

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Matthew Gibb – Executive Director

September 17, 2024



I. NEWS AND UPDATES

Investment in the DDA. The owner of Sagebrush has opened a new cigar bar in the adjacent space. It is an upscale, modern venue getting very positive reviews. It is being likened to a chic urban lounge and is very busy.

WORK IN PROGRESS: The owner has asked that we replace the sign on the Front Street parking lot that indicated it was developed and opened through the generosity of the Owner of Sagebrush Cantina. We are working on finding the artwork.

Tarr Parking Lot – We hold a lease over the southerly half of the Tarr Parking lot across from the DDA Office. A financial firm has moved from Flint Street so that it might expand and has improved the north border with plantings. However, the lot is degrading and has several areas of broken asphalt. Our lease is generic and simply states that the DDA is responsible for maintenance. We have offered to get quotes on patching the areas turning to gravel and making the lot safer.

WORK IN PROGRESS: We are planning a TIF review meeting to discuss capital projects and investment in the district. This lot improvement would be included. In the meantime we are seeking quotes on patching and repair.

Business Resource Pilot. We are working with staff from Main Street Oakland County to explore a pilot to offer first hand responsive resources to businesses in the district. Concepts include silent shopper analysis of design and staff, financial support through readiness, grant preparation and opportunity, women owned business applications, and more.

WORK IN PROGRESS: The workbook and guide we are authoring and designing to allow a recruited base of owners, volunteers and members to conduct a SWOT analysis of our position in the regional economy and the top elements of successful economic sustainability will be done by the end of September and offered as a group resource and working project for the fall. The objective is to blend the results with the concepts of direct resource for business.

II. TO DO'S AND MORE

- Website Work – We have begin the process of cleaning up the website. A FOIA section is built, but the page where our reportable records are kept needs updating and our current budget and financials correctly made accessible. We have started

to improve our events pages, are adding better access clicks to our home page. We need to pull out the multitude of Save the DDA elements out of the site and make the URL's work better for search. This work is falling on the Exec Director as our contracted web specialist is part time and not able to respond quickly. A short presentation of the direction will be shown at the Board Meeting.

- Organizational Clean Up. Our new staffer, Mackenzie Harwood, is doing an excellent job of pulling and organizing 15 years of content on our shared drives. This is opening up the opportunity to repair our business lists and contact information.
- DTE Analysis. We have been pulling the DTE invoicing to review the current delivery of invoices from the Village, a new practice starting when we were sworn in, to thoroughly decipher what's actually ours and why our utility invoicing is substantially above our historic budgeting for utilities. This is a problem and needs clarity.
- EV Chargers. Two years ago the DDA took on the responsibility for the results of a grant the Village received to install EV Chargers in the parking lot by Children's Park. A recent FOIA to the village revealed a question as to "what is the expense and revenue calculations" of these stations. We currently average about \$140/mnth of net profit from our license agreement with EVConnect. This is NOT a net of what the power costs, it is a net of what is charged at the station for the power. We also are paying the meter charge, so we have begun the laborious task of attempting to estimate the change in power consumption before and after installation, taking into account that this meter is also where ALL festival concert bans plug in. This analysis is a key part of our understanding how we are being charged from DTE and importantly will help us understand how our utility charging became so very different after this new leadership was installed.

III. LUMBER YARD

All of the core documents, to date, are in process of being catalogued on our website. By the time of this Board Meeting we plan to show where and why.

Where are certain things at?

- Waltman Lot -We are awaiting the larger survey of the property to try and avoid having to do a deeper title analysis of the MDOT easements. This small parcel remains a great addition and thereby valuable, but only if we can use it and its acquisition cost is not out weighed by the title costs. Its on hold pending the survey, but we work with title almost every week.
- Site Plan – Many have asked when everyone can see a plan for the development. Well, we need a ALTA based survey first. The property was acquired using legal descriptions and a plot plan from old print maps. That's fine legally, but to actually design a plan for people to review and advise upon we must first have a very good planimetric survey showing all details of the property, including the public infrastructure. PEA is doing this and we should have it soon.

- Environmental Reports. We cannot do the final environmental assessment we need until the debris and unsafe structures are removed. We have applied for a demolition permit, but the village has now asked that we complete more than is required under the code (for example, they want a fill water and sewer disconnect even though we are not tearing down the only building with water service) and that we cannot pull our own demo permit (instead they are asking we only do this through a contractor). So, we are moving in a different direction to get this done as we simply cannot take the time anymore (these tests cannot be reasonably done in the winter).
- Architectural Services/Engineering. This too is awaiting the survey, demolition, and a private partner. As the process prescribed by the zoning manager (McKenna) would treat us a private developer, and not a member of the public body, we are considering simply pushing out RFP's for all of this. They are being drafted, but whether we will use that approach depends on demo and status of a partner.
- Incentives. We have done a significant amounts of preparation work to open opportunity to seek brownfield and other remediation incentives, including whether new market tax credit (not likely) or historic credits might apply, whether the project might qualify for CRP, or other programmatic resource from the MEDC.

IV. MAIN STREET COMMITTEE WORK / POWER HOUR

We have restarted Main Street committee work, NOW the Power Hour Series.

The small board meetings held with leadership were excellent. Several concept questions arose that are now being formulated in strategic planning:

- How can we build a better identity?
- What is our approach to maintaining cleanliness and readiness to address changes?
- How can we communicate better, and more directly to a broader audience.
- Is there a mechanism to draw together our building owners to define a better vision for the overall identity and diversity of downtown?
- Is there a means to draw more hands on resources to start up and second stage businesses to help growth and long term stability?
- Can we apply data better?
- Communication, Communication, Communication, from all sources and listeners.

Respectfully Submitted,

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