



FARMINGTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING – ANNUAL RETREAT
Huron River Club Board Room

March 6, 2010

A special meeting of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority was called to order by Board President Cowley at 9:10 a.m.

Present: Cornwell, Cowley, Frost, Gajewski, Jakacki, Kuiken, Rock, Schneemann

Absent: Higgins, Pastue

Guests: JT Buck, Mayor, City of Farmington
Robert Donohue, Main Street Oakland County

Also Present: Annette Knowles, Janet Bloom (9:50 a.m.)

Main Street 101 Training

Robert Donohue, Principal Planner at Main Street Oakland County, conducted a basic mini-training course about the history of the Oakland County Main Street Program and the Main Street 4-Point Approach. Donohue reviewed the ten accreditation criteria, which are standards of performance that communities must meet annually. The criteria are: broad-based community support, vision and mission statements, comprehensive work plan, historic preservation ethic, active board and committees, adequate operating budget, paid professional management, ongoing training, reporting of key statistics and membership in the Main Street Network. MSOC expects that proper work planning be accomplished for every project. Each committee should be challenged with 2-3 projects for which they are given discretion to accomplish, with oversight by the director and/or board.

Donohue provided an overview on direct funding mechanisms, such as the TIF and PSD. Sponsorships are a potential source of revenue, but large corporate donations are vanishing. Small corporations may serve as a funding source and many seek out opportunities that involve green and sustainable practices and quality of life issues. The successful approach to sponsorships involves a

personal approach and collateral agreement which is of more value to them than the amount they are giving to you. Memberships and cooperative advertising are programs which often generate revenue as well.

Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market Strategic Planning

Board members discussed the status of the market, its current challenges and ideas to better the market experience.

The following are bulleted remarks about expectations:

- The site was designed for 35 vendors; average count now is 24
- I'd like to see the market moved more onto the north pad
- I'd like to see a friends of the market created
- We need a more active vendor recruitment team
- We need a sponsor; the market should appeal
- A second location is needed to spread out the vendors throughout downtown; perhaps at Memorial Park?
- I'd like us to hold the market to its present size; isn't it big enough?
- Do not destroy the grassy park
- Completion of Grove Street may help
- Try to educate the business community more about how to succeed on market day
- Create market signage and/or a business directory
- Add unique, intriguing, novel experiences
- Permit sidewalk shopping every Saturday
- Engage the businesses more into the market
- Have activities in the park
- Move the market to the north side of the Pavilion
- We need animal waste bag dispensers
- Try a reward card
- Figure out how to break even
- Move merchants out of the parking lot to open up parking spaces
- The market must be self-supporting
- Close Grove Street
- Place the music on the north pad

For the 2010 season, the board has determined that the market shall operate under the assumption that it will be self-supporting, except for DDA staff time. We will eliminate the crossing guard duty. Additionally, the costs for setup and teardown incurred by DPW will be applied to the market budget. This will impact funds for marketing and music. Free music or reduced costs will be required. We will contact city management to determine the feasibility of closing Grove Street. We will petition the city so that businesses may have sidewalk shopping every Saturday during the market season.

10-Year Capital Improvements Plan

Given that the Capital Improvements Plan has been in place for over one year, it is time to gauge progress and reprioritize items. For example, the Grand River Streetscape has been accomplished. Additionally, the City has encountered financing difficulties with the switchback from Shiawassee Park to the Maxfield Training Center, so the complementary project for a connector to Grand River Avenue can be delayed. Board members are asked to submit requested timeline changes so that the plan can be amended at the time the budget is presented.

Review of Proposed 2010-2012 Work Plan: Core Theme - Walkability

Upon request of the City of Farmington, we are preparing a two-year work plan and corresponding budget.

Given that the DDA pledged the funds for the repayment of the streetscape bonds, the funding for the debt service must be allocated from the budget first, before other projects are considered.

The Design Committee has proposed allocating funds that would be used toward professional services for the preparation of consolidated parking lot projects. These services might include design, survey and/or legal work. The projects in the Development Plan include the west parking lot between the library, City Hall and Farmington Road. Another proposed lot would be between Warner Street, west to the Village Shoe Inn. Either of these projects would be a candidate; however, the board should be prepared to identify a priority.

The Design Committee would like to finalize the wayfinding signage package design and install the signage the following summer.

Property acquisition may be necessary to accomplish parking improvements. If so, an allocation of funding may be necessary. An alternative to cash payment would be to finance the cost of the purchase.

The Marketing & Promotions Committee would like to see an annual business directory and locator map, with walking features included in the design.

