

City of Walker  
Downtown Development Authority  
**Tuesday, January 16, 2007**  
DDA Board Room-Standale Fire Station #2  
1:00PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman McIsaac at 1:00PM.

Members Present: J. McIsaac, J. Veldheer, P. Goodale, C. Vander Meulen, J. Cornell, M. Neal, D. Felton, A. Hartzler

Members Absent: J. DiLeonardo and D. Christopher

Others Present: Peter DeBoer – West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition, Jean King – Friends of the Walker Highland Trails, Alan Pennington – Moore & Bruggink, Dennis Kneibel and Michael Hood – Friends of the Walker Highland Trails.

2. Approval of Minutes – Minutes of the December 19, 2006 meeting were approved as written on a motion by J. McIsaac, with support by J. Veldheer. Motion Carried.
3. Presentation by the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition and the Friends of the Walker Highland Trails – Peter DeBoer provided information regarding the creation of the West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition that is working together to coordinate the regional connection of trails in West Michigan.

Mr. DeBoer discussed trail user data for 6 different trails as well as tourism data. Tourists who visited the White Pine Trail over a period of 3 months in 2005 spent \$177,000+ during their use. Jean King also presented information regarding the Walker Highland Trails plans to develop a trail system within the City of Walker that will consist of 25 miles of trails, which will provide connectivity to the Regional Trails project.

The South Standale Trail has already been constructed, and the group would like to continue the trail to the north to connect to Walker City Central Park. One main issue is determining the best way to continue the trail across Lake Michigan Drive. Several ideas were considered such as a pedestrian island which would be very costly or the possible tunnels under the road. The most feasible suggestion was the construction of a pedestrian overpass located just past the east end of the DDA district. The cost for construction of the over pass would be approximately \$800,000 - \$900,000. A variety of funding sources are being investigated including private donations as well as possible DNR Trust Fund Grant dollars to purchase the property needed to build the overpass. Manager Vander Meulen

noted that the property being considered for purchase is outside of the DDA district. In order for the DDA to expend funds, the DDA district would have to be expanded to include this property. There was general consensus that the trail expansion would provide a good business opportunity for DDA businesses. The DDA Board members will be considering the information presented to them and discuss the project again in the future.

4. Standale Parking Lot Easements – Discussion took place regarding the parking lot easements in the Standale DDA district. The consensus of the DDA Board following the December 19, 2006 meeting was to authorize Manager Vander Meulen to contact property owners regarding their interest in renewing the existing and proposed parking lot easements. A map was presented that outlined the areas of the easements. Vander Meulen stated that as the downtown area develops it would be critical to have front access maintained between businesses located adjacent to Lake Michigan Drive, between Kinney and Cummings and the focus needs to be on critical core areas.

Staff will put together a plan that will be discussed at the next DDA meeting of February 20, 2007. Board members agreed that it would be good idea to have the property owners that meeting as well.

5. Request for Proposals for DDA Owned Property - City Planner Wash distributed a handout entitled Developer Solicitation for Publicly Owned Land. One article refers to the two-step process of Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) and Requests for Proposals (RFP). Planner Wash stated the importance of utilizing the RPQ to ensure that the developers have the suitable qualifications for the project. One the qualifications have been reviewed, the RFP would be sent to the suitable developers. It was recommended that the RFP is made very specific regarding the design standards. The DDA Board was in full agreement to using the RFQ/RFP process and will move forward.
6. Any Other Business – C. Vander Meulen stated that DDA member Dave Christopher is no longer on the Board, and asked members their thoughts regarding his replacement. Several suggestions were made regarding individuals that could be considered to fill the vacancy. Vander Meulen will follow up on the suggestions and report to the Board at the next meeting.
7. Adjournment – On a motion by J. Cornell with support by P. Goodale, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20PM. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted to Cathy Vander Meulen,

Julia Kozminski, Recording Secretary