



DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD

March 15, 2016

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Main Lobby, Petoskey, Michigan, on Tuesday, March 15, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., and the following were

Present: Lawrence Rochon, Chairperson
Robin Bennett
David Carlson
James M. Reid, Jr.
S. Reginald Smith, Vice Chairperson

Absent: Doug Buck, William J. Fraser, Mayor, Jason Keiswetter
and Jennifer Shorter

Also in attendance was the Downtown Director Becky Goodman, City Manager Robert Straebel and Promotions Coordinator Kate Manthei.

Approve Consent Agenda Items Downtown Management Board members discussed the first item of routine business, the February 16, 2016 regular session meeting minutes; acknowledgement of bills since February 16, 2016; and acceptance of the February expense and income reports as prepared by the Downtown Director.

Upon motion made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Reid, the February 16, 2016 regular session meeting minutes were approved; acknowledgement of bills since February 16, that totaled \$30,634.02; and expense and income reports for February were approved. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Approve Public Art Plan The Downtown Director reviewed that per the Board's direction, staff met with Dave Carlson, Board volunteer for Public Art Plan, and discussed revisions to the plan that emerged at the February DMB meeting. The Downtown Director reviewed the revisions which included commission membership; opportunities for art in the public realm; process for approval; action steps; and funding sources.

Board members commented that the plan is a great framework; voiced concerns about going back and forth with City Council over the details; that the substance of plan should not be lost when negotiating between both Boards; that the power to approve or deny should be left in the Commission's hands; and heard from those in favor of giving the Commission autonomy.

The City Manager commented that the plan was a good start; that staffing of the Commission was a good balance; that staff would attend the meetings when needed with Council approval; that revised iterations should be expected from Council and advised DMB not to throw out the plan if that happened; and that perhaps the plan could be expanded to include the waterfront and other parts of the City.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard from those in favor of the plan; that the plan needs a clear path for appeals; that City Council should not approve appointments; and that there are too many officials included in the membership and not enough artists.

The Downtown Director reviewed that the DMB only has authority within the DDA district to oversee projects, but that if the City wanted to adopt the plan for their purposes it would be very welcome.

Mr. Smith moved that, seconded by Mr. Carlson to accept the Public Art Plan and recommend its adoption to City Council with instruction to staff to be certain that the line, "A preference will be given to local artists," be included. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Discuss Event Sponsorship Policy

The Downtown Director reported that there has been much discussion at the Board level about improving the downtown events schedule and a consensus has been that more money is needed to take the events to the next level. The Downtown Director reviewed that more money per event can be created by cutting events; raising the special assessment; allowing businesses from outside of the district to sponsor events and programs; that a policy for determining the acceptance of the funds would be required if money is accepted from outside of the district; and that the Board discussed matter at two prior meetings with no resolution and asked the Marketing Committee to review and provide a recommendation.

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Marketing Committee is sensitive to serving and considering the thoughts of a diverse community of retailers and restaurateurs who are committed to the district by locating downtown and paying the special assessment; feel a responsibility to promote the greater good of downtown; suggested accepting major sponsorships only, believing that there is no sense in the risk of alienating anyone in the business community for little reward; and also considered in the policy for direct competition, eliminating businesses that sell directly to the consumer, except by authorized exception. The following is the draft policy:

Downtown Petoskey Sponsorship Acceptance Guidelines

The mission of the Downtown Events Committee is "to create and coordinate events that lure residents and visitors into Downtown Petoskey, as well as promote the downtown as a community center."

Promoting the downtown as a community center is important to the entire region. For the purpose of producing the highest quality events, sponsorship funds are necessary and opportunities for promotions should be made to businesses and organizations according to the following guidelines.

It will be the policy of the DMB to seek sponsorships, especially for Winter Carnival, Spring Open House, Petoskey Rocks!, and A Moveable Feast. A tiered sponsorship menu will be created for each event.

All sponsorship opportunities will be offered to Downtown businesses first.

Sponsorship from businesses outside of the district will be accepted if they are major sponsorships (minimum of \$5,000) from businesses that do not regionally offer business to consumer sales, that do not directly compete with Downtown businesses, and whose brand is consistent with Downtown Petoskey. Exceptions will be evaluated by the Downtown Marketing Committee with final recommendation to the DMB; objections from Downtown businesses will be considered.

No title sponsorship will be awarded to any business or organization outside of the Downtown district.

National or non-regional sponsors may be pursued. Merchants will be encouraged to secure sponsorship funds from their vendors; these sponsorships would be co-sponsorships, such as Patagonia on behalf of Bearcub Outfitters or Bearcub Outfitters with support from Patagonia. No exclusive sponsorships will be accepted.

In the case that a sponsorship is accepted, an agreement will be signed that will state the responsibility of the sponsor and the reciprocal obligations of the DMB.

Board members discussed draft policy and heard from those against the concept and that it sets a bad precedent; that the draft supports the district; heard from those in favor of only allowing major contributing sponsorships; that protectionism is not a good economic policy; that it is not the Board's job to protect, but rather promote; that consideration be given to raising the special assessment; inquiries when assessments were last raised and if they had kept up with inflation; that the draft policy demonstrates reluctance for overstepping in the way that it is written and that perhaps downtown is grandstanding on their image that does not pay their bills; concern that over the years events have been tweaked, but that there is still not enough money; and that it is not the DMB's responsibility to get people into stores, but rather get them into downtown.

