

NILES DDA MAIN STREET BOARD : REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, APRIL 4, 2024 **4:30 PM**

This meeting is held in person in the Third Floor Conference Room of City Hall, behind the DDA Office. 333 N. 2nd St. Niles, MI 49120

Any interested person or group may address the DDA Main Street Board on any agenda item when recognized by the presiding officer. Also, any interested person or group may address the DDA Main Street Board on any matter of DDA concern not on the Agenda during the agenda item designated Citizen Participation. The comment of any member of the public or any special interest group may be limited in time.

MEETING PARTICIPATION

At any regular or duly called special meeting of the DDA Main Street Board, other than those meetings not subject to the provisions of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, a person desiring to speak on any item(s) on the agenda may do so subject to the following rules:

- Prior to addressing the Board Meeting, the person must provide, for the record, his/her name, permanent address.
- The person must be recognized by the Chair or other presiding officer at the point on the agenda entitled "Citizen Participation."
- The person will be allowed three (3) minutes to present remarks, unless the time restriction is waived by the chair.
- Person's wishing to address an agenda item may reserve time to address it immediately prior to the time the item is discussed by the Board.
- A person may be expelled from the meeting for a breach of the peace committed at the meeting, and if during his/her presentation to the Board becomes loud or unruly, the chair may rule the person out of order and forfeit the person's opportunity to speak further.
Resolution 92-11/1003 November 23, 1992

If you would like to contact the DDA Main Street Board about any matter, on the agenda or otherwise, please do so via the email addresses below by 1:00 PM prior to the meeting:

Chair, [Justin Flagel](mailto:Justin.Flagel@uncoverniles.com) justin@uncoverniles.com
Director, Lisa Croteau: LCroteau@nilesmi.org

Vice Chair, [Jessica Nelson](mailto:Jessica.Nelson@uncoverniles.com) jnelson@uncoverniles.com
Mayor, Nick Shelton: mayor@nilesmi.org

**MISSION: STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
ENCOURAGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

4:30 PM REGULAR BOARD MEETING

CALL TO ORDER:

ROLL CALL:

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (PUBLIC COMMENT):

PRESENTATIONS: NONE

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS: NONE

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING BOARD MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 7, 2024
2. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING COMMITTEE REPORTS.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

3. UPDATE ON FINANCIALS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Introduction of Items for Discussion / Items for Board Action

4. REVIEW MANAGERS REPORT
5. FORGE UPDATE

BOARD APPLICATIONS/REVIEW: NONE

WORKING MEETING:

6. FORGE SUBCOMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT

BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS:

- Nick Shelton, Mayor
- Jessica Nelson, Vice Chair
- Mark Weber, Treasurer
- Linda Casperson, Secretary
- Fredda Zeiter - Design Chair
- Cindy Ray
- Tracy Waggoner
- Gretchen Bertschy, Council Liaison
- Justin Flagel - Chair/Promotions Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT:

REMINDER- NEXT MEETING **THURSDAY MAY 2 2024** 4:30PM

DDA REPORT		ITEM 1
DATE:	APRIL 4, 2024	
SUBJECT:	APPROVAL OF MARCH 7, 2024 NILES DDA MAIN STREET BOARD MEETING MINUTES	
<p>Background: The Attached Niles DDA Main Street Meeting Minutes are presented to the board for approval along with corrections, if any.</p> <p>Policy Question: Consideration of approving the Niles DDA Main Street Meeting Minutes along with corrections, if any.</p> <p>Budget Impact: none</p> <p>Recommendation: Recommend accepting the Niles DDA Main Street Meeting Minutes inclusive of any corrections the board deems necessary.</p> <p>Supporting Documents: Minutes from March 7 2024 (BELOW)</p> <p>Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager</p>		

**Meeting of the Niles DDA Main Street Board of Director
Regular Board Meeting at City Hall
333 N 2nd Street, 3rd Floor Conference room behind DDA offices Niles, MI 49120
Monday, February 1, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.**

MISSION: Strengthen downtown through economic development and encourage historic preservation to promote economic growth.
www.uncoverniles.com

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Justin Flagel 4:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Justin Flagel, Fredda Zeiter, Nick Shelton, Jessica Nelson, Linda Casperson, Tracy Waggoner, Cindy Ray

ABSENT: Mark Weber, Council Liaison Gretchen Bertschy

VISITORS: Bruce Vosburgh

STAFF: Lisa Croteau

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Motion: Nelson made a motion to approve the agenda, Shelton seconded. Motioned carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Board Meeting Minutes of January 4, 2024.
2. Approving the Managers and Committee Reports.

