

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Record of the February 15, 2012 Meeting
APPROVED**

Members Present: Dale Feigley, Roscoe Smith, John Dowson, Beth Lewis, Gail Perrin, Matt Barnes, Mike Maher

Members Absent: Triscia Pilchowski, John Hirzel, Doug Bourgeois

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

Visitors Present: Rick Hamill, HDDA Design Committee

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

Regular Board Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2012

MR. FIEGLEY MOVED TO APPROVE the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of JANUARY 18, 2012 as submitted. SUPPORTED BY MS. PERRIN and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote (7 yes votes).

Director's Report

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

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dashevich shared that final figures were not available yet due to a year-end audit with the Township.

OLD BUSINESS

Sidewalks

Mr. Smith, based on previous meetings, felt that no bonding would be approved from the Township at the present time, so he proposed that everyone begin to prioritize ideas for how to spend the money that the DDA has in the bank. He challenged everyone to think outside the box, but keep in mind to come up with ideas that will have the most visual impact. Also, Mr. Smith shared that the consultant who works at Sidock Engineering, who has extensive grant experience, contacted him saying he believes there is a potential for substantial grant monies for the Highland area, and would like to meet with the DDA to discuss this. Mr. Maher suggested that Mr. Smith contact the consultant and select a day that he could come and meet with some members. Mr. Maher also suggested that the DDA offer to pay his travel expenses, since he will be coming from the Muskegon area.

Mr. Feigley, after meeting with Ms. Corwin from Highland Township, shared that the sidewalks alone would take up 80% of the entire project amount. In conversations he had with the Director of the

Milford DDA, it was suggested that while the sidewalks are important, adding the streetscape, which brings the ambience, is just as, if not more important. Perhaps doing smaller sections completely would have the most visual impact and selling features.

More discussions ensued regarding sharing costs of light fixtures and related costs with the businesses they enhance, or Mr. Hamill suggested fundraising through landscaping sales and improvements.

NEW BUSINESS

Light Fixtures

Ms. Dashevich said that Gennero Chiropractic on Milford Road wants to buy one of our lamp posts/light fixtures, but they're out of the Highland Station District. Is this something we want to consider allowing?

It was discussed that we have a few extra in stock and stored at Magnetic Products. Ms. Dashevich was contacted by the new owner of the Daly Building, and he has enough parts to assemble a few more, probably for nominal cost, but he also owns the tooling to reproduce more as needed in the future. Is this something we want to consider? Would we be willing to pay him to fabricate the original light fixtures design that was started in the beginning? Mr. Smith reminded everyone that another design was chosen part of the way through, and it was thought the two different styles would be used in designating areas, such as historic district and other. Mr. Dowson also has a few extra (as spares) at his business. It was decided that Mr. Hamill and some members of the design committee would look at some of the styles that are being used and what are available, and will report back to Ms. Dashevich.

Committee Reports

Economic restructure

Mr. Smith shared this month's advertisement featuring Highland restaurants. He encouraged everyone to patronize our local eateries and use the coupons, so they feel their advertising dollars are being well spent. He also distributed the new Highland 'Shop Local' window clings to all.

Mr. Smith also presented Mr. Maher and Highland Feed with a framed photo of his building from 1908 as a gift celebrating their Business of the Year Award.

At 7:08, the Highland DDA welcomed the Highland Township Board of Directors to a combined meeting of the Highland DDA and the Highland Township Board. Ms. McDonell, Ms. Chynoweth, Mr. Polidori, Ms. Kiley, and Mr. Tierney were present. Ms. McDonnell noted that Ms. Pilchowski and Mr. Sherman were absent, and requested a copy of the joint meeting minutes for their approval and record.

Also in attendance were Lynn O'Brien, and Judy Cooper, Deputy Treasurer for Highland Township.

Mr. Smith stated the purpose of the combined meeting was to continue discussions from the Wednesday, February 8 meeting, and to get answers to any questions either side may have.

