



DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT BOARD

April 18, 2017

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Downtown Management Board was held in the City Hall Community Room, Petoskey, Michigan, on Tuesday, April 18, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., and the following were

Present: Lawrence Rochon, Chairperson
S. Reginald Smith, Vice Chairperson
Craig Bell
Robin Bennett
Doug Buck
John Murphy, Mayor
Jessica Stubbs

Absent: Daniel Harris and Edward Karmann

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

Amend Agenda

The Downtown Director reported that she would like to add a new agenda item under new business concerning authorizing funding for a consultant for the strategic plan. Upon motion made and seconded, the April 18, 2017 agenda was amended to include the new agenda item. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Approve Consent Agenda Items

Downtown Management Board members discussed the first item of routine business, the March 21, 2017 regular session meeting minutes; acknowledgement of bills since March 21, 2017; and acceptance of the March expense and income reports as prepared by the Downtown Director.

Upon motion made and seconded, the March 21, 2017 regular session meeting minutes were approved; acknowledgement of bills since March 21, 2017 that totaled \$22,599.57; and expense and income reports for March were approved. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Hear 2017 Winter Carnival Report

The Downtown Director reviewed the final Winter Carnival report including financials; that spending was not increased on an ice sculpture display in Pennsylvania Park due to the warm weather; that they benefitted from the generosity of Taylor Rental who did not charge for the outdoor heaters; that some merchants paid for their ice sculptures up front, but the vast majority still need to be billed with a due date of August 1; that surveys were sent out and 27 people responded; that the Carnival Party was highly attended with a lot of visitors downtown; and that the Events Committee will have a Winter Carnival sub-committee meeting throughout the rest of the year to plan for next year's event.

The Promotions Coordinator reviewed marketing outlets used for the carnival. The primary places included 9&10 television commercials, Lite 96 FM radio ads, advertisement in the Petoskey News-Review and social media.

Board members inquired if staff thought the carnival could continue to grow to be a signature event after lengthy discussions regarding funding; that overall the event was good, but there needs to be a backup plan for children's activities if weather doesn't cooperate; inquired if the date is the right weekend for event; that the event has had positive growth; concerns if the event is sustainable with only allocating \$12,500 for the event; and that the Committee should use Holiday Open House as a benchmark.

Downtown staff commented that the drink tent was packed and there were a lot of people downtown during the weekend; recommended that the Events Committee begin planning now for next year; and that the Committee feels it is the proper weekend for the winter event.

Approve Street Closures for
Summer Open House

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Events Committee is actively planning 2017 Summer Open House with the directive from the Board that this become a signature event for downtown. The Committee is recommending that the streets be closed in the same manner as Sidewalk Sales and Holiday Open House. The Downtown Director reviewed the schedule and various activities planned in which a map was included illustrating the possible locations.

Board members inquired if streets had been closed for this event in the past; what the date was for the event; if City staff had been consulted on closing the streets; and commented that weather can be a factor during this time of year.

The Downtown Director responded that streets were closed for this event in its first few years; that Summer Open House is planned for Friday, June 2; and that she had mentioned the possibility of closing the streets during the City Department Head staff meeting.

Upon motion made by Ms. Stubbs and seconded by Mr. Buck, to approve closing the streets similar to Sidewalk Sales and Holiday Open House and recommend to City staff. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Approve Trolley Task Force
Recommendations

The Downtown Director reviewed that the Trolley Task Force discussed the trolley program and is making recommendations on the program. The Downtown Director reviewed six trolley stops including the following locations Stafford's Perry Hotel, Bay View Auditorium, Crooked Tree Arts Center, Gazebo in Pennsylvania Park, Marina and Magnus Park; reviewed two levels of sponsorships; that the days of operation will stay the same as 2016 but adding an additional day which will include Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday; that the lettering be removed on the trolley and if possible, be replaced with lettering that says "Petoskey Downtown Trolley" and that this would be the only exterior change this year; however since the current lettering is gold paint, if it cannot be removed effectively, the lower half of the trolley will need to be repainted and if necessary, the recommendation is to repaint with a deeper red and to re-letter with decals, not gold paint; that the old trolley be sold with any proceeds to go into the Parking Fund/other revenue line item; and that the rail trolley service does not serve a purpose that will alleviate demands on the parking system, so recommending that the Board request City Council to allow the DMB to receive the proceeds from the sale of the trolley.

