



**DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD**

December 15, 2015

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Community Room, Petoskey, Michigan, on Tuesday, December 15, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., and the following were

Present: Lawrence Rochon, Chairperson  
Robin Bennett  
Doug Buck  
David Carlson  
Jason Keiswetter  
James M. Reid Jr., Vice Chairperson  
Jennifer Shorter  
S. Reginald Smith

Absent: William J. Fraser, Mayor

Also in attendance was the Downtown Director Becky Goodman and Promotions Coordinator Kate Manthei.

Approve Consent Agenda Items Downtown Management Board members discussed the first item of routine business, the November 17, 2015 regular session meeting minutes; acknowledgement of bills since November 17, 2015; and acceptance of the November expense and income reports as prepared by the Downtown Director.

Upon motion made and seconded, the November 17, 2015 regular session meeting minutes were approved; acknowledgement of bills since November 17, that totaled \$50,577.66; and expense and income reports for November were approved. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Discuss Event Sponsorship Policy The Downtown Director reviewed that at the November Board meeting, at the request of the Events Committee, the Board discussed forming a policy for accepting sponsors for downtown events. The Board directed the Downtown Director to survey downtown merchants for opinions regarding this matter. The Downtown Director reviewed that 21 people responded to the survey and the majority were opposed to accepting outside sponsorships especially those that directly competed with downtown businesses.

Board members discussed the possibility of co-sponsorships; heard from those against outside sponsorships; reviewed the purpose of special assessments and that they are supposed to fund events; that if accept outside donations then not preserving the downtown; suggested that the schedule of events needs to be reviewed and determine if any could be eliminated for next year; and that the policy language be changed and identify co-sponsorships.

The Downtown Director suggested that the potential policy will be discussed by the Marketing Committee and brought back to the Board for further review. The Board concurred.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard that the Board needs to be careful if consider bringing in outside sponsorships and that the Events Committee already has an approved budget and should work with the approved funds.

This matter was tabled for further discussion at a future DMB meeting.

Approve Letter of Support & Funds  
For Rail Grant Feasibility Study

The Downtown Director reviewed that Jim Bruckbauer, Groundwork Center (formerly Michigan Land Use Institute) representative contacted the City regarding a proposed feasibility study for passenger rail service from Ann Arbor to Northern Michigan. The Downtown Director reviewed that the passenger rail service from Ann Arbor and other communities connected to Ann Arbor could be very beneficial to downtown if it were implemented in years to come; that several other communities along the railway have already committed to the project; and recommended that the Board approve a letter of support and a contribution amount of \$2,000 to come from the Contracted Services line of the Parking Fund that will go toward the match for the feasibility study. The Downtown Director also reviewed that no money will be spent if the coalition of organizations is not successful in securing the grant funds, and that the City Manager would be presenting this matter to City Council in early January as well.

Board members inquired if staff had talked to other communities and if there was support; heard from those in favor of supporting a rail system in Petoskey; and why funds were only coming out of the Parking Fund budget for the feasibility study.

In response to Board comments, the Downtown Director commented that she had not talked to other communities, but Mr. Bruckbauer indicated there are several communities in support and that she is unsure if the County is contributing funds towards the study, but that there wasn't any money budgeted in the General Fund for this matter.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard a concern if this study was budgeted and that there should be more of a commitment from the organization involving Petoskey.

Ms. Shorter moved that, seconded by Mr. Reid to approve a letter of support and a \$2,000 contribution from the Contracted Services line of the Parking Fund to go toward the match for a feasibility study for a passenger rail service from Ann Arbor to Northern Michigan. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Approve Funds for 2016 Winter Carnival

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Events Committee wants to improve the effectiveness and image of the Winter Carnival; reviewed the history of the carnival; and that a directive of the 2007 Downtown Marketing Study was to produce a winter event that would boost retail traffic in the winter months. The Winter Blues Festival was formed, but wasn't very promising so in 2014 downtown partnered with the City's annual winter carnival.

The Downtown Director reviewed the 2016 events schedule and potential plans for a temporary ice skating rink in Pennsylvania Park, but reported that City staff was not in favor of the ice rink. Paying for an event like this is problematic, but if a formal sponsorship policy was in place it would help. The Downtown Director recommended that the Board approve an amount up to \$10,000 to come from the Programs and Services fund balance for 2016 Winter Carnival expenses. The fund balance at the end of the year is estimated at \$91,000 which has been accumulating for the purpose of purchasing a new snow blower tractor when the need arises. The Downtown Director also reviewed that it may be more appropriate to plan for any future tractor purchase to come from the Parking Fund than from the Programs and Services Fund.

Board members discussed the lack of support from City staff concerning the temporary ice rink; that the ice rink would have been a unique opportunity; the possibility of researching a synthetic portable ice rink to use in the street; and if the Programs and Services budget, specifically the marketing budget, would be balanced at the end of the year or if there would be any carry over funds to use towards the carnival.

Ms. Shorter moved that, seconded by Mr. Smith to approve \$10,000 from the Programs and Services fund balance for 2016 Winter Carnival expenses.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard from those in favor of the event and that only \$6,000 was budgeted for winter carnival expenses and why the Board was now asking for more funds after the budget had been approved.

Chairperson Rochon then asked for a roll call vote.

Said motion was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Bennett, Carlson, Keiswetter, Rochon, Shorter, Smith (6)

NAYS: Buck, Reid (2)

#### Hear Committee Reports

The Promotions Coordinator reported on behalf of the Events Committee and that there were positive survey results from Holiday Open House and that the Stafford's Holiday Parade was a success. The Events Committee did not meet in December, but will review the events calendar as a whole at their January meeting. The Committee also is working on the Winter Carnival and secured a company from Detroit to create ice sculptures.

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of the Marketing Committee and that the Promotions Coordinator continues to work on website updates; that there was positive feedback on the holiday catalog; and commended the Promotion Coordinator's efforts on her work designing the catalog.

In economic enhancement, the Downtown Director reported that there was a pop up Christmas store on East Mitchell Street and there would be some shifting of storefronts this winter.

In beautification, the Downtown Director reported that the Christmas tree in Pennsylvania Park was lit at Open House.

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of Parking and that the Luke Pay Station demo was leaving tomorrow and that a few people stopped in to see the demo; that Barry Cole, long-time Parking Ambassador, is retiring in February and several interviews had occurred; and that the Parking Committee will interview second rounds on January 6. The Downtown Director also reported that the Elk's Lot work is anticipated to be completed by mid-May.

#### Miscellaneous Comments

Chairperson Rochon asked for miscellaneous comments and heard an inquiry if the Events Committee had reviewed the budget before it was approved and what the status was on the public art plan.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.