

City of Walker
Downtown Development Authority
Minutes
February 20, 2007
Fire Station #2 – 1:00 PM

Present: C. Vander Meulen, J. DiLeonardo, P. Goodale, J. Cornell, D. Felton, J. Veldheer, A. Hartzler
Absent: J. McIsaac, G. Hicks

Also Present: D. Schmalzel, S. Wyngaarden, M. Koning, F. Wash, and S. Connors

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by C. Vander Meulen at 1:00PM.
2. Attendance was recorded.
3. Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2007 – The minutes were approved with one change noted: The year stated as 2006, will be changed to 2007. A motion was made by D. Felton with support by J. Cornell to approve the minutes as amended. Motion Carried.
4. Item #4 was discussed after #5.
5. Update: Melnyk Property Acquisition - C. Vander Meulen received a call from the Melnyk family regarding their interest in selling their property located at 419 Cummings NW. C. Vander Meulen received written confirmation stating their intent to sell the property in the amount of \$185,000, which will be divided into 3 payments from the DDA. This amount is well within the DDA budget and the Board believes it is a fair price. A motion was made by J. Veldheer with support by P. Goodale authorizing Attorney Wyngaarden to proceed with the preparation of a buy/sell agreement, and the authorization of the Chairman, Vice Chairman or Secretary to sign said agreement acting on the behalf of the DDA. Motion Carried. Attorney Wyngaarden will begin work on the agreement.

Discussion also took place via telephone between C. Vander Meulen and Don Vos, current owner of the former Billiards by Christopher site. Mr. Vos has a party that is interested in purchasing his property, as well as the DDA property located to the east. The Board authorized C. Vander Meulen to further look into placing the property up for sale.

4. Vander Meulen reviewed the 2:00PM presentation to DDA business owners regarding parking lot and access easements. The order of presenters was discussed, as well as some of the content the presentation was to include.

This portion of the meeting concluded at 1:50PM. Guests began arriving for the easement presentation.

Downtown Development Authority Meeting with
Downtown District Businesses
2:00PM
Fire Station #2, Standale
February 20, 2007

The meeting began with City Manager Vander Meulen welcoming attendees, and providing introduction of DDA members, Attorney Sue Wyngaarden (Varnum), City Staff members Mark Koning (Department of Public Works), Frank Wash (City Planner) Darrel Schmalzel (Assistant City Manager), Scott Connors (City Engineer) and Margaret Steketee (First ROW).

Sue Wyngaarden – Parking and Access Easements

DDA Legal Counsel Sue Wyngaarden presented a brief history of the parking lot easements and special assessments in the DDA District. Many of the parking lots are now in need of additional improvements, or will be needing them in the near future. The DDA and the City would like to extend the existing parking easements with property owners through 2030 to provide for the upkeep of the parking lots and continue maintaining a consistent standard for the downtown area. The DDA would also like to formalize cross access and parking easements on properties located on Lake Michigan Drive, between Kinney and Cummings. The addition of cross-access easements may become part of the amended parking easement agreement.

Information forms were distributed to each attendee to determine the level of interest by owners in this project. If it is decided that there enough participants, Sue Wyngaarden will begin work on the documents extending the term of and creating new cross-access easements. Title work is being ordered to verify the legal owners of the properties and to determine whether or not there are any lien holders. Easements will be signed in front of a notary. Signed easements will be recorded and a copy returned to the owners for their records.

Frank Wash – DDA Market Study and Master Plan Update

Planning Director Frank Wash provided an overview of the DDA Market Study and Master Plan. He presented information to attendees indicating the location of Sub Area #4, which makes up the Standale DDA District, which is the area between Wilson and Kinney on Lake Michigan Drive. Wash spoke regarding results that were discovered during the recently completed Market research Study, which was funded by the DDA.

Wash stated that there are currently many non-conforming buildings, which do not meet the height, size and setbacks. Redeveloping the area would help to add value to the properties in the district and increase visitors to the area. The Master Plan envisions a modern “Downtown Walker”, which could include taller brick buildings, pedestrian-friendly shopping areas, many mixed uses, housing, and links to civic space, parks and natural areas. Additionally, there is now extensive use of public transit through the district daily, indicating further the need for pedestrian friendly shopping/ accessibility to areas within the DDA. The master plan also outlines area of Capital Improvements such as moving/burying overhead utility lines, construct parallel streets behind businesses, M-45 improvements, front service drives and the completion of a pedestrian system.

Mark Koning – Maintenance of Public Parking Lot Easements

Mark provided a list of items that are provided through the existing Special Assessments including snow removal, ground care, mowing, irrigation, landscape items, parking lot light maintenance, and general repairs. Koning stated that existing public lots are in need of more aggressive repairs. The light poles are also showing signs of aging and updates to some landscaping areas are also needed.

Maintenance items include crack sealing, removal;/repair of asphalt, sealer, re-stripping of all parking lots and traffic markings and parking lot light pole repairs and timer adjustments.

Additional discussion included the GVSU parking situation. Students who are using public transit to go from the Allendale campus to the downtown Grand Rapids campus – over 7,000 per day, are using many parking lots. This has created several parking issues in the DDA district. Vander Meulen stated a bus stop would be relocated to the area in front of the new Fire Station #2, which will help to alleviate some of the parking issues. Darrel stated that he has been discussing this issue with ITP.

In conclusion, City Manager Vander Meulen thanked all who attended the meeting and encouraged each owner to complete the forms provided to determine the level of interest. They were also encouraged to contact her at the Walker City Offices for questions and/or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Kozminski, Recording Secretary