**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:**

1. 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

1. Review Manager’s Report:
   * Souldier opened Groove Music School and added piano, violin, drums and rock band classes. They also opened Souldier Goods, a retail space.
   * Horizon Realty Group opened at 218 N Front Street.
   * Gather Air B&B on the 3rd floor is finished.
   * 2Ten a coworking, community, collaboration opened at 210 E. Main Street.
2. Forge Update: There are currently 12 bidders for the project. They are accepting bids until February 13, 2024.
3. 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 since 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**

**WORKING MEETING:**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

1. 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.
2. 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:

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Linda Casperson, Secretary Date