

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

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD MARCH 17, 2016**

The Oshtemo Charter Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 17, 2016. The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Community Center, 6407 Parkview Avenue.

Members present: Grant Taylor, Chair, Bruce Betzler, Jay Brown, Shelly Corakis, Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Maria Dacoba, Rich MacDonald, Terry Schley, Glenn Steeg and Jack Siegel.

Members absent: Stephen Dallas, Chip Everett, Mike Lutke, and Dick Skalski

Also present: Julie Johnston, Oshtemo Township Planning Director, and Martha Coash, Meeting Transcriptionist,

**Approve of Agenda**

Mr. Schley moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. MacDonald supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairperson Taylor asked if there were any additions or corrections to the three sets of minutes before the Board for the meetings of November 19, 2015, December 17, 2015 and January 21, 2016.

Mr. Schley asked that paragraph two on page five in the Minutes for the Special Meeting of December 17 be corrected to reflect Rotary's commitment to provide "the clock" rather than "the face of the clock." He also asked that page five, paragraph four in the Minutes of January 21 be corrected to say that Mr. Schley will not join the Grant and Loan Program Development Sub-Committee.

Hearing no further additions or corrections, the Chair asked for a motion to approve the three sets of minutes.

Mr. Schley moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 19, 2015, the Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 17, 2015 and the Regular Meeting of January 21, 2016 with the proposed corrections. Mr. Betzler supported the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Chairperson Taylor said he had spoken with newly appointed Board Member Dick Skalski, who indicated he might be willing to be Treasurer for 2016, but since he was not present at the meeting, action would need to be deferred until he was in attendance.

The Chair noted the Treasurer's Report for January and February, 2016 reflected a net positive balance of about \$36,000 for 2015. He highlighted regulatory regular fixed costs, and also the budget for capital outlay/obligated projects for 2016.

Ms. Johnston added that after the Board approved \$750 in support of the summer concert series in the park at the last DDA meeting, she added a Community Events line item to reflect that expenditure, but did not feel a budget increase was needed since there will likely be funds left over at the end of the year to cover that commitment. She also included the smaller individual projects that were approved and budgeted under Capital Outlay/Obligated Projects.

Mr. Taylor asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Mr. Schley moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Ms. Dacoba supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Approval of Proposal from S & T Lawn Service for Landscape Maintenance**

Chairperson Grant told the Board S & T Lawn Service provided a proposal for the upcoming season for maintenance of the Community Center property at a cost of \$248 a month. It was agreed last year that additional proposals from DDA businesses be solicited. At his request, Ms. Johnston contacted other local service providers to investigate costs for this continued maintenance.

Ms. Johnston reported she met with Naylor Landscape Management and DeVissor Landscape Services and received a proposal from Naylor, but had not received a proposal from DeVissor. The Naylor proposal for comparable work to what S & T has been providing was \$325 higher than the S & T proposal.

After Board discussion of what maintenance is provided, it was the consensus that S & T has done a good job maintaining and keeping the grounds attractive, had provided the lower proposal, and there was no need to change providers at this time. It was noted the Township does the mowing at the Community Center.

Chairperson Grant asked for a motion to approve the contract with S & T.

Mr. MacDonald moved to approve the contract with S & T for landscape maintenance service for 2016 at a cost of \$248 per month. Mr. Siegel supported the motion. The motion passed, with nine in favor and one dissenting (Mr. Brown).

Mr. Brown explained he voted no because when the DDA was started it was agreed the Township would take care of landscape maintenance with volunteers, but that DDA has taken care of it ever since and the Township is not holding up its end of the bargain.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said any agreement made regarding grounds maintenance was before her time and she could not speak to it.

Mr. Schley said with the DDA's Streetscaping emphasis, the grounds need to be well maintained and attractive and the DDA has to take an active role in that at some point.

Chairperson Grant said he felt one of the ways for the DDA to give back to the community is to make sure the grounds are attractive.

Although he agreed with others that the grounds of the Community Center are attractive and something for Oshtemo to be proud of, Mr. Brown felt that was not the point; a line needs to be drawn to avoid setting precedent by taking over the expense for projects the Township would like to see.

Mr. Schley noted there should be a record in the minutes of any agreement regarding grounds maintenance. He will search for them in his files; Township personnel will do the same.

### **Sign Art Banner Installation and Storage**

Ms. Johnston reported the purchase order established for Sign Art for 2015 is complete. The remaining funds were utilized through the holiday season to change out banners. Staff contacted Sign Art for a proposal for 2016.

