

**Meeting of the Niles DDA Main Street Board of Director  
IN PERSON Meeting at City Hall  
333 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference room behind DDA offices Niles, MI 49120  
Monday, October 18, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**CALL TO ORDER  
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
CHAIR REPORT**

**CONSENT AGENDA 6:30-6:35**

1. Consideration of approving the minutes from the September 27, 2021
2. Consideration of approving the Manager report.

**TREASURER'S REPORT 6:35 -6:45**

3. Financials

**STAFF REPORT 6:45-7:00** Items for Board Action Introduction of Items for Discussion

4. Social District discussion
5. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Discussion
6. Winter Cities Pilot Update
7. Discussion 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Mural
8. Christmas Decorating /Lights for the trees

**BOARD OPENINGS -2 opening.**

9. Board needs: Project Chairs and Volunteers

**OLD BUSINESS -none**

**WORKING MEETING**

9. Discuss NODE presentation to Council
10. December 18 Christmas Parade
11. Hunter Ice Festival
12. Junior Main Street

**DIRECTORS REPORTS**

Justin Flagel – Vice Chair, EV Chair  
Fredda Zeiter – Secretary, Design Chair  
Charlie Spilman- Treasurer, Organization Chair  
Elizabeth Keller  
Luigi Alberganti  
Paul Klimson  
Sandy Whitmyer  
Melanie Kennedy, Promotions Chair  
Travis Timm, Council Liaison  
Nick Shelton, Mayor

**ADJOURNMENT**

(1)



**Meeting of the Niles DDA Main Street Board of Director  
IN PERSON Meeting at City Hall  
333 N 2nd Street, 3rd Floor Conference room behind DDA offices Niles, MI 49120  
Monday, September 27, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**DATE/TIME:** September 27, 2021

**ISSUED:** September 28, 2021

**LOCATION:** City Hall, Third Floor Conference Room

**PRESENT:** Sandy Whitmyer, Melanie Kennedy, Justin Flagel, Elizabeth Keller, Charlie Spilman, Fredda Zeiter, Bryan Williams

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Paul Klimson, Luigi Alberganti, Timm – City Council Rep

**ABSENT:**

**VISITORS:** Laura Preston, Stephanie Reno

**STAFF:** Lisa Croteau – DDA / Main Street Manager

**COPIES:** All members

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**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:30 pm by Chair Bryan Williams

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:** Laura Preston, Stephanie Reno

**CHAIR REPORT:** April Gargis has resigned from the DDA Board due to getting a full time job.

**CONSENT AGENDA** 6:30-6:43

1. Consideration of approving the minutes from the August 16, 2021
2. Consideration of approving the Manager reports.

**A. MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLES SPILMAN TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 16, 2021 DDA BOARD MEETING MINUTES AND MANAGERS REPORT AND WAS SECONDED BY JUSTIN FLAGEL.**

**Discussion:** None

**MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**

**TREASURER'S REPORT – Charlie Spilman**

Financials – The August asset balance is \$132,170.

**STAFF REPORT:** 6:35-6:43

3. Social District update ASKS to encumber \$2,000 for entertainment October Third Thursday for bands if we cannot get sponsors.

**B. MOTION WAS MADE BY JUSTIN FLAGEL TO ENCUMBER \$2,000 FOR BAND ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE OCTOBER THIRD THURSDAY EVENT AND WAS SECONDED BY ELIZABETH KELLER.**

**Discussion:** There are four different venues and one has been financially under written.

**MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**

4. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Discussion – Lisa summarized what she knows to date. The Board has been asked to view the Zoom programs on December 2, December 9 and December 16, 2021 and to review the materials shared.
5. Winter Cities Pilot – Justin, Bryan and Lisa participated in MEDC strategy session for getting people out shopping during the winter.
6. Update on 2nd Street Mural – We are waiting for updated sketch from the artist.

