



DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD

February 16, 2010

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Community Room, Petoskey, Michigan, on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., and the following were

Present: Lawrence Rochon, Chairperson
James M. Reid, Jr., Vice Chairperson
David Carlson
Jennifer Shorter
Michael Teska
H. Ted Pall, Jr., M.D., Mayor

Absent: Liz Gowans-Ahrens
Rodney Phillips
David Marvin

Also in attendance were Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce Downtown Director Becky Goodman, City Manager Dan Ralley, and City Planner Amy Tweeten.

Approve Consent Agenda Items As the first item of routine business, upon motion made and seconded, draft minutes of the January 19, 2009, meeting of the Downtown Management Board were approved as submitted. Then, upon motions made and seconded, acknowledgement of bills since January 19, 2010, that totaled \$26,880.61, and acceptance of the February, 2010, expense and income reports, were approved.

The Chairperson reported that snow removal had been exceeding budgeted amounts; that the level of service received had been very effective for pedestrians in crosswalk and sidewalk areas, but that such level of snow removal had caused costs to accelerate; and that the Downtown Management Board may be asked at a later time if it wished to continue with this level of snow-removal service and, if so, address the budget allocated for such snow-removal services.

The Downtown Director reported that she had discussed snow-removal costs with the contractor and advised them that such premium services would not likely be required following downtown holiday programs; and that, following the January, February, and March billing cycles, she recommended that expended budget amounts be reviewed and, at that time, bring this matter back to the Management Board for additional review of the snow-removal budget line item.

The Downtown Director also reported that carryover figures were absent from the February expense and income reports because the Department of Finance could not provide them in time for this February meeting due to extra end-of-the-year accounting duties, but that carryover figures would be available as part of routine March expense and income reports.

Receive Sign Ordinance Recommendations; refer back to Design Committee

The Downtown Director next reported that, at the direction of the Downtown Management Board, the Design Committee reviewed nine points of the City Sign Ordinance as it related to the downtown; and that this project had been assigned to the committee in April, 2009, and much deliberation had been given to the assignment.

The Downtown Director also reported that the Design Committee was given a schedule that included the dates when each point would be discussed so that if any member was especially interested in any certain point, they could plan to be in attendance at that meeting; and that they were also given the following instructions to guide them through the discussion process:

- An attempt will be made to limit discussion of each point to 45 minutes. This process should not be rushed through and if it takes more time than 45 minutes more time will be given. Hopefully, most relevant comments can be put on the table in that amount of time before things get redundant.
- At the end of the 45 minute discussion, committee members will vote and the majority will rule regarding the recommendation of the committee to the DMB.
- The schedule can definitely be revised if more time is necessary. If discussion on the scheduled points is completed at a meeting and there is time to move on to a third point, that can happen, but a final decision will not be made until the date that is the scheduled date for that point. This will allow anyone who needs to miss a meeting, but feels strongly about a certain topic, to not be left out of a discussion/decision of that topic.

The Downtown Director also reported that the nine points that the committee had been asked to review concluded with the following recommendations to the Downtown Management Board:

1. **Nameplate Projecting Signs** – There had been requests from business owners to change the ordinance so that it would allow larger projecting signs. The committee researched what was allowed in other communities and enlisted the help of Bob Scudder (Sign & Design) to create templates of larger signs that were held up in various locations around town. With the rationale that larger signs could become a safety issue and that the current size was acceptable for pedestrian traffic there was consensus to recommend that the sign size limit remain at 3 square feet
2. **Digital readouts/Television versus signs** – There has been concern on the City's Sign Committee that the current City ordinance may not address this issue fully. Specifically, the question was whether or not televisions or digital readouts placed in display windows should be considered signs and regulated as such. The Design Committee agreed to recommend that electronic and digital display be prohibited for use inside of the windows unless they are set 36" back from the glass.

3. **Grand opening, special events, going-out-of-business policies** – A common request was for the use of temporary signs and banners. Some business owners would like to see the restrictions on these kinds of signs loosened. In response to their concerns, the City's Sign Committee changed the ordinance in December, 2008, from 7 days in a 90-day period to 14 days in a 120-day period with non-profit community events having the ability to ask for a longer period by going to the Sign Committee. All of these temporary signs require a permit before the sign is installed. The Design Committee recommends that this change be given some time to be functional before there is further evaluation.
4. **Open after hours signs/open banners** – These kinds of banners are currently treated as allowable with permits and under special conditions. The Design Committee recommends that these banners be allowed without the permit process, but that they may only be displayed during hours the business is open.
5. **Offsite/Directional signage for 'non prime property'** – In response to requests for signage that would direct the public to places of business that are not on the main streets, the Design Committee recommends that these signs be incorporated within the provisions of the wayfinding system.
6. **Sandwich boards** – There was much discussion regarding the question of allowing the unrestricted use of sandwich boards in the public right-of-way. The ordinance currently allows restaurants to use sandwich boards as they wish and retailers to use them seven days out of every ninety days. Committee members agreed to recommend no change based on the consideration that the sidewalks are very narrow and already accommodate trees, planters, and meters and also that if more of these signs are allowed they will become commonplace and their messages will be lost.
7. **Signage on awnings** – This is an issue that is not clearly addressed in the current ordinance. The Design Committee recommends that the lettering be limited to the valance portion of the awning and that the square feet that the lettering occupies be counted toward the total amount of signage allowed.