The proposal from Sign Art includes storing, maintaining and swapping out banners four times a year on the various utility poles in the Village district at a cost of \$380 each time for a total annual cost of \$1,520, reflecting no change in work or cost from the 2015 agreement.

Mr. Betzler moved to extend the contract from Sign Art through 2016 at an annual cost of \$ 1,520. Mr. Schley supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Johnston will ask Sign Art to notify her when banners need replacement.

### **Facade Grant Program**

#### a. Hite House Application

Ms. Johnston reported the owners of the Hite House business are renting and renovating the old post office building with the approval of the owners of the building, and are applying for a grant through the Façade Grant Program. They have funds to pay for the \$10,000+ project if

\$5,000 is approved from the Façade Grant Program. They would like to move forward with the work as soon as the contractor is ready.

Chairperson Grant explained the quotes for the work are not all in but were guaranteed to be provided to the DDA next week. In order to proceed with the project they cannot wait until the May DDA meeting to know whether the Board will approve their request. They are unable to provide a definite project cost until the quotes are submitted. He explained the Sub-Committee recommendation is to approve funding through a contingency plan, up to \$5,000, based on the final quotes. They don't foresee her spending less than \$10,000, but since the quotes are not available didn't feel comfortable guaranteeing her the whole \$5,000.

In answer to questions, Ms. Johnson said lighting plans are in compliance with the Form Based Code. Signs will not be back-lit, but will be required to go through the sign permit process. The addition of the planned parapet will actually put the building closer to compliance with the FBC regarding building height. Materials proposed (tile) meet the FBC and will be new. The business is branching out from downtown Kalamazoo rather than moving, but down-sizing the mall store. Everything proposed moves the building closer to the Village Overlay FBC.

Ms. Johnston said the Sub-Committee suggested since the actual amount needed is not known the Board might approve up to \$5,000 and have the Sub-Committee review the quotes when received for final approval.

Ms. Dacoba thought since they have already gone ahead with windows they should not qualify for grant funds for that purpose.

Mr. MacDonald moved to allow the Sub-Committee to approve the request for funds up to \$5000, subject to the determination that the final plans are generally consistent with the proposal, that all conditions in the application have been met and are compliant with codes and ordinances, and funds will be released based upon proof of actual invoice payment. Ms. Heiny-Cogswell supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schley said it would be nice if the Façade Grant Program funds were progressively proportional so funds would be available for other projects throughout the year. He noted this is a new program and the process is a little awkward but procedures will improve over time.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell commented if the process is successful the Township Board could consider a budget amendment.

Ms. Johnston noted there is one other legitimate request that may be coming requesting Façade Grant Funds.

b. Use of Grant for Architectural Fees

Ms. Johnston explained that recently a couple of property owners within the Village Form-Based Code Overlay District and DDA District have approached the Township about completing updates to their parcels. Due to the requirements of the Overlay District, most of

these possible applicants will need to retain an architect to assist them with their projects. This is an additional cost that might not be required for properties outside of the Overlay District. She wondered if the Board would be open to such assistance.

Ms. Dacoba said it is typical to have a separate fund for architectural fees.

Mr. Schley said since this is the first year of executing the grant program, maybe it should be looked at after the first year is completed.

Chairperson Grant agreed, saying the program could possibly be expanded to include in an architectural support program in 2017.

Ms. Johnston said if the Board want to consider expansion for 2017 they would need to consider it during the budget process at the July 2016 meeting.

It was agreed to consider an expansion at that time.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Street Rear Access Drive Update**

#### **a. Bid Opening**

Ms. Johnston told the Board a competitive, sealed bid package for the Commercial Rear Access Drive was prepared as part of a larger bid process for sewer and road projects in the Township. The bid opening occurred on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and four contractors submitted proposals. The Township Board awarded the bid to Balkema Construction at its March 15 meeting. The cost for the Commercial Access Drive was higher than expected but the Township Board has not asked for an increase in funding from DDA. The Township Supervisor has submitted a request to the Township Board for additional funding.

She said the \$70,000 approved for this project is not included in the actual 2016 DDA budget as part of the capital outlay so to move forward to expend that money, the Board will need to move \$70,000 from the fund balance to the capital outlay budget for 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Access Drive.

Mr. Schley moved moving \$70,000 from the fund balance to the Capital Outlay/Obligated Projects budget for the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Rear Access Drive project. Ms. Dacoba supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Streetscape Update**

#### **a. Meeting with MDOT Grant Coordinator**

Ms. Johnston reported the Streetscape Beautification Subcommittee met with Matt Wiitala, MDOT Grant Coordinator for the Kalamazoo area, on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wiitala informed

the Subcommittee that while the streetscape project is eligible for Transportation Alternative funds, it is not competitive. He indicated the problems that reduce the projects' competitiveness are that the Village is not really a "downtown" and that the historic character that the Township is trying to resurrect has not been realized and is not currently "re-development ready," though Ms. Johnston pointed out that is a Township initiative. Once there is more "place" they would be interested in the momentum and would consider spending some grant dollars in our area.

