

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF OSHTEMO

South Drake Road Corridor Improvement Authority (SoDA) March 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The SoDA Board special meeting was held in person at Township Hall in the Meeting Room at approximately 12 noon.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Corey Ashley
Cheri Bell
Dennis Patzer, Chair
Theresa Spurr
Macy Walters
Kelly Bringman
Joe Gesmundo
Cheri Jodoin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; Anna Horner, Public Works Director; Leeanna Harris, Zoning Administrator, and Ryan Minkus from the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County.

Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Stefforia mentioned that the Community Policing Officer did not attend; therefore, item six on the agenda could be replaced with a discussion with Ryan Minkus from the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County. Chair Patzer asked for a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Mr. Ashley **made a motion** to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Jodoin **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved unanimously**.

Election of Officers

The Board moved to the Election of Officers. Ms. Bringman was nominated as Chair, Mr. Patzer was nominated to be Vice Chair, and Ms. Walters was nominated to be Secretary and Treasurer. Ms. Walters **made a motion** for the slate of Officers, which also included combining the Secretary and Treasurer roles and assigning the Secretary/Treasurer duties to Oshtemo Planning staff. Ms. Jodoin **seconded the motion**. The election of Officers was unanimous.

Minutes

Vice Chair Patzer asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections to the Minutes of December 4, 2024. Vice Chair Patzer asked for a motion to approve the Minutes as presented.

Mr. Ashley **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of December 4, 2024, as presented. Ms. Bringman **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved unanimously**.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

There were no comments from any members of the public.

Discussion with Ryan Minkus, Road Commission of Kalamazoo County

Mr. Minkus introduced himself and explained that he'd be happy to answer any questions the Board has about striping in the rights-of-way along the SoDA corridor. He explained that the piano key style striping does have heightened visibility, but that they are typically only used for trail-widths. Sidewalk crossings widths are not striped. Since the path changes from a trail down to a six-foot sidewalk crossing width at Skyridge Avenue, it would not be striped. The SoDA board discussed that having marks of any kind would be most important, but if piano keys were more visible, then that would be the priority.

Mr. Minkus confirmed that within private roads or driveways, the striping would be at the discretion of the Township. Mr. Gesmundo asked if this is the case even if it is located in the rights-of-way. Mr. Minkus confirmed that was the case.

It was discussed that the SoDA would maintain the private street crossings and the Road Commission would maintain the public street crossings.

Vice Chair Patzer and Mr. Ashley discussed they would draft a letter addressed to Mr. Minkus to request an exception from policy to add striping along the entire corridor, including across Skyridge Avenue.

Treasurer's Reports

Vice Chair Patzer asked for Treasurer's Reports. Ms. Stefforia shared the Treasurer's Report for 2024 Year End (unaudited) and January 2025 through February 2025.

The expenditure of \$60,000 was paid to the General Fund for repayment of the Drake Road path. No legal fees were incurred last year, but there were routine auditing fees. Ms. Stefforia pointed to the miscellaneous category where there was a repayment due to an error where the DDA property taxes were paid out of the SoDA board's fund, resulting in a double expenditure of \$1,800, where it should have only been withdrawn once. Ms. Stefforia will clarify with the Treasurer's office on how this will be corrected.

In the Treasurer's Report for January 2025 through February 2025, there was a charge from the Township Attorney totaling \$2,600. Ms. Stefforia is not sure whether this is monthly or per pay period, but confirmed there has not been any time spent by the Attorney thus far on the SoDA Board. At the end of the year, there would be an account of the total amount of time spent by the Attorney on the Board.

Ms. Walters would like to know what the tax capture is per parcel when this information is available.

The Treasurer's Report was received by the Board.

Projects

Ms. Stefforia presented the Master List of Project Ideas. Vice Chair Patzer explained they had been discussing prioritizing these items over the last couple meetings. Ms. Stefforia said that Public

Works had provided them with some cost estimates for some of the list ideas. One item, the funds for the Drake Road Path contribution, was adopted in the Capital Improvement Plan at \$40,000 annually.

Mr. Ashley supports adding lighting along the corridor. Ms. Stefforia explained that the Public Works Department reached out to Consumers Energy regarding lighting costs along Drake Road and the City of Kalamazoo could potentially be a partner in that project.

Ms. Horner explained that if there is a light that is existing and is high-pressure sodium, that when it is repaired, it is replaced with an LED at Consumers Energy's cost. If there is an existing light that has not gone out that is requested to be converted to LED, the replacement would be at the Township's cost. However, if a brand-new light pole and light were requested, it would cost the Township about \$100. She advised that if a streetlight is out, to report it to the Township.

Ms. Walters had questions about the immediate need for lighting along this corridor. Ms. Stefforia explained that there is a subcommittee on lighting in this area and that as more information comes out from that subcommittee, it can be shared with the SoDA Board in a memo.

Supervisor Bell said that lighting was identified as an option to hopefully increase safety in the area, but that more information is to come from the Sheriff's Office. She mentioned it could be an option to create a grant program, like the DDA Board has, to help assist in the implementation of lighting on private property.

Vice Chair Patzer moved to the Nonmotorized Path Updates along Drake Road and KL Avenue. Ms. Horner mentioned that the path along Drake Road, from KL Avenue to Stadium Drive, was currently being delayed by Amtrak. The path would be about ten feet wide, but that across the railroad, it would most likely reduce to six feet. More to come. There are upgrades at the Speedway site on Drake Road and they have agreed to include the Drake Road path along their site within their upgrades. Ms. Horner gave other project updates.

Other Items

Chair Patzer walked the Board through the 2024 Annual Synopsis.

The group discussed funding for grants that are primarily funded by the federal government.

Ms. Horner gave updates regarding the sewer expansion. It is advertised currently and will be put out for bid soon, and likely be constructed during this year's construction season. She also said there would be a meeting regarding the MDOT road widening project at Township Hall on March 6th from 4 to 6 pm. Ms. Horner also gave an update about a traffic calming project near Green Meadow Road.

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Minutes prepared: March 17, 2025

Minutes approved: September 3, 2025