

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Matthew Gibb – Executive Director

April 16, 2024



I. NEWS AND UPDATES

12 W. Flint. Broadway Embroidery – This newly moved business has received our assistance in securing proper change of use permitting from the Village of Lake Orion, as well as, a process flow for inspections and punch list improvements from the Building Official/Inspector/Fire Marshall. This work is allowing our staff to outline a better pro-active resource guide for businesses that are about to walk through that process.

➡ The owners of A Bean to Go expressed their support for such a guide as they were without a liaison or information as to all the little checkboxes and needs to get through from idea to permit to certificate of occupancy. This is a trend, and other businesses are offering background of their story.

WORK IN PROGRESS: We are developing a “Little Book of Big Solutions” to address District wide needs of businesses in all stages of growth and development.

44 E Flint – A design and plan meeting has been held with the Developer who is anticipating submitting for site plan review within the next 30 days. The proposed use is a mixed use of retail/office and upper floor residential. We are also discussing a shared approach to tenant development that would allow both DDA/Developer resource to seek a broader downtown identity.

➡ A concept was discussed that may allow the DDA to collaborate with the applicant/owner to improve refuse and disposal by the placement of a co-developed facility on the border between the public lot and the development parcel.

WORK IN PROGRESS: The overall dumpster/grease trap issue is being re-assessed and this concept is now part of that discussion. Recommendations anticipated by June 2024.

20 Front St. – This three-tenant building is home to music, coffee and ice cream, and was in a transition phase of the leasehold status for each business. Expert technical assistance was provided to enable the lease agreements for the property to be updated and approved by owner and business, keeping this unique site alive and well.

➡ We were the first customer of the spring opening of Cookies & Cream and posted live with the owner.

WORK IN PROGRESS: Expanding uses of the venue, possible summer music event.

II. TO DO'S AND MORE

- Parking Agreement(s): All contracts have been pulled and are being reviewed and planned for updating.
- DDA Lease: Our office lease is expiring soon, and we are in the process of extending.
- Service Contracts: All of the service contracts with the Village are expired. This is a new negotiation, requiring a deeper analysis of the budget but possibly needed prior the Village adoption of a new budget.
- **HERITAGE CONSULTING**: Outreach has now happened as the principal at Heritage has returned from an obligation out of the country. We are planning an initial work-process meeting via zoom/teams before April 19, 2024 and from that meeting will announce a timeline and deliverable needs.

➡ There needs to be a 501(c)(3) organization formed, which our Director can accomplish, but the focus of the identity and purpose must be refined.

WORK IN PROGRESS: This will be brought to the Summit of Committees, a call for volunteer representatives extended, and a proposed concept set of bylaws and purpose drafted by our Director. The progress and steps will be brought back to the Board in May.

- Gift Certificates: We accumulate funds from the Downtown Dollars program, via credit card / debit pay, in a separate account. This needs to have a better control and audit mechanism, which is being reviewed.
- **FAÇADE PROGRAM**: We currently have three interested parties; LO Art Center, Ed Broadway Gifts, and Spresser Ogden. There is some funding budgeted in the remaining year and an additional sum in the coming budget.

➡ There is no established committee assignment of the review and approval process for the program. The budget amounts do not match the program limits.

WORK IN PROGRESS: Leadership is reviewing the various ways the grants were administered in the past and will be recommending a permanent solution.

- **PART TIME WORKER**: We traditionally hire a part time summer worker to help with beautification, watering, and miscellaneous support. Its that time of year.

➡ This is hired and made a part of the DPW staff. I don't like that. I would prefer having this be a contract position that could then control in hours and scope.

WORK IN PROGRESS: find a worker, either through posting or word of mouth, vette, interview and hire. If there is Board appetite for a direct contract, I would draft that bring it back in May.

- Trolley Drivers: NOTA drivers have been used thus far and there may be a more affordable and friendly way to turn the trolley driver position into one of our own.

III. LUMBER YARD

The development project is moving forward as all the details get organized and gathered. Of significant note to the initial analysis work being conducted:

MDOT PERCOLATION BASIN. We are giving a significant attention to the MDOT owned parcels that sit to the immediate north of our site and along the Paint Creek. These are very important assets for the walkability and access to our Downtown. Several communications and meetings have been held and the discussion on the opportunity to incorporate the area is ongoing.

EASEMENT IDENTIFICATION. Title is being examined to determine the extent of the restrictive areas for possible sue on site. There are not less than five areas that provide encumbrance. Meetings are scheduled with prior architectural services and the County.

FUNDING RESOURCE PLANNING. Concepts that include possible RTA access, multi-modal grant support, land lease revenue planning, optimization of PPP offerings, and other ideas are being compiled. Contact has been made with multiple developers, planning experts from outside the region, interviews conducted with local voices, and debt service options are being constructed.

ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS. The hazardous material report from Michael Baker is now in, and doesn't look that bad. We have three smaller areas to mitigate prior to demolition, or as part of a larger bid. All of the ground contamination reporting in the Phase 2 has been reviewed and the site walked several times for pre-development concept planning.

STARTING DECONSTRUCTION. We want to start deconstruction and plan to:

- SIGNS: Carefully, and without liability, remove and store the artwork sign and the lumber yard sign. We want to deconstruct the main triangle sign and store the panels.
- Have the truck inspected for possible restoration as a historical art piece in redevelopment.
- Pull pre-bid information based on the new reports.
- **WE NEED TO SELL/DONATE.** Can we sell the shed in front? Can we sell in bulk the hardware left behind?

SMALL LOT ON SITE. There is a small lot on site that would block the full development of the frontage. It is owned by Carl Waltman, long time business family on the Village. He is willing to sell, but we want to wait and see if other options arise. This is just awareness.

INITIAL DISCUSSIONS. There are several discussions starting and inquiry made with regards to our neighbors and how the Village property fits, and what happens to access and the restaurant on the corner.

IV. SMALL BOARD CHARETTES

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 if 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.

V. IMPORTANT EVENTS AND DATES

APRIL 16, 2024 SPRING PUNCH LIST WALK ABOUT

APRIL 25, 2024 SUMMIT OF COMMITTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

WEEK OF APRIL 29 SMALL BUSINESS APPRECIATION WEEK

Respectfully Submitted,

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