Motion: Nelson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Waggoner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

3. September year-end as well as December were submitted. Zeiter asked for clarification on the funds available for the Design Committee. Lisa responded that she would have a break-down of funds.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Introduction of Items for Discussion/Items for Board Action Review

4. Review Manager's Report:
 - a. Souldier opened Groove Music School and added piano, violin, drums and rock band classes. They also opened Souldier Goods, a retail space.
 - b. Horizon Realty Group opened at 218 N Front Street.
 - c. Gather Air B&B on the 3rd floor is finished.
 - d. 2Ten a coworking, community, collaboration opened at 210 E. Main Street.
5. Forge Update: There are currently 12 bidders for the project. They are accepting bids until February 13, 24.
6. Hunter Ice Festival Update: Weather was too fierce for people. It was guesstimated that 1200-1500 people attended. Businesses extended specials the weekend after but the weather wasn't much better. It's questionable if the coordinating carver will continue because he bought his father's business. Flagel stated that the Promotion Committee is plotting the future of the Hunter Ice Festival with the scarcity of ice carvers. Lisa's husband and son were instrumental in putting the festival together. Discussion followed in putting together a list of activities for volunteers. Nelson suggested using Maestro

Recruitment Volunteer app so that people can easily sign-in. She asked Lisa and Justin if they would put together a list of events and activities.

Motion: Shelton made a motion to pay Lisa's son \$200/day for a total of \$400 for his work during the Hunter Ice Festival. **Nelson** seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Match on Main: MEDC has put a hold on the Match on Main program.
- MSUE Fit: We did not get picked for the program. They can be hired to show businesses how to market their business.
- MEDC Rap 1.0: We received a check for Streetscape and 115 E. Main Street. We are still waiting on reimbursement checks for 210 E. Main Street and 3 N. 3rd. There is talk of Rap 3 whereby communities go in together as a county then grant gets disbursed.
- Social District: Underground Laugh Lounge/The Study has been approved and received their permit. They will not be implementing it until May 1, 2024. 2nd & Main Coffeehouse and Wine Bar had a glitch but has received their permit.
- Website: Justin is working on it. He requested a list of businesses.
- Yiftee: Gift card system. Lisa sent out a notice to businesses. A webinar is being put together to explain to businesses in more detail.
- Maestro: Still working on database.

BOARD APPLICATIONS/REVIEW none

WORKING MEETING:

7. Concrete Sidewalk Deterioration: After recent freeze and thaw, the sidewalks have major deterioration. The city has contacted the concrete contractor, and they will be taking samples to analyze the problem. Justin asked to inform the businesses that the city is aware of the problem, and it is being addressed.
8. Discuss Enforcing Trash Can and Sidewalk Snow Removal Code Ordinance in the DDA District. Trash pick-up for the downtown area is Monday. Trash haulers won't go down the narrow alleyways. Discussion followed regarding enforcement of the current ordinance. Snow removal is also a problem downtown. The city and DDA need to collectively come to a solution with downtown businesses.
9. Discuss Forming a Business Welcome Team. This would be an Economic Vitality role. The Chamber of Commerce has an ambassador program where someone goes to local businesses and introduces themselves with important information.
10. Discuss Signage for Art Installations (Shelton left at 5:15) Fredda reported that a sign for the "Dance of Life" art installation in Riverfront Park was designed and approved by the Public Arts Commission and DDA Design Committee and the last step was to get approval from the Parks Board. The Parks Board denied the approval stating that it did not meet their standards for memorial and donation plaques in the city parks. It does not allow for post mounted signs. It was suggested that art installations be included in the future wayfinding signage with a QR code explaining the story behind the artist. It was also suggested that a procedure be developed by the Public Art Commission when an art installation is being considered. A detailed checklist addressing expectations.
11. Discuss Monthly Project and Accomplishment Street Draft: Justin stated that everyone from the DDA committee takes turns attending a city council meeting giving a report on the monthly projects and accomplishment. The draft was reviewed, additional suggestions were: Add volunteer hours and upcoming events. An updated list will be issued.
12. Discuss Attendance at National Main Street Conference in Birmingham, AL May 6-8, 2024. If you are interested in going let Lisa know as soon as possible.

BOARD MEMBER'S REPORT:

Jessica reported that the Organization Committee will be kicking off their first meeting in the beginning of March.

Justin: Justin met with Attorney Mitt Drew and he is interested in representing the DDA with any legal issues as it relates to DDA/City separation of Lisa's employment and city benefits.

Motion: Nelson made a motion to hire Attorney Mitt Drew as the legal representative for the DDA at a rate of \$250/hr. up to \$3,000. **Waggoner** seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The step next would be for the Executive Board to meet with the City Administrator Ric Huff to discuss the parameters and expectations.

