

## Darwin McClary

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**From:** Eric Papacek  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2026 3:51 PM  
**To:** Darwin McClary  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Recommendation on Improving Alignment Between the Village and the DDA

Great, thanks Darwin. So yes, I'd be happy to have it on a council agenda. And if I'm following, it wouldn't be for Council to consider the consolidation itself. It would be whether Council would like to hear an updated opinion from you on the merits of consolidation (and if a fresh look should be taken, given events in recent months). Thanks,

Eric

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**From:** Darwin McClary <mcclaryd@lakeorion.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2026 3:01 PM  
**To:** Eric Papacek <papaceke@lakeorion.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Request for Recommendation on Improving Alignment Between the Village and the DDA

Eric:

It is never a waste of time to make the request. I am open to taking a fresh look at the matter of DDA Board/Planning Commission consolidation again if the Council would like me to do so.



**DARWIN D. P. McCLARY** (he, him, his)

**Village Manager**

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**From:** Eric Papacek <papaceke@lakeorion.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2026 2:28 PM  
**To:** Darwin McClary <mcclaryd@lakeorion.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Recommendation on Improving Alignment Between the Village and the DDA

Well, I don't want to waste everyone's time. Unless you think enough has changed in recent months to revisit your previous opinion. I found it (Feb 10, 2025 packet), and it really helped me understand some of the past issues that were discussed. Here are a few thoughts - maybe enough to warrant a fresh look?

Your memo identified three core issues:

1. budgetary control,
2. communication and cooperation, and
3. duplication of operations.

Since then, the most significant change has been operational rather than statutory. The communication and alignment gaps you identified have (perhaps?) not meaningfully improved, and the Lumberyard project continues to demonstrate how difficult it is for two separate boards to coordinate major redevelopment work. The delays, cost escalation, and friction between processes seem to reflect the structural issues you described in the memo.

You also noted that the Village Manager is the position with the deepest understanding of TIF law, budgeting, zoning, and redevelopment. Consolidation would strengthen your role in coordinating redevelopment and ensuring that Village-wide priorities, infrastructure needs, and long-term planning are aligned with DDA activities.

I guess I'm not asking you to reverse your recommendation. I'm asking whether you would be open to revisiting the question with updated information and current conditions. Seems like when alignment and efficiency become challenges, maybe we should explore consolidation to help serve the Village more effectively than the structure we have today?

If you see a path where consolidation could address the issues you identified — and if you believe it could strengthen the Village's ability to execute major projects — I would be very interested in exploring that. But again, I don't want to waste everyone's time if you're unlikely to revisit your previous opinion.

Thank you for considering this.

Eric

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**From:** Darwin McClary <[mcclaryd@lakeorion.org](mailto:mcclaryd@lakeorion.org)>

**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2026 9:33 AM

**To:** Eric Papacek <[papaceke@lakeorion.org](mailto:papaceke@lakeorion.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Request for Recommendation on Improving Alignment Between the Village and the DDA

Eric:

Thank you for reaching out to me with your important concerns about the DDA and the progress with the Lumber Yard at Paint Creek development project. The last Council addressed this issue about two years ago. It would be appropriate to bring the matter back to the current Council for consideration. However, I would need direction from a majority of Council to provide my recommendation on this matter.

Please let me know if you would like the matter placed on a Council agenda for its consideration. Thank you again for reaching out to me.



**DARWIN D. P. McCLARY** (he, him, his)

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**From:** Eric Papacek <[papaceke@lakeorion.org](mailto:papaceke@lakeorion.org)>

**Sent:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 7:56 PM

**To:** Darwin McClary <[mccclaryd@lakeorion.org](mailto:mccclaryd@lakeorion.org)>

**Subject:** Request for Recommendation on Improving Alignment Between the Village and the DDA

Hi Darwin,

I want to raise a concern that has become increasingly difficult to ignore: the current separation between the Village and the DDA is creating persistent misalignment that is slowing down major projects, inflating costs, and preventing us from delivering results for residents.

We are now four years into the Lumberyard project. The DDA deserves credit for the substantial cleanup and the rehabilitation of a building and several barns. But the remaining work is moving far too slowly, and there are concerns that project is becoming more expensive than it should be. This is not due to lack of effort—it is the predictable outcome of two entities operating with different priorities, different processes, and no unified chain of accountability.

The DDA continues to manage a large residential tax capture, yet the pace and efficiency of project execution are not matching the scale of that revenue. Meanwhile, the Village is facing rising infrastructure costs, water and sewer pressures, and growing expectations from residents. We cannot afford another four years of stalled progress on a flagship redevelopment.

To address this, I am asking you to consider recommending a structural realignment in which the **Planning Commission absorbs the DDA's operational and project-management functions**. This approach would:

- Preserve the DDA funding and TIF revenue
- Retain DDA staff and institutional knowledge
- Place development oversight under a single Village-aligned body
- Improve coordination, reduce delays, and strengthen fiscal discipline
- Ensure downtown development aligns with Village-wide priorities

This is not a dissolution of the DDA. It is a governance adjustment that keeps every dollar and every staff member in place while eliminating the structural friction that is slowing our progress and eroding public confidence.

Your recommendation would carry significant weight and would help the Council move toward a more unified, efficient model that better serves residents and the downtown district alike. I would welcome the chance to discuss how this transition could be structured in a smooth and collaborative way.

Thank you for considering this. Our community needs a more aligned system before we lose more time and more money on projects that should already be delivering results.

Eric