

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 15, 2012**

The Oshtemo Charter Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors held a regular meeting on Thursday, November 15, 2012. The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:05 p.m. at the Oshtemo Community Center at 6407 Parkview Avenue.

Members of the Board of Directors present: Chairperson Bruce Betzler, Kathleen Garland-Rike, Jay Brown, Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Michael Lutke, Fred Gould, Jack Siegel, Glenn Steeg, and Chip Everett. (Terry Schley arrived at 12:11.)

Members of the Board of Directors absent: Andy Wenzel and Stephen Dallas.

Also present were Maria and Emilio Dacoba and Gregory Milliken, Planning Director.

Approve Agenda

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:05 p.m. by Chairperson Betzler. The Chairperson asked for approval of the agenda. Ms. Garland-Rike moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Mr. Gould seconded the motion. The Chairperson called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approve Minutes

Chairperson Betzler asked for approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of September 20, 2012. There were no comments or changes to the proposed minutes. Chairperson Betzler moved to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2012 regular meeting as presented. Mr. Lutke seconded the motion. The Chairperson called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Brown indicated that he had reviewed the Treasurer's Report and presented the report distributed to the members in their packets. Chairperson Betzler asked if there were any year-end expenses that should be anticipated such as banner maintenance.

Mr. Lutke made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Ms. Garland-Rike seconded the motion. The Chairperson called for a vote on the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Street Rear Access Discussion

Chairperson Betzler inquired as to the status of the rear access drive project following the discussion at the last meeting.

Mr. Schley indicated that the Board is going to have to try something if they are going to do anything. At the last meeting, he indicated that he would draft a letter, and he has not done that yet. He apologized for that. He was pretty certain that the Township Board's expectation was that the DDA would explore the possibility of locating the drive on private property before locating it on the public property.

Mr. Siegel asked what the Township is going to do with the property.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell stated that there are no plans for the property at this time.

Mr. Schley said that he did not get the sense that it was a high priority of the Township Board nor did he hear a clear consensus of the Board at the time.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said that the Park Committee did discuss the use of the property for a park about two years ago at the request of one Board member but figured it was not the best use of the property due to other existing and future facilities in the vicinity.

Mr. Siegel described the benefits of having the rear access drive for the area.

Mr. Schley stated that the DDA agrees that the rear access drive is a good idea for traffic, development, and viability of the area. Something needs to be done, and it will be a temporary solution until more significant redevelopment occurs.

Mr. Schley also stated it should also be mentioned that long-term, as the drive is developed and these properties redevelop, it is likely that some of the existing access points on to 9<sup>th</sup> Street will go away.

Mr. Lutke stated that he has already initiated plans to improve his building and discovered some of the challenges created by the changes the DDA has put in place. With the form based code standards in place, he indicated he will need to have the rear access drive in order to grow and meet the standards in place. There needs to be a starting point. He indicated that even if the drive were located on the Township side of the property line, it would still leave plenty of room to use the property.

Mr. Steeg indicated that his understanding is there are some property owners that will not allow the road on their land. He wondered if the Township could use eminent domain to take the land for the road.

Mr. Lutke asked why the Township would. The property has not changed in 27 years.

Mr. Schley said it is clear the DDA is ready to do something; they just need the land to do it on.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said that the DDA should send the letter to the property owners in order to formalize the commitment or lack of commitment to participate by the owners.

Mr. Schley agreed saying that we have had informal discussions but have not gotten anything formal to present to the Board. Perhaps a meeting would be more effective in order to have face-to-face discussions and build consensus with the owners.

Mr. Brown asked why the DDA has to ask the property owners when the Township Board does not ask residents when they spend money on projects.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell stated she supports the suggestion to call a special meeting in December or January with property owners to formalize the commitment to the project.

Mr. Steeg indicated that January may be better due to holidays.

Chairman Betzler asked if unanimous support was necessary.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell stated she did not think so.

Mr. Lutke said that since it is hard to get people together, it might be better to send the letter.

Mr. Steeg said he agreed with Mr. Schley that it would be more effective to get the people in the same room and have face-to-face discussion with them and allow them to understand the project and potential benefits.

Mr. Schley said to the question of unanimity of the Board, the Supervisor sets the agenda, and the item will not require unanimous support to be approved. But we should not be trying to force something together. The DDA has to begin to craft a process where in private property owners, the DDA, and the Township work together to improve the area.

The DDA continued to discuss a potential meeting of property owners. Two weeks notice was determined to be sufficient. This would put the meeting in mid-December. Mr. Schley agreed to write a letter, with assistance from Mr. Lutke. Mr. Milliken will provide Mr. Schley with the address list of property owners that was previously prepared. For the meeting, aerial photographs and graphics that were previously prepared and utilized would be helpful. Mr. Milliken and Mr. Schley would discuss these issues further as the meeting approaches.

Mr. Gould asked if the DDA should schedule a meeting immediately following the special meeting to formulate a recommendation to the Township Board.

