to the Public closed at 6:10 p.m.

## **5. FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT**

Knight informed the Board that there were some unexpected expenditures due to unplanned property damage within a downtown building that will appear on the next Financial Snapshot along with tax payments that have not been credited yet.

## **6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE**

### **Communications**

Downtown Farmington is currently in full swing with our On the Ground Farmington series through Metromode. As of Thanksgiving, with eight weeks of coverage, digital reach has hit 18,364 individuals. Analytics show the most popular piece thus far was "How Farmington turned a 'busted-up asphalt parking lot' into a lively community hub", written by local journalist and project editor Jenn McKee. Readers averaged 6:44 minutes on that article. The next step is building a coalition to continue this work. MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) strongly supports Metromode and subsidizes their partnerships for RRC (Redevelopment Ready Communities). Once our City Master Plan is complete, we'll be eligible for this support.

### **Events**

The first autumn edition of Ladies Night Out was November 15. Most merchants reported a successful first effort; it will be a fixture in our event offerings. Small Business Saturday was November 24, Holly Days was Saturday, December 1. Holly Days was a partnership with the Chamber and Farmers Market, featuring free movies at the Farmington Civic Theater, expanded artisan market shopping at Riley Park, and the Light Up the Grand Parade, culminating in a tree-lighting at the Governor Warner mansion. (The DDA provided branding and promotional support for this downtown Chamber event.) The DDA encouraged downtown merchants to stay open for these three consecutive calendar events.

Clement, Store Manager at Dress Barn in Downtown Farmington, shared with the Board that her store received more traffic than the usual Thursday due to Ladies Night Out. Clement thought that the event was more lightly promoted and that promotions for LNO could be improved, however, her store received upwards of 300 customers compared to 500 at the spring event, which was good considering the inclement weather. Buck suggested the DDA collect more positive testimonies, like Clement's, from businesses that participated in Ladies Night Out and other fall/winter events to share with all businesses and encourage more participation at these events in the future.

### **Design and Maintenance**

This week the DDA is installing festival lighting in Riley Park, spanning from the inside of the Grand River north entrance to the center gable of Sundquist Pavilion. Thank you to S3 for the thoughtful inspiration, drawings, and design expertise! Installation will precede installation of the ice rink in early December. Knight stated that the project will cost an estimated \$10-15,000, and could be covered with proceeds from the DDA's 2017-2018 Harvest Moon Celebrations, which had yet been unattributed to a specific project. Past years' event proceeds had been dedicated to public art and the ice rink. Skrzycki and Griswold stated that the Harvest Moon Committee had agreed that lighting would be an apt project for proceeds. Craft commented that it was a fitting demonstration of proceeds put to visible use.

Tree lighting within the streetscape was installed last week, in time for the holidays. Nine trees with more uniform canopy were "de-lighted" and re-installed with new generation, high-efficiency LED. The installation focused on clusters anchoring pedestrian crosswalks on Grand River. Thank you to the volunteers who joined our call to action and helped decorate Riley Park for the holidays. A brigade of six to eight helpers assisted DDA staff and Restoration Plus in wrapping and lighting the park on November 25. More than 20 volunteer hours knocked out the installation in record time. Our downtown holiday preparation is complete this week. Sidewalk improvement wrapped up last week at Loft Cigar Lounge on Grand River. This DDA-merchant partnership provides the accessibility required for this change of business use.

Tom Buck suggested the DDA discuss lighting and holiday décor with the Corridor Improvement Authority to set a precedent for décor along the Grand River Corridor into the future.

Skrzycki complimented Mutual Property Management for decorating their building with lights for the holidays. Skrzycki thinks it is a great complement to the DDA's holiday décor and suggested the DDA write a letter of appreciation to the owner and encourage other businesses to decorate their storefronts for the season.

## **7. Capital Planning FY 2019-2020 Work Group Representation**

Knight shared that the City is beginning Capital Improvement Planning for the FY 19-20 and will be reinstating the CIP Work Group which requires DDA representation. Knight asked the Board to make a motion to determine whether they would like to continue to have the Executive Director serve as the liaison to the CIP Work Group or nominate a Board Member.