ADJOURNMENT

Shelton moved to adjourn at 5:48p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 4:30PM.

Respectfully submitted: _____

Linda Casperson, Secretary

Date

DDA REPORT	ITEM 2
DATE: APRIL 4, 2024	
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MARCH 22, 2024 NILES DDA MAIN STREET SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES	
<p>Background: The Attached Niles DDA Main Street Special Meeting Minutes are presented to the board for approval along with corrections, if any.</p> <p>Policy Question: Consideration of approving the Niles DDA Main Street Meeting Minutes along with corrections, if any.</p> <p>Budget Impact: none</p> <p>Recommendation: Recommend accepting the Niles DDA Main Street Meeting Minutes inclusive of any corrections the board deems necessary.</p> <p>Supporting Documents: Minutes from March 22 2024 (BELOW)</p> <p>Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager</p>	

**IN PERSON Meeting of the Niles DDA Main Street Board of Director
Special Board Meeting at City Hall
333 N 2nd Street, 3rd Floor Conference room behind DDA offices Niles, MI 49120
Friday, March 22, 2024 10:00am**

**MISSION: STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
ENCOURAGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH
www.uncoverniles.com**

DATE/TIME: March 22, 2024 at 10:00am

LOCATION: City Hall, Third Floor Conference Room

PRESENT: Justin Flagel, Nick Shelton, Tracy Waggoner, Fredda Zeiter, Cindy Ray, Mark Weber

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Jessica Nelson, Linda Casperson

ABSENT: none

VISITORS: Suzannah Deneau/Wightman, Tim Rogers, Bruce Vosburgh, Vikki Jurgonski, Ruth Slater, Harry Thibault, Melissa Smith, Chance Smith

STAFF: Lisa Croteau – DDA / Main Street Manager

COPIES: All members

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING 10:00AM

CALL TO ORDER: JUSTIN FLAGEL

ROLL CALL: THERE IS QUORUM

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Shelton motioned and **Waggoner** seconded to accept the agenda. Motioned carried unanimously

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (PUBLIC COMMENT):

Bruce Vosburgh asked: Why a special meeting, how much did Wightman spend to redo plans, why is the parking lot by pine tree on Main not being repaved.

Harry Thibault Owner 211 N 2nd Street stated he was here to listen and asked to reserve time to speak later.

Joe Ray added a housekeeping item letting the board know that downtown Parking Lot repaving will start next week starting with Curb Removal and replacement, then move to mill and fill when asphalt plants open. Expect the project to move quickly.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Introduction of Items for Discussion

Item for Board Action

Introduced Suzannah Deneau from Wightman to present estimates on 3 plans to move forward with the FORGE. Suzannah stated that any underground work for now or future amenities should be planned for and done now.

Mark asked what funds we have for this project - \$650,000 RAP/ARPA plus \$20,000 Vibrancy Grant(furnishings) \$10,000 Firepit installation= \$680,000 TOTAL.

Streetscape Features: ALL plans have Columns at the Stage area and at the Firepit area, as well as the Entry Gates.

#1: Keep the road as planned with 2 lanes of traffic open, but moved to the west, keeping some features of the original design.

Road Utility Work	\$343,560.30
Streetscape Features	\$258,547.20
Furniture Budget	\$100,000.00
<u>Engineering</u>	<u>\$105,316.13</u>
TOTAL Estimate:	\$807,423.63.

Realignment of the road, as well as removing sidewalk to place underground supports for features, are expensive.

#2: Close the road. Move underground features from sidewalk to road to maintain current sidewalk.

Road Utility Work	\$208,652.80
Streetscape Features	\$258,547.20
Furniture Budget	\$100,000.00
<u>Engineering</u>	<u>\$ 85,080.00</u>
TOTAL Estimate:	\$652,280.00.

Suzannah and Joe both feel this is the option that will keep people the safest. Suzannah added this is the plan that gives the “biggest bang for the buck”. Plan to push firepit west away from current sidewalk. New curb on north and south ends. The area would still be accessible to emergency vehicles.

#3: Extend current sidewalk to bump outs creating appx 20' sidewalks on both sides of 2nd and leaving current traffic lanes as they are.

Estimate: \$728,401.03

Road Utility Work	\$274,845.00
Streetscape Features	\$258,547.20
Furniture Budget	\$100,000.00
<u>Engineering</u>	<u>\$ 95,008.83</u>
TOTAL Estimate:	\$728,401.03.

Justin asked Board and Joe for their thoughts:

Fredda: Option 2 is most cost effective, but does revisit the issue of closing that section of the road.

