

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Record of the March 21, 2012 Regular Board Meeting
APPROVED**

Members Present: Triscia Pilchowski, John Hirzel, Dale Feigley, Roscoe Smith, John Dowson, Beth Lewis, Gail Perrin, Matt Barnes

Members Absent: Mike Maher, Doug Bourgeois

Staff Present: Melissa Dashevich, Director
Karen Beardsley, Recording Secretary

Visitors Present: Rick Hamill, HDDA Design Committee
Jerry Detloff, MSOC

Mr. Roscoe Smith called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

Regular Board Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2012

MS. PERRIN MOVED TO APPROVE the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of FEBRUARY 15, 2012 as presented. SUPPORTED BY MR. BARNES and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote (8 yes votes).

MS. PILCHOWSKI MOVED TO ACCEPT the Special Luncheon Meeting Minutes of FEBRUARY 29, 2012 as presented to be placed on file. SUPPORTED BY MR. DOWSON and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote (8 yes votes).

Director's Report

Ms. Dashevich reviewed her Director's report and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Hirzel pointed out a few adjustments since audit review and some TIF received. With only \$4800 in expenditures, the balance went into the bank resulting in a \$669,262 balance. An expenditure of \$1500 was for window clings that are available and will be distributed to local businesses. Per Ms. Dashevich, they will be divided among the board and committee members to distribute. Also, due to a printing error, we have a total of 1,000 (500 single-side, 500 double-sided) available.

OLD BUSINESS

Sidewalks

Mr. Smith stated that under the current conditions; since it did not look like bonding from the township was likely, he asked the board what areas we should concentrate on to make the biggest impact visually and economically.

While many felt that bonding would not happen at all, Mr. Hamill and Mr. Feigley did not think that was the case. Mr. Hirzel also felt that grant money is quite possibly available, and we should be prepared to go after that as well. He also pointed out that many parts, such as lighting and landscaping could be planned for, but phased in later.

Mrs. Perrin and Mrs. Lewis both felt that simply putting in sidewalks for a large stretch not necessarily highlighting anything or going anywhere in particular would not be the way to start. They felt that beginning with 'wow' factors on each entrance would be more beneficial.

Mr. Hamill felt that looking at the sections, as originally laid out in the conceptual drawings would be more productive. He also felt that the area from Livingston to Colasanti's has the most available business openings, therefore the biggest potential for selling. He felt the money really should be spent at entrances, setting the mood, and show that something is really happening in Highland. While some felt they were not totally attached to the sections as shown in the drawings, it was felt it was a good starting point.

After much discussion it was a general agreement that, given the money we have to work with, and wanting to provide the biggest visual impact, that simply sidewalks would not be the way to go. Beginning with the two entries to Highland is the most critical. Per Mr. Smith, from an economic development standpoint, Colasanti's is a huge traffic generator, and could be the "anchor" store. He mentioned the license plate survey done through the DDA showed that people from South Lyon and West Bloomfield to Holly and Howell shop at Colasanti's, and we need to provide a draw for them into Highland.

Others felt that concentrating more work in that area, such as some type of link from Colasanti's to the north, at least to McPherson would be beneficial. Something that would span the water problem in front of Colasanti's, and provide a way to cross Milford Road that would connect Fragments as well.

Mr. Barnes felt that some sort of 'entryway' marker to the area would attract the most attention. Something with some design and incorporating a theme in it; perhaps a 'façade' type sign, or 'over the road' gateway type. He also felt it would be smart to include a cutout or train feature of sorts, in keeping with the Highland Train Station at M-59. This would provide a common thread to build on and provide cohesiveness, with not a large cost involved. Also, something like a 'gateway' sign could provide a place for event banners to be placed, which could provide more draw to Highland.

Mr. Smith also felt that Napa Auto needed improvement with grass and trees perhaps, since it is the next visual past the train station. Next, he would like to look at Livingston Road, specifically to the feed store, one of the businesses that makes Highland unique; it should be featured.

Another area discussed for a priority on improvement is at Livingston Road. On the east side of Milford Road, there is already some form of sidewalk. In order to complete that all way to M59 would just require a sidewalk from the Marathon Station to Ruggles. That would provide a complete pathway on one side. Maybe the west sidewalks there could wait. Also, just cleaning up muddy shoulders would be a huge improvement for not a lot of cash outlay.