She said Mr. Wiitala provided alternatives for the DDA to consider. He indicated MDOT is interested in larger connectivity projects that link communities to each other and suggested considering submission for some type of connection on Stadium Drive from the Village core to the City of Kalamazoo's pedestrian system. While not a grant to complete aesthetic components of the streetscape plan, it would help with pedestrian access to the Village.

Ms. Johnston said Mr. Wiitala also recommended working with the Chime School or Prairie Ridge Elementary on the Safe Routes to School program. This is a grant that would assist with pedestrian connections within a two mile radius of the school and would require a champion from the school as the organizer for the application. Some planning work is required before an application can be submitted, which must come from the school and not the DDA.

Chairperson Grant said we would have to look at the budget for items that would qualify for limited grant funding and those that would not, to determine what should be done. Mr. Wiitala said we might just want to figure out a way to pay for the projects ourselves.

Mr. McDonald mentioned the possibility of the Planning Department working with MDOT in an organized approach, which can be a criterion for certain grants.

Ms. Johnston said if the Board decides to move forward with the Transportation Alternative grant application for a connection on Stadium Drive, a 20% match would be required. The DDA and the Township would need to work together to determine funding sources for the match portion of the grant because part of that would be outside the DDA, so the Township would have to be on board to provide their portion of the 20%. There would be an expectation that the connection would be all the way to the City of Kalamazoo to 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell said there would be another 20% for things that are not eligible for grant funds, such as design and aesthetic elements, so the total match ends up being about 40%.

Ms. Johnston said we could submit our full Streetscape plan for grant funding but Mr. Wiitala did not believe it was competitive. The pedestrian connection was competitive with a much greater chance of being funded. If pursued, the Township Board would need to provide approval, then most of the work would be done at the Planning Commission level.

b. Discussion with MEDC Grand Coordinator

Ms. Johnston said she talked with Emily Petz, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Community Assistant Team Specialist for the Kalamazoo area, to discuss if any of their programs would support the development of the streetscape. Ms. Petz didn't

believe the Village area qualified under their programs. Her comments were similar to Mr. Wiitala's in that Village is not yet a "place." She did indicate that the Public Spaces, Community Spaces program has a component that helps local communities do crowd source funding. The program includes assistance from the MEDC Videography to produce a pitch video and placement of the project on the Patronicity website to help with crowd source funding. Ms. Johnston felt that with the current capital parks campaign, another funding initiative might mean the Township would be competing with itself.

In summary, Ms. Johnston felt the most competitive project for grant funds would be the pedestrian connection.

It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with a grant submission for the Stadium and 9<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian connection.

### **Car Wash**

Chairperson Grant asked Ms. Johnston for an update on the car wash.

Ms. Johnston said she had contacted the Kalamazoo County Land Bank regarding possible funding for demolition, but they are not interested in spending their grant funds on properties that will not be owned by the Land Bank.

Chairperson Grant asked what if any commitment the DDA has from the church regarding the car wash property in return for demolition of the car wash. He noted the church accepted the blighted property and has a public responsibility to remove the blight. Voters ask often about removing the eyesore and he feels pressure to get that done. Although it is not Township or DDA property it would be a win for everyone to remove the building.

There was extended discussion of what might have been discussed with the church in the past and possible ways to move forward. Also discussed was the possibility of contacting demolition contractors to get an idea of the costs that would be involved to demolish the car wash, what the liability and costs of environmental studies and other requirements might be, and the possibility of loaning the church the money for demolition.

After discussion it was agreed the Streetscape/Beautification Sub-Committee would schedule a meeting with church representatives to discuss whether they are still interested in working together to achieve demolition of the car wash and an agreement that would be acceptable to both parties regarding ownership and use of the property.

Mr. Schley said he would find the record of prior negotiations with the church to provide history to share at the meeting.

### **Any Other Business**

Mr. Schley noted the difficulty to enforce snow removal with no uniform mechanism to assess property owners in the policy.

Ms. Heiny-Cogswell reported the suit regarding underground power lines is still in the Michigan Supreme Court.

Mr. Schley commented the wires are being strung over the street anyway.

**Announcements and Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Oshtemo Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority

Minutes Prepared: March 23, 2016  
Minutes Approved: June 9, 2016