Nick: Responded to two of the citizen questions: why a special meeting- because time is of the essence if this project is to go to bid and be completed in 2024, and added that the parking lot by the pine tree is a privately-owned lot, not a City lot.

Mark: Was not in original planning group and believes there needs to be community input. He also said there may be options for additional funding.

Tracy: Option 2 is the best option and does not need for amenities to be crammed.

Cindy: Does not understand why so much attention is being given to this given that The Rage, Front Street Pizza Pub and soon The Underground Laugh Lounge will all have patios. She feels we should go after other things that were in the grant, like the Market building and skating rink. She stated she likes Social District but does not know how often this space will be used, and has questioned how long volunteers will be on board to maintain the space.

Lisa responded to her question about pursuing a Market building & Skating rink that there was not enough money from the grant for the market building as the construction figure used for the grant ask was \$2.1M and was based off 2017 costs from a similar building in Cadillac, MI and our total RAP award was \$1.3M.

Joe: Feels the safest option 2. He would suggest an 8"-10" curb making it difficult to hop and feels he and Suzannah can work on motifs that will fit and be crash worthy acceptable.

Nick: Option #1 has lots of the original design removed and is still out of our budget. He added that the first complaint about the original NODE was about aesthetics, not the closed road, but that as complaints were addressed, new ones would arise, landing on the road being closed. He said that the business owner when the NODE was there has moved their business and, for a while, was an investor in the new business at that location. He asked Lisa how the current owner of the business at that location feels and she said that he is all in for closing the road and had a previous appointment so was unable to attend this meeting but will be at the Meeting of the Whole with Council Monday evening.

Justin: Agreed with Nick about the evolution of the arguments about the NODE adding that he had personally been the brunt of a lot of complaints, adding that community feedback matters, but other factors need to be taken into account as well.

Fredda: it is just one half of one block. Lisa had it marked in neon green on 3 area maps to show the footprint.

Nick: ARPA could be used elsewhere, but RAP cannot, and he does not like leaving money on the table. HE stated that the original goal was to create an area that would bring people downtown to be an economic engine. This location was chosen because it is central in the downtown and had been used for decades when a street needed to be closed 3for events. Downtown Professionals Network did a study and the data showed that this was the best location.

Tim Rogers: Has followed the process since the beginning. Agrees that Option 2 is the best for safety, but feels there is no clear choice from the public and that there will be “vocal involvements throwing shots from the cheap seats.” He does not know if there will be a clear mandate from Council, but restated that the safe way is to close the road.

Joe: added that with any portion of the road left open, snow removal becomes a concern as the road will not be wide enough to remove snow as the city does on other roads.

It was stated and agreed that snow removal at the space will need to be managed either by volunteers or be hired out.

Justin asked for comments from the visitors, limiting each to 1 minute due to the time:

Vikki: stated concerns about the condition of the building facades on the east side of the road when so such is being done to make this a beautiful area.

Harry: If the road is closed, it needs to be done right, and not just with bollards. He felt it was great when it was active before, but not during most of the time when the space was dead. He has some concern about increased use of the alley and people hitting his building with their vehicles. He likes the timer for the firepit, and does not see that as the problem that it was with the NODE.

Ruth: Agrees with everything Vikki and Harry have said, adding that she heard from homeless while she was painting the mural at Riverfront park that they enjoyed the node and would sleep on the benches there.

Melissa: Agreed with Cindy and the fact that it was a dead zone when there were no events and felt it would be active 6mo of the year at most, adding that the businesses on that street need the drive by traffic because people are lazy and does not want another business to shut down, and also feels this is a slam to the other restaurants.

Chance had no additional comments.

Zeiter motioned and **Waggoner** seconded to recommend to Council to pursue Option 2. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion: There will be a Meeting of the Whole Monday 3/23/24 after the Council meeting for open discussion.

Cindy: wants to be sure that Option 2 can be done within our budget.

Justin: agrees with safety concerns. We don't have enough for the grand dream, but Option 2 gives the best option for creating a place to grow from with more flexibility. He would like to keep a healthy furniture budget so there is funding for nice build out.

Nick: This space will not always be busy, but something good was happening with the NODE until all the controversy. Downtown doesn't feel the same since it was closed. It feels like something is missing.