Mr. Tierney wanted to convey that the Township Board believes in the DDA and their mission and wants to see this project move forward. The expenses and funding are the items that raise concerns and need more clarification.

Mr. Polidori began with his disappointment with not receiving the documents he felt were necessary to make informed decisions. He then went on to discuss some of the reasons behind his and the board's apprehension to support, or back by approving funding, a large project. He spoke of three separate past projects that Highland Township has been 'burned' on: 1) waste treatment project, 2) civic center area road installation, and 3) paving of N. John Street.

He felt that Ms. Pilchowski, Ms. McDonell and Ms. Kiley work very hard together to find ways to cut costs and build up the Highland Township fund equity balance, and they have had to use some of those funds to pay for these aforementioned projects. He also feels very strongly that the board operates on a budget, does not waste money, and does not go into debt. He is not willing to sign on for the \$600,000 bond issue the DDA is asking for. He is also uncomfortable with conflicting contract language he has seen on legal and state documents. He suggests that the DDA do this project in phases, beginning with sidewalks, then streetscape. In the future, he may consider moving ahead by supporting a bond issue, but a statement must be attached to it clearly saying that the township will not back it. Mr. Dowson asked for clarification that the township wouldn't stand in the DDA's way to get a bond; however, Ms. McDonell pointed out that he was speaking for himself only.

Mr. Polidori also felt that Highland Township should develop some sort of property inspections, in order to set some semblance of standards in the Highland Station District. He felt that having a single residence with their home in disrepair could bring down the value of adjoining businesses.

Mr. Smith wanted to point out that we have many businesses operating in Highland without sewers; he doesn't believe that's a breaking point. He also pointed out to Mr. Polidori that the DDA has paid over \$100,000 for many parts of the Town Center Drive project. Ms. Dashevich added that the initial conceptual drawings were available to any who attended meetings, or asked to see them.

Mr. Feigley added that governing one person's choices would not be our charge; but that we make the surrounding areas pleasant enough to lure others. Mr. Maher added that discussions took place deciding that if that type of situation were bad enough, the DDA might possibly cover the cost of painting, repair costs, etc. Mr. Feigley also wanted to point out that the DDA has only spent \$30,000 on engineering estimates because we wanted to get numbers that the initial budgeting could be based on. This way, we were not spending thousands more dollars on something that was not going to move forward. Ms. Chynoweth asked how the DDA felt about proceeding with just the sidewalks first; and Mr. Feigley explained that combining the various project phases and taking each into consideration saves money, and he felt that was a huge responsibility of the DDA.

Ms. McDonell suggested that the DDA obtain all the actual engineering drawings for the entire project. That is something that would have to be done first anyway before the DDA can begin any part of the project at all. Once a complete set of engineering drawings are done, bids can be sought for any and/ or all phases of the project. These actual figures then can then be brought before the Township Board asking for specific amounts based upon actual figures that have supporting documentation. Ms. McDonell also stated that she does not feel comfortable risking the Township's reputation for the other half of the funding for this project; she is very conservative as well, and feels that the projected revenues that the DDA is expecting are not true numbers.

Ms. McDonell further reasoned that even if only a portion of sidewalk, streetscape and landscaping can be done at a time, it will be a selling point, would attract more attention, and would give the DDA something to show for all of the efforts to date, as well as a direction to move towards

Mr. Polidori suggested the DDA meet again with the Township Board in April, or when engineering drawings are complete.

Mr. Feigley shared that he has been on the Milford DDA since 1993, and once a year they, along with many other committees get together to share what each is working on and towards. Mr. Polidori and Mr. Hamill agreed that would be beneficial. Mr. Maher added that from a business owner's perspective, when they became part of the Highland Community, there was much buzz from and about the Highland DDA. To date, there has not been much improvement to the infrastructure, and he feels this would be a positive step for many current and prospective business owners.

Ms. Kiley reminded the DDA that Mr. Robert Dado would be at the March Township Board meeting and all were invited to attend.

At 8:15 p.m., Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Roscoe Smith

ARS/kb