Mr. Schley suggested that the DDA may want to give the owners some time to digest the information and determine an answer.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell suggested it would be best to present this to the Board at a work session due to the presence of new members, who will need some background to get up to speed on the topic. January 8<sup>th</sup> is the next work session at 5:00.

Mr. Schley asked Mr. Milliken to call him regarding the schedule for the Community Center in early to mid December during the day.

Mr. Brown suggested that a deadline be established for getting this approved so that bids can go out and contractors can be selected before it is too late next year.

### Citgo Property

Chairperson Betzler indicated that there was a recent meeting with Mr. Gould, Mr. Schley, Mr. Wenzel, and Mr. Milliken along with Attorney Porter to tie up loose ends and discuss questions and comments in the Sales Agreement with Citgo.

Mr. Schley summarized the meeting and indicated that he relayed the comments of Mr. Steeg.

Mr. Steeg indicated that he thought the meeting was at the Community Center and went there instead of the Township Hall.

Mr. Schley indicated that the group discussed potential environmental issues above the ground and the due diligence process, tank removal and what happens immediately following, the escrow of money at closing until tanks are removed, and review of dates and timing in the document to allow close of business around March 2013.

Mr. Milliken indicated that the Attorney has made the changes and they are currently being processed. He anticipates they will be in Chairperson Betzler's hands in about a week.

Mr. Gould also said the need to do a survey was discussed. It was determined that there was no need to do one now because it will happen with the streetscape project. Plus, the issue with the land area was due to whether or not the right of way was included.

Mr. Schley stated that this points out need to line up all of the dominoes as this advances. The DDA has not talked about insurance on the property, and the group will want to begin thinking about the streetscape design and implementation of that design too. The time will go quick.

Chairperson Betzler indicated that he hopes to make use of Mr. Wenzel's expertise with those issues.

Mr. Schley suggested that the DDA reengage a designer on the streetscape project.

Mr. Gould said he believes all this will accelerate once the agreement is signed.

## Update – Circulation Study

Mr. Milliken indicated that the agreement between the DDA and KATS has finally been approved by the KATS Policy Committee. The next step is for KATS to issue an RFP for the study. Prior to issuing a contract to the selected contractor, the DDA will need to pay KATS the \$20,000 agreed to in the document. Then, over the course of the project, the DDA will be reimbursed for the majority of the project.

## Any Other Business

Mr. Steeg asked Mr. Brown about the status of the car wash, which is owned by the Methodist Church.

Mr. Brown said that all of the items the Township wanted done have been done.

Mr. Steeg asked what the Church's plans are for the site.

Mr. Brown said there are no plans at this time.

Chairperson Betzler asked what the best way was to communicate with the Church.

Mr. Brown stated that nothing has been formally determined as to what to do with the property. It came available and was purchased for additional parking. Ultimately, money keeps things under control. The leadership at the Church has had some conversations about demolishing the structures, but portions of the buildings are not in bad shape. He wonders if there is something else that could be done with the buildings.

Mr. Steeg asked why the Church purchased the property.

Mr. Brown said that it came available and the Church had no room available for expansion.

Mr. Steeg asked if the Church was open to sale of the property.

Mr. Brown said that none of the trustees have considered that action.

Chairperson Betzler asked if there was a specific person the DDA should direct communication on this subject.

Mr. Brown suggested talking to the Minister or the Chair of the Trustees.

Mr. Schley said that he believes the Church approached the Planning Commission in the past about possible changes to the car wash site and was told at the time that the form based code limited many of their plans.

Chairperson Betzler introduced Emilio and Maria Dacoba, owners of Mangia Mangia in downtown Kalamazoo and La Cantina in downtown Paw Paw.

Emilio Dacoba indicated that they have an agreement to purchase the Mi Ranchito and hope to open in early spring. They have had several conversations with the Franco's and share similar values running family owned restaurants.

Mr. Dacoba indicated they will open an Italian-theme family/casual restaurant that is accessible and affordable for the area. It will offer delivery and catering services. They have selected the name Mangia, Pizza, and Pasta Company. He expressed their excitement to locate in Oshtemo and in the village area.

Ms. Dacoba indicated that their other restaurants are in downtown areas, and they have experience with various grant programs that can be helpful to encourage redevelopment and improvement of properties.

Chairperson Betzler welcomed the Dacobas to the community. He asked if there were any other announcements.

Mr. Everett stated that the house on 9<sup>th</sup> Street immediately south of the former law office at 9<sup>th</sup> and Stadium is scheduled to be demolished by the Fire Department in the near future. It is also owned by Hinman.

Mr. Steeg asked if Hinman has any plans for that corner.

Mr. Milliken said that he believes Mr. Wenzel will be in to talk with him soon to review some potential development plans for the site.

#### Announcements and Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2013.

Having exhausted the agenda, Chairperson Betzler adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Oshtemo Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority

Minutes Prepared: November 17, 2012

Minutes Approved: January 16, 2013