

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: By Board member Buck on
Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 7:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Burch, Board members; Tim Jewell,
Bob Phillips, Mike Lahr, Doug Buck, Travis Silvas and
Tom Hewitt.

STAFF: Deputy City Clerk Dell'Acqua and Community
Development Director Myrkle.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR REGULAR
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2014: Board member
Buck moved to approve the minutes of September 11,
2014 as presented. Seconded by Phillips. Carried. 6
Yeas. 0 Nays.

ABSENT: Jeannette Sommer

PUBLIC COMMENT: No Public Comment.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. ECONOMIC SUMMIT REPORT – DOWNTOWN
FOCUS STRATEGY:

Director Myrkle spoke in regards to the two main concerns
of the city's economy. First, the state of the school district
and second, the state of our downtown businesses. He
explained that with the changes in leadership at the school
district, a new Superintendent and three new school board
members, the school district is moving in a good direction.

The Downtown businesses are now the focus and there is a
desire for action. Myrkle presented a short term plan to
generate more support from the public to include action,
improvements and recruiting. He suggested starting a
recruiting team to include the City, the Chamber of Commerce
and local business owners.

Truck Rerouting: He reiterated the need for a meeting with
MDOT to reroute the trucks from downtown and to get local
citizens involved in this action.

Additional Winter Events: He suggested a winter version of
the music festival to liven up the downtown area during the
winter months. He mentioned a possible "Art Attack" event
for local artists in our community, something similar to what
Lansing has done in the past four years.

Façade grants: He suggested incentives such as Façade grants.
To qualify for these types of grants, the household income for
the city must reach 51 percent. Right now, our city's low to
moderate percentage is at 49 percent. He mentioned a possible
survey to qualify for the grant. It would cost \$2,000 dollars to
run a survey to compile the data.

Blight elimination: He reported on eliminating the blight in
the city such as weeds, mowing, trash and the like. It is an on-
going issue and he hoped that the local businesses help out to
alleviate the problem.

Michigan Main Street Program: He mentioned a Michigan
Main Street program to help revitalize downtown and
encourage economic development. Training is available to
redevelop communities. There is a commitment involved and
the program is run by the State of Michigan.

New Signage: He stated that with the heavy traffic on "fast
food alley", Lansing road businesses, he suggested new
signage leading the public to downtown. He suggested that it
might read "Just Around the Corner" so it would lead those in
the direction of our historic Charlotte. He encouraged ideas

for marketing this sign campaign for “Just Around the Corner” to patronize downtown businesses.

Farmers Market: He reported that a core group of six volunteers wanted a week night added to the Farmer’s Market. The group suggested Thursday night during the music events and how it might generate more business.

MSHDA Apartments: He stated that he would like to continue the development of the MSHDA apartments downtown. He reported that the apartment space at the moment has been neglected for some time.

Beach Market: He would like to see the Lion’s Club refurbish the Beach Market for more local vendors.

Additional Historic Area: He highlighted the historic area near the two train depots. This area is extended from Johnson’s Workbench on the north and goes south to the former Dennis Distributing, Don Tequilas and Applegate Heating. He suggested naming it the “Milltown Historic District”. He also stated that MDOT may have a transportation enhancement grant to connect the downtown district to this other historic district. He encouraged members to consider this for it might fuel some excitement for the city.

He stated that he realizes that the public desires more focus on local business development and that he will be presenting his strategies to the Can Do! Committee and to City Council. He will have a PowerPoint available to all DDA members and he urged them to consider his ideas presented today.

2. UPDATES:

Parking Lot #10: Director Myrkle mentioned the development of Parking lot #10. It is located where the Corral building once stood at the corner of Washington and Lovett streets. It has eight (8) new parking spaces for overnight parking. Signage will be created very soon.

Light Poles: He reported that Consumer Energy was scheduled to replace our light poles and the city has asked them to delay their work until the first of the New Year.

Replacement Elf: He reported that Courthouse Square has purchased a new elf for Christmas time. The previous elf had been stolen. It costs \$1200 dollars to replace the elf for the lawn and they are looking for donations to alleviate the expense.

Snow Removal: All snow assessments have been mailed to residents.

Tree Replacement: He reported that nine (9) new trees have been replaced downtown along with new soil.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

- Board Member Silvas was encouraged by Myrkle’s plan. He hoped that people would be in support of it. He mentioned that the school had qualified for the discounted lunch program because the income researched was at 51 percent. He also liked the idea of the “Mill Town District”.
- Board member Phillips asked how Hastings generated their funding. Myrkle explained their plan and also mentioned the strategies that generated more funds through the City of Grand Ledge.
- Board member Buck stated that the ideas were good ideas presented today and he hoped that there would be more action taken.
- Board member Hewitt liked the idea of extending the Downtown Development to Lansing road businesses. He also asked if the school will be on board with the plan. Myrkle hoped that with this new strategic plan the school would benefit.

- Board member Jewell said that he hoped that Myrkle's dreams come true. He wondered what body will be making the decisions on these ideas. Myrkle said that the DDA and Council will need to approve the plan. Myrkle wanted to wait until an action "team" had been established.
- Mayor Burch wondered how the Mainstreet Michigan program would be budgeted. Myrkle assured her that it would be done through his department. He will create a proposal and then present it to Council for approval.
- Board member Silvas commented that if the public knew of our situation they would be encouraged to comment.

Meeting adjourned by Board member Buck at 8:30 a.m.

Deputy City Clerk, Denise Dell'Acqua