

**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, January 17, 2022 at 6:30pm**

**CALL TO ORDER
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
CHAIR REPORT**

CONSENT AGENDA 6:30-6:35

1. Consideration of approving the minutes from the November 20,2021.
2. Consideration of approving the Manager report.

TREASURER'S REPORT 6:35 -6:45

3. Financials-WILL FORWARD WHEN RECEIVED

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

4. COMMONS AREA Update: Clarify area for Commons Area by Board Motion: *Change Commons Area boundaries on the North from Wayne Street to the North Side of Sycamore Street and on the south from 3rd and Broadway to the South Side of Cedar Street.*
5. Recap Hunter Ice Festival
6. Reminder Economic Ecosystems meeting Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 19th at 1 pm to 2:30 pm
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89892672186?pwd=VHJsZ1pESngxd1dPT2dZU0JUdURaZz09>
7. NODE Update

BOARD OPENINGS -3 opening.

8. Board Applications
9. Discuss Plans for Recruitment

OLD BUSINESS -none

WORKING MEETING -none

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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- a. EE Meeting Wednesday, January 19, 2022 1:00pm - 2:30pm

(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, November 15, 2021 at 6:30pm**

DATE/TIME: November 15, 2021

ISSUED: November 16, 2021

LOCATION: City Hall, Third Floor Conference Room

PRESENT: Sandy Whitmyer, Melanie Kennedy, Paul Klimson, Charlie Spilman, Fredda Zeiter, Luigi Alberganti
Mayor Nick Shelton

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Justin Flagel, Elizabeth Keller, Bryan Williams, Travis Timm – City Council Rep.

ABSENT:

VISITORS: Laura Preston, Vikki Jurgonski, Caryn Adler. Selina Guevara

STAFF: Lisa Croteau – DDA / Main Street Manager

COPIES: All members

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 pm by Treasurer Charles Spilman

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: Caryn Adler – President of Niles Music and More, discussed the collaboration to get shoppers in the downtown stores during the holidays. There will be a drawing of a prize of \$100.00 Niles Dollars to the person that visits 12 businesses with the Employee signatures from November 27 – December 18, 2021.

CHAIR REPORT: None

CONSENT AGENDA 6:30-6:43

2. Consideration of approving the minutes from the October 18, 2021
3. Consideration of approving the Manager reports.

A. MOTION WAS MADE BY SANDY WHITMYER TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 18, 2021 DDA BOARD MEETING MINUTES AND MANAGERS REPORT AND WAS SECONDED BY LUIGI ALBERGANTI.

Discussion: None

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

TREASURER'S REPORT – Charlie Spilman

4. Financials – The October financials were received today. Charlie will review and report at our next meeting. Lisa noted that our TIF funding was up 3 percent.

STAFF REPORT: 6:35-6:43

5. Social District Update – Dec 13 - The boundaries are being revised and then will be presented to the City Council for approval.
6. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Discussion – First Zoom Meeting is Dec 2 at 9 am and 3 pm, The Second Zoom Meeting is December 9 at 9 am and 3 pm and the Third Zoom Meeting is December 16 at 9 am and 3 pm. Lisa encouraged us to be part of as many of these as possible.
7. Winter Cities Pilot Update– Draft report due Dec 19. They will be at the November 22nd City Council Meeting to report on their findings. There was discussion about a potential ice skating rink using artificial ice. MEDC may have some funding available.
8. Hunter 2022 application will be submitted by November 24th
9. Junior Main Street Update – Justin is continuing the planning for this with Niles New Tec.
10. Second Street Mural Discussion

- B. MOTION WAS MADE BY NICK SHELTON TO RECOMMEND THAT THE NILES PUBLIC ART COMMISSION DISCUSS THIS PROJECT AND PASS THEIR RECOMMENDATION OF HOW TO PROCEED TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION FOR THEIR REVIEW AND AFFIRMATION WHICH THEN WOULD GO TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL, AND WAS SECONDED BY MELANIE KENNEDY.**

Discussion: Concern was expressed that this mural may need to be cleaned up and removed. The artist has been given significant time to give us concrete direction for how he was going to proceed and finish this mural.

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

BOARD APPLICATIONS -3 openings

11. Board needs – Project Chairs / Volunteers.
See if Linda Casperson has any applications showing interest in the DDA Board.
DDA Board Members are recommended to have DDA Committee experience before becoming a Board member.