**BOARD APPLICATIONS** - 3 openings

7. Board needs – Promotions Chair and Organization Chair
  - a. **Melanie Kennedy volunteered to Chair the Promotions Committee**
  - b. **Charles Spilman volunteered to Chair the Organization Committee**
  - c. The board is asked to review the proposed projects and choose 5 possible that we might take on.
  - d. Safe Trick or Treat October 30, 2021 from 4 – 5 pm
  - e. Small Business Saturday – Saturday November 27, 2021
  - f. Hunter Ice Festival – January 14 – 16, 2022

**OLD BUSINESS** - None

**WORKING MEETING** 6:43 – 7:05

8. Discuss NODE presentation to Council.
  - a. City Council presentation October 11, 2021

**C. MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLES SPILMAN TO ASK THE COUNCIL FOR AN EXTENSION OF 5 YEARS FOR THE NODE LOCATION AND WAS SECONDED BY ELIZABETH KELLER.**

**Discussion:** None

**MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**

- b. The foundations are ready to support the NODE with up to \$75,000.
- c. The Winter City Pilot may also be helpful.

9. Discuss Cannabis businesses being allowed in the DDA District.

**D. MOTION WAS MADE BY MELANIE KENNEDY TO ASK THE CITY COUNCIL TO ALLOW UP TO TWO CANNABIS BUSINESSES TO OPERATE WITHIN THE DDA DISTRICT AND WAS SECONDED BY JUSTIN FLAGEL.**

**Discussion:** This may allow vacant buildings to become contributing tax and business properties. These businesses would be near a child care center and library. Do we want this type of business in our downtown?

**MOTION CARRIED BY 6 yes and 1 no**

**E. A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLES SPILMAN TO PROCEED TO A CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS DDA MANAGERS SALARY.**

**Discussion:** None

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**F. A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLES SPILMAN TO RAISE THE MANAGERS SALARY TO \$56,000 A YEAR WITH A ONE TIME BONUS OF \$4,000. AND WAS SECONDED BY JUSTIN FLAGEL.**

**Discussion:** Charles explained his rationale for a pay raise. There has not been a raise since 2016

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**G. A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLES SPILMAN MAKE THIS RAISE RETROACTIVE TO SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 AND WAS SECONDED BY JUSTIN FLAGEL.**

**Discussion:** None

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

H. **A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLES SPILMAN TO END THE CLOSED SESSION AND WAS SECONDED BY JUSTIN FLAGEL.**

**Discussion:** None

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**DIRECTORS REPORTS:**

Justin Flagel: Vice Chair - None  
Fredda Zeiter: None  
Charlie Spilman: None  
Elizabeth Keller: None  
Luigi Alberganti: Absent  
Paul Klimson: Absent  
Sandy Whitmyer: None  
Melanie Kennedy: None  
Travis Timm: Absent  
Nick Shelton: Absent

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJORN AT 7:44 PM**

**Next Board meetings will occur Monday, October 18, 2021**

We believe these minutes reflect the intent of the events, discussions and decisions made during the meeting.  
Respectfully submitted,

Fredda Zeiter

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- a. Safe Trick or Treat October 30, 2021 from 4 – 5 pm
- b. Small Business Saturday – Saturday November 27, 2021
- c. Hunter Ice Festival – January 14 – 16, 2022

**(2) Manager Report**

**Business Update:**

**New Prospects:**

**REVENUE:** Working on identifying all properties that have been made non-taxable per previous discussion.

**NECI:** no update

**MEDC/MMS/RRC:** First meeting re Winter Cities was 9/23. New round of MoM opens October 18 and we are allowed to apply on behalf of two (2) businesses. More funding opportunities are coming from MEDC in conjunction with Norther Initiatives and Business Coaching/Training. Details to some later.

**NODE/Street Furniture/ Outdoor Dining / Social District/ Common Area:** I have not received anything from Andrews University presentation 9/15/21 yet.