Adjourn 11:05 am

Respectfully submitted: _____

Lisa Croteau, Program Manager

Date

DDA REPORT	ITEM 2
DATE: APRIL 4, 2024	
SUBJECT: APPROVAL COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Background: Promotions & Design Committee Meeting Minutes below	
Policy Question: Consideration of approving the attached Reports	
Budget Impact: none	
Recommendation: Recommend accepting the attached reports/minutes.	
Supporting Documents: Promotions & Design minutes (BELOW)	
Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager	
Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager	

Meeting of the Niles DDA Main Street Promotions Committee

Main Street Conference Room at City Hall Tuesday, March 26th 5pm

PRESENT: Andrea Burns, Nicole Mireles, Marci Taylor, Justin Flagel

ABSENT: Bettina Payton , Kristin Bivens , Brandon Townsley , Harri, Christina Arseneau

VISITORS:

STAFF: Lisa Croteau – DDA / Main Street Manager

CALL TO ORDER:

Restaurant Week Recap

- Survey being sent to restaurants
- On the ground feedback was all positive
 - Everyone seemed busy
- We had 25 participants in downtown Niles, the wider 49120, and even pushing into Buchanan

FORGE Update (Lisa)

- Current construction costs make the original vision unaffordable
- Main Street Board reviewed three more options and met to discuss
- Of the three, the most affordable was the option to close the road, Option 2
 - This option also gives us “room to grow” into the full, original vision we planned
 - Joe Ray from the city preferred Option 2 as well for safety reasons
- Niles Main Street officially recommended Option 2 to City Council
 - All business owners on that street other than one are in favor, some very much so, some more indifferent, some with changes
 - We are accepting feedback from businesses
 - Antique Mall concerned about loading for customers, parking
 - We discussed 20 minute loading areas, additional signage to point to businesses
 - This recommendation was given to council at the Meeting of the Whole
 - One citizen spoke about not liking to drive around
 - One business voiced that they wanted to make sure the area is properly maintained
 - The original NODE had a maintenance team led by Justin
 - A new version of this is part of the plan for the Forge
 - Hoping to put this on the agenda for the April 8th meeting
 - Please voice your opinion to the city council, we need them to know this project is supported by the community
 - Justin will attach a copy of his message sent to council, feel free to use the same ideas
 - Mayor Shelton created a comprehensive work plan draft currently being reviewed by the Executive Board of Main Street
 - Time is of the essence due to funding situation
 - Various ideas mentioned to program space once open
 - Bike nights (South bend bike garage), greek fest, music
 - ask community for their ideas

Telling Our Story Monthly Report (Justin)

- Will begin April
- Please sign up for a date

Monthly Event Update (Nicole)

- Reviewed draft/sample questions to be used in surveying businesses for what a monthly event should entail:
The Promotions committee is working on developing a calendar of events, and want to start with a monthly event. We'd very much appreciate and truly value your input as we start to plan.

We'd like to start by picking a day and time and get your input on how you could participate. Please help by completing the attached survey:

DAY/TIME

Is there a particular day of the month that would work best for your business to be involved in a recurring monthly event (i.e. Third Thursday, Second Saturday, Fourth Friday, First Wednesday)?

In your experience, which days of the week typically draw more foot traffic or customers to your business?

Are there any days or times when your business tends to be busier or quieter?

Do you have any insights or recommendations regarding the timing of the event based on past experiences or observations?

Would you prefer the event to be during daytime hours, evening hours, or both?

Are there particular hours that would work best for your business to be involved in the event? (i.e.: 4p-8p, 9a-5p, 5p-10p)

Would you be open to adjusting your business hours to align with the event hours (whatever they end up being) if they don't currently match?

Are there any scheduling conflicts you have that we should be aware of when planning the events?

What factors do you believe are most important to consider when selecting the day and timeframe for the event?

PARTICIPATION

What type of involvement are you comfortable with (e.g., hosting a special activity, hosting an artisan, offering a promotion, or something else)?

Are you interested in collaborating with other businesses or artists for joint promotions or activities?

- Suggestions from meeting:
 - Nicole: Add a comment box asking for input on what sort of events they believe would draw attention to downtown
 - Include something about how to embrace the upcoming construction (parking lots, sidewalk repairs, Forge)
- Survey will be delivered:
 - Electronically (Social media, email)
 - Get a volunteer to run paper copies to businesses
 - Hit the streets to knock on doors and talk to businesses
 - Justin willing to go out and knock on doors
 - Nicole will help
 - Marci will help
- **Next step: finish survey, then get it out there**

Bettina Event and Promotion Ideas:

- Saw Wayland Hype Team online- volunteers that help promote, act as ambassadors to events
- Downtown Passports
 - A project long in the Parking Lot Justin would like to see activated
 - Kristin led successful one-day passports for Small Business Saturday
- Food Truck Days
- Mike Reed's event
- Buchanan Munchie Mondays
- Commissary kitchen to help build relationships with food trucks

Andrea

- Library events: <https://nileslibrary.com/calendar/>
- Would like to have talks/events similar to what the library does at the Forge (Beekeeper Presentation, etc.)