OLD BUSINESS - None

WORKING MEETING 6:43 – 7:05

12. Discuss NODE presentation to Council after the general meeting.
Lisa is documenting the responses to the survey from the business and public.
There will be input from MEDC Winter City at the presentation
No City Council decision will occur at this meeting
13. December 18 Christmas Parade – Is in planning stage. They are looking for a music event focus to bring the public out to the Amphitheater for prizes. Possibly a short Christmas Movie at the NODE for the kids and another event for adults at the NODE.
Vikki from River Essence noted that the Ready Theater windows will be decorated and the marquee lighted during the holidays.

DIRECTORS REPORTS:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJORN AT 7:35 PM

Next Board meetings will occur Monday, December 20, 2021

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

Fredda Zeiter

2nd Mandatory DDA Public Q&A immediately after Board Meeting

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- a. Small Business Saturday – Saturday November 27, 2021
b. Hunter Ice Festival – January 14 – 16, 2022
-

(2) Manager Report

Business Update:

New: -115 E Main Sold and Closed to the folks that bought 306 E Main Street. They have not made their plans for redevelopment public yet, though they have submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness with plans to the Historic Commission that shows they are building out Fitness Area on the first floor with 2 apartments upstairs.

-222-226 E Main and 401 Sycamore Street buildings have been purchased by Chad Mitchell. He intends to keep as is, with the possible future addition of apartments over 226. We made a \$4875 loan to Chad Mitchell for a new roof on 226 from the Building Improvement fund.

-The Rage has opened and now have a liquor license. During winter they will be open Wednesday – Saturday.

MEDC/MMS/RRC: MoM: We applied for Match on Main on behalf of Apothica Teas and their expansion. AND GOT THEM THE GRANT! It makes the 5th Match on Main Grant we have received for our businesses. MEDC will put out a Press Release 12/16/22.

RAP Grant: MEDC is releasing a new grant opportunity : Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) program which utilizes \$100 million in federal American Rescue Plan dollars to support investments that will repurpose vacant, underutilized, blighted or historic buildings and place-based infrastructure. The RAP program will allow individual projects to apply for up to \$5 million in support of their efforts to revitalize these now vacant spaces. The program is intended to address a rise in vacancy rates throughout Michigan's downtowns and commercial districts as the number of offices transitioning to remote or hybrid work settings increases, and investment is needed to repurpose or renovate buildings and regain vitality. I would like to apply with a project that put together all of the trainings and services MEDC has invested in Niles to be able to make them more than just plans, specifically EE & Winter Cities. Initial thoughts are acquiring the Leader building and making it into Arts Entrepreneurial Center, putting a synthetic ice Ice Skating Rink on 3rd Street, and finalizing the build out of The NODE. We have spoken with Michelle Baumann at MEDC and she agrees that we have opportunity. If we are able to include private projects, there are a few we could add. We are working with the City and Chamber on an application, possibly in conjunction with a larger Regional application.

Optimize Main Street: Here's an amazing new program for 5 of our businesses that we will have happening in February. I do not have all details yet, but in a nutshell, if businesses are willing to train with an Initiate Trainer, at the end of the training the business will receive up to \$2500 for a technology related something that they need! We need to brainstorm a criterion for choosing who to pick in case we get more than 5 applicants AND we need a firm commitment that they will follow through with commitment to work with the trainer bc WE DO NOT want to waste an opportunity on someone that is not committed to take full advantage of it. As soon as they release more, I will share more.

Funds may be used to purchase hardware, software, or third-party contract services that will incorporate or advance the usage of technology within the business to increase efficiency in business operations, improve connectivity to customers and/or increase sales.

Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Hardware – computer, laptop, tablet, modem, WiFi equipment, printer, point of sale system, camera, lightbox, or similar equipment to advance technology operations for the business
- Software –website development including domain name, web hosting and/or e-commerce integration, web platform subscriptions including QuickBooks, point of sale, printing, graphic design, content management, email marketing, or similar platforms
- Contract Services from a third party – grantee may work with a small business or third-party contractor that has expertise to help grantee meet technology goals, ex. mobile optimization, social media content calendar creation, SEO, email marketing, etc. *Grant funds may not be used for advertising expenses, lead generation (such as online advertisements, paper advertisements, and/or purchasing customer lists), or other expenses deemed unacceptable to the MEDC. Funds may not be used prior expenses incurred*

NODE/Street Furniture/ Outdoor Dining / Social District/ Common Area:

Survey results: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-ZQSBHZ629/> Password: NODE#1 This is the Business and Building owner survey. You'll notice a few 'double dips' where the same business and/or family replied multiple times. It happened on both for and against sides. After #27, only #33 & 34 are a new business, #33 is out on Wayne Street by the Train Station. #34 is from Sage Smith, daughter of the Smiths and sister to Chance Smith. She does have a salon on Front Street. #4 & #16 are both from Four Flags Antique Mall #24 & #25 are from the same business-Grand LV.