(Note from Downtown Petoskey Design Guidelines: There should be minimal signage on awnings. Signage can be incorporated into awnings with silk-screening, sewn appliqué, self-adhesive vinyl, and hand painting, but should feature only the business name. Product names should not be promoted on the awning. Promotion of products should be accomplished by strong window displays.)
8. **Window signs/transparency and distance from the window** – This is another point on which the City's Sign Committee had asked for guidance, basically as it pertained to real estate listings taped to windows. The Design Committee recommends that anything placed within three feet of the window can be considered signage.
9. **Administration and enforcement of the ordinance** – After consideration of other possible enforcement methods that all would require funding, the Design Committee recommends that the current methods of enforcement be continued.

The Downtown Director also reported that the Design Committee is chaired by Richard A. Neumann, and that members of the committee were: Julie Norcross, McLean & Eakin; Tim Knudsen, Beckett and Raeder; Greg Presley, Architect; and Justin Rashid, American Spoon Foods.

The Downtown Director further reported that the Downtown Management Board could refer some or all of these sign ordinance items back to the Design Committee for further consideration; that once the Downtown Management Board had approved its final recommendations, these recommendations would be provided to the Sign Committee and then be forwarded to the Planning Commission, and ultimately, the Planning Commission's recommendations would be provided to the City Council.

Downtown Management Board members reviewed these recommendations and discussions that included: provisions for sandwich-board sign duration and eligible businesses that can use sandwich-board signs; regulating a digital-sign setback within someone's private property to a setback of 36 inches and the effectiveness of such distance requirement; regulation of awning signage for business name only with no product or logo signage; projecting sign sizes; effectiveness of off-site directional signage for out-of-the-way businesses; real-estate photos in realtor windows; if sign provisions are too restrictive; the lack of adequate entrance signage; additional review of these sign provisions by a professional consultant; and finding a balance between regulating signs for aesthetic reasons and limiting creativity of business owners in advertising their business.

BJ Shawn, BearCub Outfitters, East Lake Street, who was in attendance at this February 16 Downtown Management Board meeting, reported that she believed that the City's sign ordinance should serve to assist downtown "brick and mortar" retailers in advertising their business location and product in a visual manner that would attract shoppers to their business location at a time when internet shopping opportunities are readily available to shoppers; and that she believed that visuals such as signage worked best to attract shoppers; and that it was her hope that the sign ordinance provisions would not be too restrictive to business owners in creating such visuals.

Design Committee Chairperson Richard Neumann reported that this review had been a tough task for the committee; that varying opinions of members had often been the norm in reviewing these sign provisions; that the review was not a simple case of "black and white"; and responded to the several recommendations that had been discussed by Management Board members at its February 16 meeting by reviewing the Design Committee's rationale for making such recommendations.

The City Planner reviewed the current practice of sandwich board regulations and the Committee's discussion to prohibit them altogether, but reported that the Committee had ultimately decided to keep these because businesses had already invested in the manufacture of sandwich-board signs; reviewed other options for sandwich-board signs that included after-hour sandwich-board provisions; that she believed these nine points had been thoroughly reviewed by the Design Committee with their conclusions provided to the Board; that she believed that discussions at this February 16 meeting had focused more on economic issues of businesses with sign provisions and asked the Management Board to consider its Economic Enhancement Committee to review the several concerns raised concerning sandwich-board signs and digital displays.

Following further discussion, Mr. Reid moved that, seconded by Mr. Carlson, this matter be tabled and asked that the Design Committee provide additional review of Point #2 - Digital readouts/television versus signs, and Point #6 - Sandwich Boards, with Downtown Management Board comments concerning these two items relayed to the Committee; and that on Point #7 - Signage on Awnings - to have the term "logo" added to permissible features on the awning. Said motion was adopted unanimously.

Accept Design Guidelines Document

The Downtown Director then reported that the 2007 HyettPalma Downtown Blueprint recommended that the Downtown Management Board guide private investment in the downtown by hiring a professional to write design guidelines; and that, to that end, in 2008, the Management Board contracted with Scott Day, Urban Development Services, to begin the process of creating this document.