Mr. Hamill pointed out the importance and business etiquette of using a design firm from start to finish. He and Mr. Hirzel suggested that we meet again as a board to be sure the drawings include all the details we want, including Mr. Barnes' ideas. Once we meet with Tad again, he will want to be sure everything is finalized before he would send it to bid for construction drawings.

Mr. Detloff offered Ron Campbell's assistance with designing the 'gateway' overhangs and/or facades. He works for the county and can provide his assistance free of charge. Ms. Pilchowski thought it would be helpful if that could take place as soon as possible.

NEW BUSINESS

Main Street Conference, April 1 through April 4, 2012. Ms. Dashevich is seeking approval to attend. Airfare and hotel will be approximately \$1,000, plus expenses.

MS. PERRIN MOVED TO APPROVE \$1,500 maximum for Ms. Dashevich to attend the conference. **MR. FEIGLEY SUPPORTED** and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a roll call vote: Pilchowski-yes; Hirzel-yes; Feigley-yes; Smith-yes; Dowson-yes; Lewis-yes, Perrin-yes; Barnes-yes.

Watering and maintenance of Four Corners' flower beds. Ms. Dashevich received a proposal from Kris Kopecki, the same person as last year, for watering only as needed up to 2 times per week at \$45 per visit, with a cost maximum of \$2,160. This amount is currently in the budget. With regard to weeding, the same amount has been budgeted as last year, but no one has been selected. As long as Ms. Dashevich selects someone within the budgeted amount, there is no need for additional approval.

Discussions with Oakland County regarding eating establishments in Highland Station. Ms. Dashevich continues to have discussions regarding this topic, but it is not something the DDA would be able to pre-establish. Oakland County says it would need to be considered on an 'as applied' basis.

Highland Community Parade May 19, 2012

It is important for Highland to have a presence in the parade; the DDA will have the use of a golf cart and will be passing out magnets supporting the summer concerts again. Ms. Pilchowski suggested getting Rick and John to volunteer, and they will help promote as well. Also, we are in need of some decorations for the golf cart float.

DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT REVIEW

Welcome to Bagel Express, in the old Zaydee's location near Dairy Queen; they do serve lunch.
Welcome to Fresh Hair across from old Carpet Classics, in the old Just Hair location.

Mr. Smith reported the ER Committee is organizing a program that hopes to bring artwork to the DDA District.

Mr. Hamill stated that the library has been talking to Ms. Pilchowski and Ms. McDonell regarding the erection of a play structure at the Highland Library on the property between the parking lot and M59. They are applying for a grant offered by Milford Rotary, and it was recommended that they get a letter of support from the DDA to go along with requests. Ms. Pilchowski added that each park group would be applying individually and would have a common theme, perhaps trains and/or horses, designs that would unify them as Highland locations. This is a great combined effort for the Library, Township and DDA.

MR. FEIGLEY MADE A MOTION for Ms. Dashevich to draft letters of support for the proposed library and park themed play structures. **MR. BARNES SUPPORTED** and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a unanimous voice vote (8 yes votes).

Ms. Pilchowski commented that the school board has a retreat this weekend, and she felt it would be important for the DDA to send a letter to the Board stating their desire to see Highland Middle School utilized as a community building of some sort and that we are opposed to it being torn down.

MR. FEIGLEY MADE A MOTION for Ms. Dashevich to draft a letter to the school system (both the interim superintendent and the school board) from the DDA in support of utilizing Highland Middle School as a community building, and not tearing it down. **MR. BARNES SUPPORTED** and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a unanimous voice vote (8 yes votes).

Regarding Main Street Oakland County Evaluation, Mr. Detloff commented on the DDA's efforts this past year. He hopes that we will regain National Accreditation with the addition of a paid Executive Director and active and participating Board and Committees. Areas that improved and will be focused on are Volunteer Recruitment within Committees, Fundraising Efforts and follow up of ideas. An area that is lacking is a program of ongoing training. Perhaps a separate Mainstreet 101 for the Board and Committees would help. Mr. Detloff also commented positively on the participation, enthusiasm, and community loyalty he witnessed during our meeting tonight.

Mr. Smith added that there was an upcoming workshop on the history of railroads in Oakland County that he may be attending. Mr. Smith also provided the members with an article regarding how food trucks are coexisting with restaurants in the Ferndale area. He complimented the board on their passionate involvement and everyone's willingness to listen to other's ideas.

At 8:25 p.m., Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
A. Roscoe Smith

ARS/kb