ADJOURNMENT: 5:59pm

**NILES MAIN STREET
DESIGN COMMITTEE**

Date: March 20, 2024
Issued: March 25, 2024
Location: City Hall, 333 N 2nd Street, 3rd floor back conference room.
Time: 1:00 PM
Present: Fredda Zeiter, Lisa Croteau, Andrea Burns, Ruth Slater, Sandy Whitmyer, Cindy Ray, Vikki Jurgonski, Betty Knoll
Absent: Lesley Bookout, Linda Casperson, Dawn Summerton, Melanie Kennedy, Cheri Hallwood, Nancy DiCicco, Sandy Williams
Visitors: None
Copies To: All Members

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Fredda Zeiter.

Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: A motion was made by Sandy Whitmyer to approve the meeting minutes of February 21, 2024, as submitted. Ruth Slater seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Financial Report:

February 2024

Bench Account:	\$710.51
Book Account:	\$1,274.74
Sign Grants:	\$1,934.54
Façade Grants:	\$30,707.15

**Will be removing Façade Grants from this report as those funds are in the Money Market acct.*

LHDC Report: Approved Underground Laugh Lounge plans for outdoor patio.

NPAC Report: Currently updating By-laws and updating/ creating guidelines.

Board Meeting Report:

Organization Committee will have their first meeting Wed Mar 20 @ 6pm at 229 E Main. Charles Nelson Chair.
Promotions Committee is working on a calendar of events and working with Brian French on new program and district branding.

Unfinished Business:

- A. Signage for "Dance of Life" sidewalk mural sign is the project pushing work at NPAC at this time.
- B. Forge design : After receiving only one bid and it was for \$1.1M, Wightman was asked to review the project and present options for moving the project forward. That meeting will be this Friday at 10am.

Sign Grant Application: None

Façade Grant Application: None

New Business:

- A. **Art in the Alley:** Vikki reported that this project is on hold until there is direction from NPAC re: Guidelines for public art.
- B. **Way Finding potential design project.** Fredda read that Guidestudio.com, and offers a free 30min design meeting. Lisa will schedule it for the April Meeting, so that meeting time will be 12:45pm so we are all ready for the virtual meeting to begin at 1pm. www.guidestudio.com
- C. **Other project ideas.**
Living Wall: No update.

Mural walls in and around the city: NPAC is working on guidelines for murals.

General Comments:

Reminder: Richard Hunt Studio Center in Benton Harbor is having a "celebration of life" April 6, 2024 from 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Andrea reported that Fandom Fest will take place at the Mendel Center/LMC Napier Avenue, BH on Saturday, April 20th. Also, Wings Etc. is having a 20% Give Back fundraiser for The Fort tonight.

Ruth investigated and found that there is a planter in the upper level parking lot and that it appears irrigation is available in the corner planters. Ruth added that Art encompasses Music, Dance, and more.

Vikki reported that River Essence is working on enhancing the flowers from last year and reminded folks that their Polar Plunge Fund Raiser will take place at Front Street Pizza Pub on Sunday, March 24, 2024 Doors open at noon, plunging starts at 2pm.

ADJORN: Adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: April 17, 2024 at 1 p.m. DDA Conference Room

Chair, Fredda Zeiter

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lisa Croteau

DDA REPORT	ITEM 3
DATE: APRIL 4, 2024 SUBJECT: FINANCIALS	
<p>Background: February Financials attached</p> <p>Policy Question: No question – informational</p> <p>Budget Impact: Report</p> <p>Supporting Documents: February Financials sent as separate attachments.</p> <p>Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager</p>	

DDA REPORT	ITEM 4
DATE: APRIL 4, 2024 SUBJECT: 3.5 – 4.1 MANAGER REPORTS	
<p>Background: Managers Report below give a recap of the previous weeks</p> <p>Policy Question: Consideration of approving the attached Report</p> <p>Budget Impact: none</p> <p>Recommendation: Recommend accepting the attached reports/minutes.</p> <p>Supporting Documents: Manager Report recap below</p> <p>Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager</p>	

MANAGER UPDATE 3/5 -4/1

BUSINESSES: Attended Ribbon Cutting of 2 TEN Co-working space.

RESTAURANT WEEK: created draft survey to Restaurant Week team for review before sending to participants.

MMS:

Match on Main: Submitted on behalf of 2nd & Main for their new venture, 2nd & Main Kitchen - a Shared Commissary. We can submit one more application -deadline 4.17.24

MEDC:

RAP 1 - Iron Shoe's reimbursement has been paid. 210's reimbursement request has been submitted to MEDC and is pending

approval.