To put it in context there are about 80 different property owners and about 105 business owners from Front to 5th/ Broadway to Cass. We heard from 27, or 15%.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-FDC5TZ629/> Password: NODE#2 This link is to all individual surveys that allowed folks to pick 5 amenities

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-J6BX5Z629/> Password: NODE #3 This link is to all individual surveys that did not allowed folks to pick 5 amenities

Please review and draw your own conclusions. **I also have about a dozen paper surveys, largely in favor of NODE being removed or moved, and all by folks over 64, most whom say they have never been there.

MEDC is sorting the survey results and should have them to us by February.

To stop the controversy and be able to move forward, I propose that we revise our ask to extend the time for having The NODE Council with a compromise solution. By in large the complaints are (1) the road is closed (2) it is ugly. At Small Business Saturday, we left one lane of traffic open for the horse and carriage and found there was plenty of room for tables, firepit and NODE goes with one lane of traffic left open. Fredda had suggested this at an earlier meeting. I propose that we leave one leave ONE LANE of traffic from Main

heading North on the West side (yes, *changing the current flow*) using security planters that can be moved with forklift and opened into the whole area on times when larger events are happening as safety barriers.



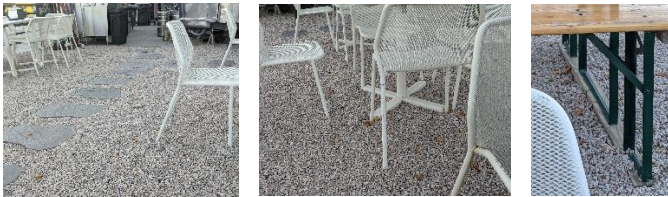
A Cordon Steel planter like the one pictured is made in a multitude of sizes, and it matches the firepit.

With one lane open heading north, angled parking could be put outside 214 & 218 N 2nd Street, adding 4-5 spaces plus one to be handicap and still have a loading zone. I will have a scale mock-up of by Monday night's meeting.

DESIGN IDEAS: I found the design below at a Blue Jacket Brewery in DC. If the NODE area were gridded with steel frames like pictured, we could get clear plastic that is used up north on porches on the lake to put on the sides as transparent windbreaks in the winter & have a waterproof covering to go over them to protect from rain & sun as pictured in the first picture.



Another stolen DC idea is to use gravel as the road cover, using pavers to make walking/sitting "pads". We could even put a heated sidewalk grid under the gravel to manage snow which would also serve as radiant heat once the rocks were warmed.



At the **January 10th, 2022**, Christopher Germain gave a very informative presentation on outdoor spaces, many being done in closed streets.

Also at the January 10th meeting, there were +/-20 people in the audience against extending the NODE, several spoke asking it be closed. Dicostanzo make a motion during his report asking to close it after Hunter Ice Festival on the grounds that the DDA Misled Council when they asked for an extension. That motion did not pass. The vote was 2-5. More discussion has occurred on the Niles DDA Main Street Business FB page. I have either added or invited you all to that page.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Matt from National Main Street has revamped how he will be collecting the necessary information from the Niles Community. Each of you received a packet. Please let me know if you have any questions, and please be available for the next meeting Wednesday, January 19th at 1 pm to 2:30pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89892672186?pwd=VHJsZ1pESngxd1dPT2dZU0JUdURaZz09>

Homeless/Vagrants: Judy Truesdell pull together approximately 20 people that met on December 2nd to learning what each does in order to hopefully have a more cohesive coordinated effort in Niles. Gateway Foundation has agreed to be the "Keeper" of this project.

Hunter Ice Festival: January 14-16, 2022. Aaric will plan the festival as he has in past years unless new restrictions are put in place between now and January. Single/double block sponsorship will be limited to 50 this year, however sponsorship of larger multi block pieces will be made so that anyone wanting recognition for supporting this event can have it. Sponsorship letters went out December 10, and as of 12.15.21 we have a \$10k commitment from Hunter Foundation if we need it, plus 5 sponsorships in totaling \$3650. As of 1.13.22 we have raised, not including foundation pledge, \$29,950.00

Storytime- We taped a Story Time Podcast with Phl Eich for Michigan Main Street talking about Niles and Main Street. The businesses that were interviewed were Veni's- the longest surviving downtown business with local ties to ownership and Gabrizio the newest to open with no ties to local, and they still chose Niles.

