

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

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD MAY 20, 2021**

The Oshtemo Charter Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors met virtually through Zoom on Thursday, May 20, 2021. The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:02 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote:**

<u>Members present:</u>	<u>Location of Members during Meeting</u>
Grant Taylor	Oshtemo
Bruce Betzler	Oshtemo
Bill Cekola	Portage
Themis Corakis	Oshtemo
Libby Heiny-Cogswell	Oshtemo
Rich MacDonald	Portage
Dick Skalski	Kalamazoo

Members absent: Julie Hite, Mike Lutke, Jack Siegel and Ryan Wieber

Also present: Iris Lubbert, Planning Director, Ryan Russell, Prein & Newhof, and Martha Coash, Recording Secretary

**Agenda**

Chairperson Taylor confirmed with Ms. Lubbert there were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

Mr. Skalski made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Cekola seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**Minutes**

The Chair determined no one had additions or corrections to the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of April 7, 2021.

Mr. Skalski made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of April 7, 2021 as presented. Mr. Cekola seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**Treasurer's Report: March – April 2021 (unaudited)**

Ms. Lubbert provided the Treasurer's Report for March – April 2021, unaudited, which reflected the budgeted amendments approved at the DDA's April meeting.

She cited revenues of \$57,774.84 in property tax revenue and \$253.01 in interested earned during the cycle. Although we received the full amount, approximately \$189,000 will not show until the next cycle, reflective of the budget.

Expenditures totaled \$12,068.13 and included payments for general operating expenditures, Stadium Drive Shared Use Path design and easement recording fees, DDA banner rotation, annual sponsorship of 'Music in the Park,' and \$500 for Oshtemo staff time. The expenditure approved at the last meeting for the raffle will appear in the report for May – June 2021. The Stadium Drive shared use path work was over \$9,000.

Mr. Corakis said the seasonal banners have been changed out by S & T.

Chairperson Taylor noted the reports did not need formal approval and moved to the next agenda item.

### **Project Updates**

#### **a. Stadium Drive Sidewalks and Contract**

Ms. Lubbert stated that at the DDA Board's meeting on January 15th a contract for engineering design services was entered into with Prein&Newhof for sidewalk on Stadium Drive. Ryan Russell, with P & N was attending the meeting to provide a project update and present a proposal for construction staking and observation for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Russell explained the contract would supply construction engineering services with someone located on site every day to make sure everything proceeds well, to talk with land owners about easements, oversee traffic control and communicate with KCRC.

Chairperson Taylor said this contract would provide assurance that everything is going as expected.

Mr. Russell noted MDOT requires an engineer on site 100% of the time and detailed which entity is responsible for different types of issues if they occur.

It was noted landscape plantings are part of the contract with OCBA and that grass installation will be done by Prein & Newhof.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the construction staking and observation contract with Prein and Newhof.

Mr. Skalski made a motion to approve the contract with Prein & Newhof dated March 11, 2021 for provision of professional services for construction staking and construction observation for the proposed Stadium Drive Sidewalk Project from the East

DDA limits to 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Betzler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Chairperson Taylor suggested consideration of a corridor of ornamental trees along the length of both the north and south paths.

The group agreed they would like to pursue that idea and to find out what that might cost, but that it would be timely to actually plant trees after both paths are completed to be sure the trees would be uniform in size when planted.

Mr. Russell walked the group through the detailed sidewalk plan, the current status of the project, and how various required changes will be handled.

It was agreed Mr. Russell, Mr. Corakis, and Mr. Skalski will meet to work out details of how to provide an ADA ramp at the Ted & Marie's site.

Ms. Lubbert indicated an open house should be held to present the plan to the public for comments. She suggesting holding the Open house the afternoon of June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The group agreed that would be appropriate and asked Ms. Lubbert to schedule and advertise such.

Mr. MacDonald asked if there were a way quality trees could be left standing at the site of the retaining wall that needs to be built.

Mr. Russell said the easement for that area was obtained with the owner's understanding the trees in that area would be removed. The owner intends to develop the property over the next few years and would remove the trees at that point anyway, so saving them now would be very expensive and would provide only a short term solution.

### **Potential New Hire**

Ms. Lubbert said last year the DDA created a subcommittee to explore the possibility of hiring a DDA Executive Director. After research and discussion, the subcommittee agreed the discussion for a potential Executive Director was premature and agreed to revisit it once there was a better understanding of where the group sees themselves in the future.

Chairperson Taylor explained currently the DDA reimburses the Township \$500 each quarter for Ms. Lubbert's work, which is not fair compensation for her time. She does not have time to devote to small projects that are priorities for the DDA, such as installing charging stations, adding WIFI, property acquisition, additional reporting and hosting open houses. The DDA has funds allocated to pay a half-time Executive

Director. He suggested he be authorized to work with the Township on how this might be handled.

Members were supportive and discussed options such as having someone on the Township staff work in this capacity, having the DDA hiring their own staff member, or contracting with someone from the area.

Chairperson Taylor thanked Mr. Skalski for all the work he has been doing for the DDA on the various construction projects.

It was agreed a sub-committee be formed, comprised of the Chair and Mr. Corakis and any other members who may wish to participate, to look into this issue.

Mr. Skalski made a motion to create a sub-committee comprised of the Chair and Mr. Corakis and any other members who may wish to participate, to investigate and return to the group with a recommendation on how to solve this staffing issue. Mr. Cekola seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Other Board Items/Updates**

Ms. Lubbert said the triangle property at Parkview and Atlantic is for sale and the Township is in the process of purchasing it. It will be safer for traffic when the road commission “Tees” off the intersection.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said there may be a potential acquisition of portions of the parcels east of Millard’s Way as previously discussed by the DDA. A realtor is looking into the possibility. She will keep the group informed of any developments.

Mr. Corakis said the water needs to be turned on at both the corner and the community center as the grass is turning brown.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said the corner maintenance responsibility needs to be clarified. Also maintenance for Millard’s Way requires an invoice initiated by the DDA to the Township.

Mr. Corakis said a cross-parking agreement with the church needs to be done.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell will investigate whether the Township can manage trash pick up and sprinkler start up and shut down at the corner and what an annual fee might be.

Mr. Corakis asked when in person meetings might resume.

Chairperson Taylor indicated the county says meetings can remain virtual for the entirety of 2021 and that it is not his intention to return to in person meetings for the rest of the year.

The group agreed to include a discussion of this on their July meeting agenda.

**Announcements and Adjournment**

As there were no announcements, Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:33 p.m.

Oshtemo Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority

Minutes Prepared: May 21, 2021

Minutes Approved: July 7, 2021