- Completed the necessary Quarterly Report for the County to review and submit to MEDC.

FORGE/Outdoor HUB: - Thank you all for attending the special meeting. Minutes will be sent shortly. If you are able to make the Council Meeting this coming Monday at 6pm for the Meeting of the Whole, it would be great.

- Met with several adjacent business owners to discuss options presented by Wightman.
- Have found a couple of companies that have upscale commercial furniture & offer free design services. I

have sent info to them asked for input on how best to furnish the area. I will share when I have their reply.

<https://sisterbayfurniture.com> Customizable. Made in WI and states their product is made to withstand winters. 7 year commercial warranty.

<https://www.tropitone.com/outdoor-furniture/commercial/group/radius?nav=110> some interesting modular pieces maybe for the fire pit area and some cool umbrella. Customizable.

[Corten Steel Edge Planters - Etsy](#) LOTS of planter options.

MEETINGS: Attended Art Commission, Design, Organization and Promotions committee meetings.

BRANDING: Justin and I met with Brian French to start the process of re-branding. It was an exciting meeting and as soon as he has his first rough draft of ideas to us, we'll share to get board input.

No updates:

FOIA:

MAIN STREET CONFERENCE:

Maestro:

enFocus:

BOOKSTORE:

NILES HIGH SCHOOL:

DESIGN COMMITTEE:

OLD CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:

TRASH:

Board:

SOCIAL DISTRICT / Commons Area:

YIFTEE:

WEBSITE:

Lisa's Issues Parking Lot @ 2.23.24-everything we with no update:

REVENUE: The Maestro Database will identifying all properties that have been made non-taxable per previous discussion, along with the cost DDA pays each year for these properties.

Parking: and Speed limit on Niles parking lot to be discussed with City in Streetscape & new Outdoor HUB discussions. Working with Ric to facilitate a Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss downtown parking

FOOD TRUCKS: no new

DDA REPORT	ITEM 5
<p>DATE: APRIL 4, 2024</p> <p>SUBJECT: FORGE UPDATE</p>	
<p>Background: We have requested that the question to Council re: Closing 2nd Street will be on their 4.8.24 agenda.</p> <p>Policy Question: none at this time. Please be present at the 4.8.24 6pm Council meeting if you can.</p> <p>Budget Impact: tbd</p> <p>Recommendation: Information only.</p> <p>Supporting Documents: FORGE Explained Report to Council explaining why we are asking.</p> <p>Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager</p>	

DDA REPORT	ITEM 6
DATE: APRIL 4, 2024 SUBJECT: FORGE SUBCOMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT	
<p>Background: Concerns have been raised about maintenance and programming of the space. Mayor has recommended that part of the forge plan be the creation of a FORGE Subcommittee.</p> <p>Policy Question: Should such a subcommittee be created?</p> <p>Budget Impact: tbd</p> <p>Recommendation: Yes</p> <p>Supporting Documents: Mayor first draft below</p> <p>Prepared by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager Submitted by: Lisa Croteau, Program Manager</p>	

1. Committee Composition:

a. Membership Size:

- The subcommittee should consist of approximately 7-9 members to ensure diversity and efficiency in decision-making.

b. Representation:

- Adjacent Business Owners: 2-3 members
- Other DDA District Business and Property Owners: 2 members
- DDA Board Members: 2 members
- Community Representatives: 1-3 members (*residents, community leaders, or individuals with relevant expertise- E.G. Vikki, or a representative from River Essence Group, who may be interested in beautifying this space; students/kids; etc; someone interested in the programming aspect/entertainment*)
- DDA Manager: 1 member (*non-voting*)

2. Selection Criteria:

a. Business Owners:

- Selected from businesses directly adjacent to the outdoor space to represent immediate stakeholders.

Chosen based on their vested interest in the success of the outdoor space and their willingness to actively participate in subcommittee activities.

b. DDA Board Members:

- At least two members of the DDA board should serve on the subcommittee to ensure alignment with the broader strategic goals and objectives of the DDA.

Board members with relevant experience or expertise in urban development, community engagement, or event management may be prioritized.

c. Community Representatives:

- Selected from diverse backgrounds within the community to ensure representation of different perspectives and interests.

Individuals with experience in areas such as urban planning, event coordination, volunteer management, or financial management may bring valuable skills to the subcommittee.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

- Each member of the subcommittee should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, outlined in the subcommittee management plan.

Responsibilities may include participating in meetings, contributing to decision-making processes, liaising with stakeholders, and actively engaging in subcommittee initiatives.