**OLD Y DEVELOPMENT:** no update.

**Third Thursday:** Winter Cities will be at October Third Thursday to get input from the community on The NODE and what winter activities they would like to see in Niles. Honor Credit Union is sponsoring the band. Hope and Fernwood will also be onsite to promote their causes.

**Streetscape:** no update

**Parking:** no update

**Homeless/Vagrants:** Working on pulling together all Niles entities with interest in helping to better coordinate response to issues

**Safe Trick or Treat:** Friday Folder for 1500 Niles Elementary School Students have been delivered. There will not be any additional Advertising.

**Hunter Ice Festival:** January 14-16, 2022. UltraCamp will likely not be able to be used for a Warming Center due to their COVID policy. Ric has generously offered the Carnegie Library as a location we can use. I will create and print sponsor letters to send to businesses and anyone that you think should receive one. They will be ready for your taking by October 22<sup>nd</sup>. I will connect with the Health Department this coming week to ask their thoughts on the Ice Cream Booth. IF they do not think live scooping is a good idea, we can order and pre-scoop containers of the ice cream for sale during the festival. I am working with Aaric Kendall now on expenses

to develop a budget, as it is likely that costs have grown since 2020. I would ask that the board encumber up to \$10k for the festival, if needed, as has been done in previous years.

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### 3. FINANCIALS – \*\*SEPTEMBER FINANCIALS WILL LIKELY NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL DECEMBER OR JANUARY

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8 Christmas Decorating /Lights for the trees

**BOARD OPENINGS** -2 opening.

9. Board needs: Project Chairs and Volunteers

**OLD BUSINESS** -none

### WORKING MEETING

10 December 18 Christmas Parade

**4. Social District:** Discuss tightening Commons Area until additional businesses obtain their Social District License. Still only Niles Brewing Company and The Brass Eye. I suggest we tighten the area to 3<sup>rd</sup> and Cedar vs 3<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway and Front and Sycamore into the park vs Front and Wayne to try and alleviate confusion for consumers about where they can go with drinks.

**5. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Discussion:** Please check your schedule and let me know what meeting you will likely be able to attend. Please give me your suggestions for the Stakeholders Group- I suggest all of our board and any district business that wants to participate PLUS Selena Guevara and Jeff Rea from the Chamber, Ric and Mayor and any council person that wants to participate, Jerry Holtgren and Jethrow Kyles from Niles New Tech. And invite all district business and chamber businesses to the Entrepreneur Focus Groups. I will ask National for to share any invitation they have created for other cities that have received this training.

### Thursday December 2

**9a 1hr** Webinar 1 – Introduction to Entrepreneurship Ecosystems. To include staff, board members and invited stakeholders. Review the service, overview of entrepreneurship ecosystems, and outcomes from the service. Discuss existing Transformation Strategies for any Specialization areas to consider.

**3p 1.5hr** Entrepreneur Focus Group Convening Invitees: Would be good to have mix of new, old, emerging, entrepreneurs from cross section of fields – tech, retail, office, and mfg. Could also include social entrepreneurs if you would like. \*\* all of our district businesses plus who? Help identify the “who”.

### December 9

**9a 1.5hr** Part 1 with Partner Stakeholder Providers: (i.e. planning/zoning; economic development; library; college/university officials, SBDC, Tourism, incubator/accelerators, Chambers). Objective is for them to describe their organizations and what they do. We will also review findings from the pre-virtual visit entrepreneurs survey and entrepreneurs Focus Group.

**3p 1.5hr** Part 2 with Partner Stakeholder Providers: Using the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Audit Tool – Assess current strengths and gaps within the support system for local entrepreneurs

### December 16

**9a 1hr** Part 3 with Partner Stakeholder Providers: Discussion of Roles under the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem. We will use a matrix tool to walk them through identifying essentially who owns what and how they view their respective roles.

**3p 1hr** Wrap Up with Lead Group/Task Force Members: Discussion around key gaps and Opportunities as aligned with how the community/district perceives its market strengths and targets. Next steps reviewed.