The Downtown Director further reported that two open meetings had been held to gather input from business and building owners, as well as the public; that an inventory of photographs and building characteristics and styles were created by Mr. Day before his work began; and that a total of six drafts had been submitted to the Design Committee for its review, input, and suggested revisions.

The Downtown Director also reported that the Design Committee was now requesting that the Downtown Management Board accept this final draft - as included in the Board's February 16 meeting agenda materials - to become "Downtown Petoskey Design Guidelines" for downtown Petoskey; and that the document would be used as intended in the Blueprint document "as guidelines for building renovations and new construction and as a standard for awarding façade improvement grants".

Downtown Management Board members then requested a correction to the document's territory map on page 8 that depicted the design guidelines area to include the block bounded by US-31 and East Mitchell Street between Petoskey Street and Emmet Street (the Petoskey Pointe PUD site); discussed the document and heard Mr. Neumann response to questions of the Management Board as Chairperson of the Design Committee; and heard the City Planner report that, following its approval by this Board, the Design Guidelines document could be reviewed by the Planning Commission for changes they believed are needed within the City Code to correspond with this document, noting that the current document served merely as a guideline and could not be enforced.

Mr. Teska then moved that, seconded by Mr. Reid, adoption of the Downtown Petoskey Design Guidelines as submitted, with correction to the territory map to include the Petoskey Pointe block. Said motion was adopted unanimously.

Retain Board Member Marvin

Chairperson Rochon then reported that correspondence had been received from Board Member David Marvin following inquiries of his consecutive absences at Board meetings. Mr. Marvin, who was unable to attend this February 16 meeting due to work duties, requested that his letter be read aloud to the membership in which he reported that business duties had conflicted with his attendance at many 2009 and recent 2010 Board meetings, but that these business duties would very soon be clearing that would again permit him to attend Management Board meetings, and that he hoped the Management Board would be willing to permit his membership to continue. The Board concurred that Mr. Marvin's membership remain current and hoped that he would be able to attend future Management Board meetings.

Hear Committee Reports

The Downtown Director reported that the Marketing Committee had invited New Moon to review its marketing plan and would be in Petoskey February 20 to meet with the committee; that the Marketing Committee was researching a new sponsorship program for a \$1,000 gold-star investor - similar to a past program that had been offered - as an additional way to raise revenue for the marketing fund, but had decided that it was not the appropriate economic time to renew this program; reported that she had recently distributed through group email a "news flash" letter and reviewed its' content; had deliberated additional ads in the shopping map, at the Management Board's request, and concurred that ad prices should be increased from \$350 to \$500 with back page advertisement at \$1,000, with additional space added for two new advertisers; and requested additional wayfinding signage for Howard Street noting directional signage for "shopping and lodging".

The Downtown Director also reported for the Events Committee that included the on-going Blues Festival program activities; and reported for the Economic Enhancement Committee that two new stores would be opening in the downtown within the next 30 days.

Hear Chamber Report

The Downtown Director reported that the Chamber of Commerce building remodeling project was progressing; that she and Chamber staff had attended committee meetings for a June "Smart Commute" program that would challenge people to find alternative ways to driving to work; and that the June, 2012 International Hemingway Conference was scheduled to be held in Petoskey that would include approximately 500 attendees and that the Downtown Management Board could be asked to assist with funding of certain programs associated with the Conference.

The Downtown Director then presented a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed Downtown Management Board and its Committees' accomplishments during the 2009 calendar year.

Refer Joint Dumpster Locations
Matter to Parking Committee

The City Planner next reported that, in addition to a recommendation in the Downtown Blueprint about installing alley compactors, the City staff had been approached by downtown business Owners about the possibility of creating joint dumpster areas that would replace individual dumpsters; that there were several benefits to this approach including possible trash-hauling cost savings, ability to include a compactor for cardboard, and improved screening of dumpsters.

The City Planner also reported that, in 2008, the City staff and then Mayor Meyer made a trip to Grand Haven for the Mayor's Exchange Program; that, as part of a parking lot project, downtown Grand Haven had installed communal dumpsters and created an ordinance to require all properties on the block to use them, and that two of these enclosures were at opposite ends of a parking lot and one included a compactor.

The City Planner also reported that an assessment for garbage removal was created with a formula based on type of use, and that, quite possibly, there were other communities that do this as well, and that this issue could be researched.

The City Planner also reported that, in addition to the advantages of improved appearances, likely cost savings, and possible other uses by businesses of the area formerly occupied by dumpsters, there were disadvantages that included a likely loss of parking, the cost of enclosure construction, and less convenient location of trash dumpster.

Following discussion, the Downtown Management Board referred review of this matter to its Parking Committee for recommendation to the Downtown Management Board.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 P.M.