Review of Proposed 2009-2010 Work Plan: Core Theme – Destination Downtown (Increase Awareness)

Riley Park is ground central for most of the DDA events. As such, there are certain improvements that will increase the serviceability of the Pavilion and that will finish off the project as it was originally conceived. The Design Committee would request funds for more prominent mullions on the windows and to paint the remaining white trim areas. Loose tables and chairs that are easier to move

would be friendly for visitors to the park. To eliminate costs for generator rental at events, the Pavilion would require an upgrade to the electrical service, consistent with a recent study of the location. Lastly, funds are requested for an outdoor skating rink, which would add a winter component to the seasonal calendar.

In order to make sure the downtown remains clean and attractive, an annual maintenance plan is required. The DDA agreed to assume maintenance responsibilities as part of the TIF reauthorization. Additionally, hanging baskets with flowers and holiday decorations add to the attractiveness of downtown.

The events calendar is robust. Most of the events will be required to break even, at a minimum. Thus, they will not derive financial support from a tax-related funding source. The calendar includes Rhythmz in Riley Park, Art on the Grand, the Farmers & Artisans Market, the Founders Festival, the Harvest Moon Celebration and Holly Days. No new events are proposed over the next two years.

The Marketing & Promotions Committee is nearing completion on the branding project and requests funding to facilitate a launch of the brand. A small advertising budget is requested that will include funds for a loyalty campaign. A request for proposals was distributed for services to redesign the web site. With the timeline that is proposed, the payment for these services will not apply until later in the summer. The web site has an operational cost as well.

Volunteerism and public information are important in getting out the word about Downtown Farmington. The Organization Committee requests funds for volunteer management and appreciation and for the newsletter. The committee would like to expand the newsletter to more fully saturate zip codes 48335 and 48336. A new proposal is to venture with the city and sponsor six episodes of the Farmington 15 News show. Brian Golden was present to answer questions about the show as it currently exists.

Review of Proposed 2009-2010 Work Plan: Core Theme – Increase Commercial Jobs

Incentives may play an important role in attracting new business to Farmington. For that reason, the façade and sign incentive programs add to the toolbox. The Economic Restructuring Committee is researching a new program to fund redevelopment incentives; such a program might be useful in facilitating new development at the Maxfield Training Center, which is slated to close at the end of the school year. We are nearing completion on the program for build-out loans for food service establishments that will require seed money, which might be derived from fund balance.

Although no funding is requested at this time, the business incubator and real estate broker incentives are on ER's target list for the future.

Business recruitment and retention activities help to attract new businesses, but to strengthen those that already are present. Ideas proposed include a trade show kit and associated participation (for example, at ICSC's sessions in Novi and Chicago), updating and reprinting annually the business recruitment packet and hosting retention forums and familiarization tours. The ER Committee would like to see a new market analysis conducted after the 2010 census results are available. A new study will help to gauge if existing marketing activities have resulted in expansion of the primary trade area and if the demographics of such have changed since the previous census.

Schneemann departed the meeting.

The meeting was recessed for lunch at 12:15 p.m.
The meeting was reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Prioritization of Proposed Work Plan

A summary of projected funds for 2010-2012 was announced, as follows: TIF, \$360,000 and \$340,000 respectively and PSD, \$216,000 each year. Staff recommends that the DDA waive any increases to the PSD that is expected this year through 2012. Given the challenging economy, it is not in the best interest of the downtown to request an increase this year. With overhead costs deducted as well as the bond debt for streetscape, the availability of funds for the forthcoming two years will pose challenges and force prioritization.

The plan for the 2010-2012 budget is to introduce a new cost center for the PSD funds, separate from the DDA operating (TIF) fund. This will help us apply costs to the PSD, which traditionally have been maintenance and marketing, more specifically than in the previous budgets.

Projects or programs to be funded with TIF dollars include professional services to develop consolidated parking lot projects, façade incentives, build-out incentives and electrical upgrades at the Pavilion. It was suggested that we replace the existing sign at the Pavilion for one with Walter Sundquist's name more visible.

Projects or programs to be funded with PSD dollars include maintenance, hanging baskets and holiday decorations, the branding rollout and web site redesign, volunteer management and appreciation and the newsletter. All events are intended to become self-supporting, but Rhythms and Holly Days will receive funding for one last year. The salary for the Events Planner shall be spread among the events, but the operating fund shall be the source of benefits. The

budget for business recruitment and retention combined will be \$5,000.00. The market analysis will be repeated in the second year.

Cowley departed the meeting.

The next step in the process is the development of the budget in accordance with this direction provided.

The retreat was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.