Social District: Charlie and I marked the boundaries as best we could. We suggest we have Social District for Events Only until we can get the stickers to stick on the sidewalk and/or paint the sidewalk.

Board Reappointments: At the December 28th meeting, Justin, Fredda and Sandy were all reappointed.

Board Applications: In addition to Stephanie Reno, William Lakeman from Four Flags Antique Mall, Cindy Ray from Front Street Pizza Pub, Christine Martin Wooden Accounting, Chance Smith from The Rage, Kim Vidt citizen have all submitted applications to be on the board. I have sent them all the list of projects to see what areas they would like to get involved with to learn more, as well as invited them both to start attending meetings about DDA Main Street. Only Cindy Ray has responded, asking for Fredda's contact info. Ruth Crum had submitted an application, but has since changed her mind (in writing) and no longer wishes to apply.

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

OLD Y DEVELOPMENT: no update.

NECI: working to restore hot water to the kitchen to allow some limited use of the space.

Parking: no update

Streetscape: no update other than working with the city to help identify all funds that could be available for this project in order to make the most of what funds are available to Niles.

Board Reappointments- at the December 28

Christmas Decorating/Lights: River Essence did a lovely job refurbishing the Christmas Decorations. Additionally, they purchased 55 new strings of larger c5 lights for the large tree. MAAC, for the 17th year, volunteered and strung the new led lights on the corner trees, as well as hung the new lights on the big tree. Kudos to everyone involved!

3. FINANCIALS – Charlie is working on them.

4. Commons Area Clarification: At the October meeting the board voted to change the Commons Area boundaries on the North from Wayne Street to the North Side of Sycamore Street and on the south from 3rd and Broadway to the South Side of Cedar Street.

It was not clearly stated in the attached minutes, so I am asking for a revised motion with clearer defined boundaries.

Motion to be: *Change Commons Area boundaries on the North from Wayne Street to the North Side of Sycamore Street and on the south from 3rd and Broadway to the South Side of Cedar Street.*

Brandon Townsley- Niles Brewing Company very much wants to start, so for Hunter Charlie and I put out boundary markers as best we could. I would suggest that we keep Commons Area for use only during events until we can have weather that will let us put the stickers on the sidewalk and or paint the boundaries.

5. **Recap Hunter Ice Festival.** \$29950.00 in sponsorship as of 1.14.22 plus a pledge for up to \$10,000 from a foundation.

6. Reminder **Economic Ecosystems** meeting Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 19th at 1 pm to 2:30 pm <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89892672186?pwd=VHJsZ1pESngxdlDPT2dU0JUdURaZz09>

7. **NODE Update:** Councilman Dicostanzo has asked on FB for input from downtown businesses on the Niles DDA Main Street FB page their thoughts about what to do after the NODE expires. Michigan Main Street wants to offer a Technical Assistance for The NODE. I will know more after a call January 19th.

8&9: Board Applications Discuss Plans for Recruitment: Given that we have so many, as well as some members that would like to leave positions, we need to put in place a recruitment/ review process for new members. As a place to start, I pulled this from the **Michigan Main Street Board Performance Guidebook.** https://www.miplace.org/4a14e1/globalassets/documents/michigan-main-street/resources/local-main-street-board-performance-guidebook_final.pdf

Expectations of Main Street Board Members

- Fund raising and collecting the funds needed to operate the program. This is not the Executive Director's responsibility.
- Supports board decisions even when he/she may disagree with the majority
- Understands the mission of the Main Street organization and promotes its goals and activities to the community.
- Attends and actively participates in board meetings.
- As often as possible, attends the training programs and workshops held by the state coordinating program and the National Main Street Center as well as any other organization providing relevant training
- Contributes knowledge, financial resources and labor to the Main Street organization.
- Respects the need for the Executive Director to report to only one "boss".
- Offers opinions honestly, constructively and without reservation.
- Delegates responsibility to project committees or to the Executive Director when appropriate.
- Promotes unity within the organization and seeks to resolve internal conflicts.
- Encourages orderly, systematic, and incremental implementation of the Main Street organization's transformation strategy(ies), while discouraging the board from becoming distracted by secondary issues or projects not included in the annual strategic plan.
- Encourages staff and other board members to express their opinions openly in board meetings.
- Remains loyal to the Main Street organization and honors his/her commitment to it.

Charlie and I will review all resources and put together something to present to the board to review at the February meeting.