4. Diversity and Inclusion:

- Efforts should be made to ensure diversity and inclusivity within the subcommittee, representing various demographic groups, business sectors, and community interests.

5. Term Limits and Rotation:

- Establish term limits for subcommittee members to ensure regular turnover and fresh perspectives. Implement a rotation system where members serve staggered terms to maintain continuity while allowing for new voices and ideas to be introduced.

6. Recruitment Process:

- Solicit nominations or applications for subcommittee membership from eligible stakeholders, businesses, and community members.
- Conduct interviews or selection processes to assess candidates' qualifications, commitment, and suitability for the subcommittee role.

DDA Board approves/removes members by majority vote.

7. Training and Orientation:

- Provide orientation sessions for new subcommittee members to familiarize them with their roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures.
- Offer training opportunities on relevant topics such as event management, volunteer coordination, budgeting, and conflict resolution to enhance members' capabilities.

By organizing the subcommittee in this manner, the DDA can ensure effective governance, representation, and collaboration in managing and overseeing the outdoor space, ultimately contributing to its success as a vibrant community asset.

Subcommittee Management Plan for Outdoor Space Oversight

1. Subcommittee Composition:

- The subcommittee will consist of:
 - Adjacent business owners
 - Other DDA district business and property owners
 - At least 2 members from the DDA board
 - DDA Manager

2. Responsibilities of the Subcommittee:

Maintenance Management:

- Develop and oversee a maintenance plan for the outdoor space within the allocated budget of approximately \$10,000.
- Coordinate volunteer efforts to assist with maintenance tasks, such as cleaning, landscaping, and minor repairs.
- Regularly inspect the space to identify maintenance needs and address them promptly.
- Liaise with contractors or service providers for specialized maintenance tasks as necessary.

Programming and Space Use:

- Curate a diverse calendar of events and activities for the outdoor space, considering the interests and preferences of the community.
- Solicit input from stakeholders to ensure programming aligns with the needs and desires of the community.
- Manage event logistics, including scheduling, setup, promotion, and coordination with vendors or performers.
- Monitor the use of the space to ensure compliance with established guidelines and regulations.

Decision-Making Authority:

- Make day-to-day operational decisions regarding maintenance, programming, and use of the space.
- Present major decisions, such as significant changes or purchases, to the full DDA board for ultimate approval.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making processes, providing regular updates to the DDA board on subcommittee activities and initiatives.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Facilitate communication and collaboration among stakeholders, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in the outdoor space.
- Organize regular meetings or forums for stakeholders to provide feedback, share ideas, and address concerns.
- Act as advocates for the outdoor space within the community, promoting its benefits and encouraging participation in its activities.

Financial Management:

- Manage the allocated budget for maintenance, programming, and other operational expenses, ensuring responsible stewardship of funds.
- Seek opportunities for cost-saving measures or alternative funding sources to maximize the impact of available resources.
- Maintain accurate financial records and provide reports to the DDA board as needed.

Marketing, Promotion, and Outreach/Solicitation:

- Develop marketing and promotional strategies to raise awareness of the outdoor space and its programming among the community.
- Utilize various channels such as social media, email newsletters, website updates, and local publications to disseminate information about upcoming events and activities.
- Coordinate outreach efforts to solicit participation and support from DDA district businesses for programming initiatives, including sponsorship opportunities, vendor partnerships, and promotional collaborations.
- Cultivate relationships with local businesses and community organizations to enhance visibility and engagement with the outdoor space, leveraging their networks and resources for mutual benefit.

3. Support for Subcommittee Volunteers:

- Provide orientation and training for subcommittee members to familiarize them with their roles and responsibilities.
- Establish clear communication channels and protocols for collaboration among subcommittee members.
- Recognize and appreciate the contributions of volunteers, acknowledging their efforts and commitment to the success of the outdoor space.
- Offer resources and support to address any challenges or obstacles encountered in fulfilling volunteer duties.

4. Continuous Improvement and Evaluation:

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of subcommittee activities and initiatives, soliciting feedback from stakeholders and community members.
- Identify opportunities for improvement and innovation in managing and enhancing the outdoor space.
- Adapt strategies and approaches as needed to address evolving needs and priorities of the community.

5. Conclusion:

The subcommittee will play a vital role in the management and oversight of the outdoor space, leveraging the collective expertise and dedication of its volunteer members to ensure its success as a vibrant community asset.

By working collaboratively with stakeholders, exercising sound decision-making, and fostering a culture of engagement and stewardship, the subcommittee will contribute to the ongoing vitality and sustainability of the outdoor space for the benefit of all.