Buck mentioned that the DDA has received negative feedback from the Main Street organization because they do not elect a Board Member to serve on the CIP Work Group. Schneemann commented saying he believed the Executive Director is the best equipped to serve on the CIP Work Group because they are most connected to the daily activities of the City. Knight suggested that they use their January meeting as a working session to discuss their thoughts for FY 19-20 Capital Improvement

Planning and then she will bring these ideas to the CIP Work Group conversation on behalf of the Board.

**Motion by**, Schneemann seconded by, Pascaris resolved that the board designates Kate Knight to serve on the Capital Improvement Program Work Group.

**Motion carried 7-0-2.**

### **8. Oakland Street Update**

Knight updated the Board on the Oakland Street Improvement Project. Knight presented OHM's, the City's engineering contractor, updated cost estimate for the project and finalized construction documents. The original cost and scope for the project, which only included repaving and additional parking spaces, was estimated at approximately \$266,000. The updated cost and scope for the project, which now includes a reconfiguration of the street, added utilities, and wayfinding, on top of the original scope of work, is estimated at approximately \$646,000. The Design Committee worked closely with OHM to outline the scope of work and believes the added improvements will offer more value to the community over the long run and that investing the money into the Oakland Street project is important because the area is a major gateway to the downtown district. The DDA and the City originally agreed to split the cost 55/45. Knight informed the Board that they would need to approve the new cost and scope of work and then bring it in front Council for final approval by January in order to go to bid in February/March.

The Board provided individual comments on the project:

Buck was surprised that OHM had produced finalized construction documents before the DDA Board approved the cost and scope of work. Buck believes the cost and scope of work are extravagant and not what was originally agreed upon when the project began. He suggested tailoring the project back to the original scope of work in order to bring costs down. Buck expressed his concern that the Board and the Design Committee were not aware of the cost estimate until now. He suggested that when major changes to the project scope were made, they should have been addressed with updated cost estimates by OHM throughout the design process. Buck suggested that in the future the Board should improve their communication and information process for major streetscape projects amongst the contracting engineers and the Design Committee so that a major surprise like this does not happen again. Buck also suggested the Board host a special meeting with OHM in order to explain the details of the new project scope and cost estimate so that the DDA Board may make a more informed decision. In light of the new cost estimate, Buck also suggested the Board consider other downtown improvement projects and weigh the pros and cons for investing in either, or.

Schneemann agreed with Buck that the price was much higher than planned and not the normal investment the DDA has made on past projects, however, he argued the value of the improvement project, in its current scope, will outweigh the added expenditure.

Pascaris agreed the price tag was quite high for the project. He also expressed his concern for the contracting engineers' lack of communication with the DDA regarding the extreme hike in project cost.

Murphy agreed the cost was very high, but noted that he saw the added value of streetscape improvements for the downtown and what the additional parking spaces would bring.

Skrzycki expressed her concern for the project cost and the likelihood this would require the DDA Board to nearly halve their fund balance.

Clement also agreed the price was very high and expressed her desire to get clarification from OHM.

Craft agreed the price was very high and nodded to Buck's point that the Board should consider how this money could be invested in the community in other areas that may be of higher priority, such as Farmington Road.

The Board directed staff to connect with OHM and set up a special meeting before the end of the year in order to make a decision on how to move forward with the project before the January City Council Meeting.

## **9. Other Business**

Due to the holiday, the Board opted to move their January 2, 2019 meeting to Wednesday, January 9, 2019.

### **Board Comment**

Schneemann commented on the Galvin's words during public comment regarding the Founders Festival location change. Schneemann echoed Galvin reporting that he too had received both positive and negative feedback, specifically from business owners. He asked that the topic be put on a future agenda so that the Board can discuss further how they will address the void and support business owners at the 2019 event.

Schneemann also commented on the Oakland Street Project discussion asking that the project missteps not derail the entire project from moving forward as he thinks improving Oakland Street in any capacity will be of high value to the community.

Buck reported that a new business moved into the upper level of the Cook Building. The business, ITA is an HR Tech Company and is excited to be a part of the downtown community. Knight asked that Buck share their contact info so she can add them to downtown merchant communications.

## **10. Adjournment**

**Motion by** Schneemann, seconded by Pascaris to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

**Motion carried 7-0-2.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Lydia Macklin-Camel  
Staff, Farmington DDA

The next regular meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 7, 2018, in the conference room at Farmington City Hall.