**6. Winter Cities Pilot:** 1<sup>st</sup> meeting was 9/23. Ric Huff, Jessica Nelson, Bryan Williams, Justin Fligel, Lisa Croteau. They are coordinating Stakeholder meetings with River Essence Group, Chamber of Commerce and Niles New Tech. MEDC will have a workable plan to us by the end of November, and will be present at the October Third Thursday and November 22<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting in person and with the rest of the team available virtually.

**7. Mural-** Pain hopes to have a revised plan to me by Monday. It will be historic. Right now, he is experimenting with what works on that wall, painting things he is comfortable with to see how to get them to look right.



**8. Christmas Decorating/Lights:** River Essence will be refreshing the swags. **I would ask that the board approve an amount not to exceed \$3400 for new warm LED lights for the corner trees.** MAAC will order and install.

**9. Vacancies/Board Needs: We need A PROMOTIONS & ORGANIZATION CHAIR.** We still need Chairs for many projects. You all have the list. Any takers?

**10. NODE Presentation to Council.** Thursday, OCTOBER 14 I sent a surveymonkey.com survey to downtown businesses VIA fb, email, and FB messenger. It asked the same questions we asked in January. As of noon Friday, 22 had replied. I will print and bring all responses to the meeting Monday. \*\*In order for an opinion to be counted, it must have a name.

Do you think The NODE is a good idea?	73% yes	23% no	5% no opinion
Do you like the location chosen for The NODE?	41% yes	45% no	14% no opinion
Have you benefited from The NODE?	41% yes	50% no	9% not sure

Have you done anything to benefit from The NODE?

62% yes 32% no

Comments.

Winter Cities will be present at Third Thursday to do customer/community surveying. We will put out a FB survey asking for community input after Thursday.\* one key question will be Have You Attended An Event At The NODE-if so which one.

I will walk town with Christopher from Winter Cities and ask for his opinion on alternative locations.

We will also have a box with survey cards asking folks to go to the community survey link and/or write their opinion of The NODE on the card and drop it in the box on Third Thursday that will stay through Mid-November. If we have a retail or restaurant business that does not complete the survey, we will reach out to them personally to get their input.

The Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce is compiling a report for us using their Buxton Projective Analytics that will show when people came downtown, along with the demographic profile of those customers. They will run one for all of 2019, 2020 and 2021 so that we will be able to see if there is a correlation with events.

Please give any additional ways you feel we can get feedback, as well as any follow-up questions you would like to see asked.

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**10. December 18 Christmas Parade:** In conjunction with Mayor Shelton's Holiday Decorating Contest, and at the suggestion of Vikki Jurgonski-Chair of River Essence Group, we are planning a Party & Holiday People/Pets Parade to culminate at The NODE with the announcement of the winners of the Holiday Lighting Contest...details to follow.

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**11: HUNTER ICE FESTIVAL:** January 14-16, 2022. UltraCamp will likely not be able to be used for a Warming Center due to their COVID policy. Ric has generously offered the Carnegie Library as a location we can use. I will create and print sponsor letters to send to businesses and anyone that you think should receive one. They will be ready for your taking by October 22<sup>nd</sup>. I will connect with the Health Department this coming week to ask their thoughts on the Ice Cream Booth. IF they do not think live scooping is a good idea, we can order and pre-scoop containers of the ice cream for sale during the festival. I am working with Aaric Kendall now on expenses to develop a budget, as it is likely that costs have grown since 2020. **I would ask that the board encumber up to \$10k for the festival, if needed, as has been done in previous years.**

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**12: Junior Main Street:** Justin coordinated a meeting with Jerry Holtgren, Head of Niles New Tech and Jethrow Kyles, Teacher and Advisor for new Culture Club at NHS. We talked for about an hour about how the learners can become involved. Jerry also said they are creating a curriculum on Entrepreneurship for the 2022-2033 school year and would like to use information about the Main Street program in their new program.