Chairperson Rochon proposed to table this matter and that staff do an in depth review of all the events to determine which ones are necessary and realistic; that wish list budgets be created for each event; and that the marketing budget be reviewed with the intention of supporting a potential increase in the special assessment. The Board concurred.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard comments that accepting sponsorships from outside the district is dangerous; that events are a great value to the local community; that if they bring even one big box shopper to downtown it is a benefit; that downtown is not a carnival; that the advertising plan needs to be reviewed; that a large marketing budget is not necessary; that the potential for alienating merchants is very high; and that it is more important that merchants get along as a downtown than have big events.

Authorize 2016 Façade
Improvement Grants

The Downtown Director then reported that the Design Committee had received three applications for the Façade Improvement Grant Program. The third application was not considered due to the fact that it was for a residential building in the commercial district; that another application was received late; and that the Design Committee may request a second round of funding in the fall if there are funds available.

Rod and Judy Phillips, 320 East Mitchell Street, applied for grant funds and if approved \$7,500 would help replace windows and save and preserve the historic pressed metal face of the upper story of the building. The grant is contingent on the property owners meeting with a sub-committee of the Design Committee for the purpose of clarifying the exact window design that will be funded and recommendations of proper prep and paint procedures.

Mike Lambert, 200 Petoskey Street, applied for grant funds and if approved \$9,000 will help remove the fake mansard roof cornice and replace it with a cornice that suits the period of the building. The grant is contingent on the property owner meeting with a sub-committee of the Design Committee for the purpose of clarifying the exact design, size and number of the corbels that will support the cornice.

Upon motion made by Mr. Reid and supported by Mr. Carlson, the 2016 façade improvement grants were approved as requested by the Downtown Design Committee. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Approve Revised Design Guidelines

that many businesses have placed planters, benches and outdoor dining furnishings in the public right-of-ways since then; and that updates include the addition of guidelines for outdoor dining barriers, if outdoor liquor is permitted, a change in materials to commercial grade, and a prohibition on neon, fluorescent or iridescent colors.

The Downtown Director reviewed that Downtown Design Guidelines for outdoor furnishings were adopted in 1997 and had not been reviewed since;

The Downtown Director also reviewed that streetscape amenities add to the ambiance of downtown, but there is also a need to provide sufficient pedestrian clearance on sidewalks; that the City was in the process of updating its ordinance to ensure ADA compliance is met for items it allows in the public right-of-ways; and that the guidelines assist City staff when licensing outdoor dining applications.

Board members expressed concern over interpretation of some of the language; that the City should not be dictating to the merchants what displays should look like; and that the City did have authorization to dictate since furnishings would be in the public right-of-way.

Upon motion made by Mr. Carlson, and seconded by Ms. Bennett, to approve the revised Downtown Design Guidelines. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Approve Committee Appointment

Mr. Smith moved that, seconded by Ms. Bennett, to appoint Dylan Vallade to the Marketing Committee. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

The Downtown Director reported that Dylan Vallade, owner of Sungem Website Development, asked to join the Downtown Marketing Committee.

Hear Committee Reports

that Petoskey Rocks! event will be consistent each night with 7 Friday nights in a row starting on July 1.

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of the Events Committee and that Summer Open House activities will be similar to last year; and

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of the Marketing Committee and that the Committee has been focusing on the sponsorship plan, but is also working on additions to the website and revisions to the shopping map.

In economic enhancement, the Downtown Director reported that several new businesses were planning to open, but none ready to announce; and that downtown should have a very high occupancy rate this summer.

In beautification, the Downtown Director reported that bubble gum pink petunias were ordered to be planted into the concrete planters.

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of Parking and that the new Parking Ambassador is dedicated and adapting nicely; that deposit information is delayed since coins are being counted in Grand Rapids, but the Director of Finance is helping matter with Fifth Third Bank; that staff is preparing for the closure of the Elks Lot when the renovation begins and permit holders will need to be moved to other locations; that the pay stations have been ordered and will be programmed; that staff has met with Sign and Design regarding proper signage for the lot; that a sales representative from Traffic and Safety was in this week and talked to staff about the process of credit card collections and Parkmobile interfacing.

The Downtown Director also reported that City Council approved the Downtown Greenway Corridor - South Segment plan but did not include accommodations for any parking; that there was serious consideration about removing the trolley out of the final plan; that she believes she helped to convince Council to leave it in the plan; and that an RFP is prepared and ready to send out concerning the trolley.

Hear City Staff Report

The City Manager reported that City Council would be conducting a second reading on a proposed ordinance amending Chapter 18 entitled Streets, Sidewalks and other Public Places; that a request to rezone 215 East Lake Street was denied; that marina improvement projects will begin early spring; that staff was preparing documents for grant submission for the Downtown Greenway Corridor – South Segment; and that if DMB was interested a tour of the trolley could be setup.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.