Board members inquired if the trolley driver could keep track of number of riders at each stop; how riders are aware of the stop locations; and if the new trolley is handicap accessible.

The Downtown Director responded that the trolley driver currently keeps track of ridership; that locations are clearly marked with signage, maps and on website; and that the new trolley is handicap accessible.

The City Manager reviewed that it may be well received by City Council if the Board earmarked money from potential sale of rail trolley for future maintenance for trolley or transportation purposes.

Board members discussed future use of the rail trolley and concurred that proceeds from potential sale of rail trolley will be put toward ongoing maintenance and consideration of refunding \$15,000 for feasibility study.

Upon motion made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Bennett, to approve the recommendations of the Trolley Task Force with changes to the future use of rail trolley and to forward recommendation to City Council to consider the potential proceeds go to the DMB for ongoing trolley maintenance. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

The Downtown Director reported that she will draft a memo as an informational item for City Council that the Board recommended not using the rail trolley and to consider potential proceeds from the sale be given back to the DMB.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard that a QR code should be added to the signs at the trolley stops and that they are sorry to see rail trolley dissolve because it would have been a good asset to the downtown.

Approve Committee Appointments
The Downtown Director reported that Julie Stoppel, owner of Somebody's Gallery, volunteered to serve on the Downtown Events Committee and as a retailer, she fits the criteria for membership on this Committee. The Downtown Director also reviewed that the Parking Committee is an executive committee of the DMB and includes the Chair, the Vice Chair and a member at large. The member at large position is vacant and Board member Doug Buck volunteered to fill it and his financial background will be helpful.

Upon motion made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Stubbs, to appoint Julie Stoppel to the Downtown Events Committee and Doug Buck to the Parking Committee. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard from an individual that thinks the membership of the Parking Committee should be changed, but now understands the makeup of the Committee; and that a Parking Planning Committee should be formed to educate public on parking system and include their involvement.

Approve Funding for Strategic Plan Consultant
The Downtown Director reviewed that the Downtown Strategic Plan Process Committee met and their first task was to begin work on the procedures to be used for collecting information that will be incorporated into the development of the final plan. The Committee was to develop a survey which has already been sent to business owners and managers. The next step is to develop a process for collecting information from various groups of downtown stakeholders. The Committee discussed some of the challenges involved, particularly in the area of getting information from key property owners, the concept of working with a consultant that specialized in business districts and would bring more stature and objectivity to the process. Bob Gibbs, Gibbs Planning Group, who has worked for the downtown in the past, was discussed with the idea that Bob would conduct key stakeholder interviews and also offer a meeting to be held for all of downtown that would focus on what we are doing well now and on other national trends. The Process Committee requested a proposal from Mr. Gibbs and is interested in having him come early May. The funds would come out of the Contracted Services line item of the Parking Fund to pay for his services.

Board members commented that it is encouraging that Mr. Gibbs wants to help and give input on this process; if the Committee has a clear vision of what they want out of this plan; and inquired on how many formal bids were received.

The Downtown Director responded that the Committee is working on an update to the current Strategic Plan and that bids were not advertised because it was under the \$50,000 threshold.

Upon motion made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mayor Murphy, to contract with Bob Gibbs, Gibbs Planning Group, not to exceed \$5,000 to assist in revising strategic plan. Said motion was unanimously approved as submitted.

Chairperson Rochon asked for public comments and heard a concern why funds weren't budgeted for when staff knew this project was happening this year; if there is a public stakeholder group; that omitting the public is a problem; why the DMB is paying for Mr. Gibbs' services when other bodies are involved; and the timeline of the project.

Hear Committee Reports

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of the Parking Committee and that the City Manager and herself met with Emmet County officials concerning parking and that it was a positive meeting; that the next steps will be receiving feedback from County Commissioners and City Council and fine tuning some of the costs, especially the engineering study; that a new Parking Ambassador has been hired; and that the Parking Office will be fully staffed this summer.

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of the Events Committee and that the Gallery Walk Committee is working on the event and that all promotional materials are ready; and that the Summer Open House is being planned for June 2.

The Downtown Director reported on behalf of the Marketing Committee and that the shopping map will be ready for distribution before Memorial weekend.

In economic enhancement, the Downtown Director reported that the former North Perk location on Lake Street has been leased; that Horizon Books is closing April 30; that Jespersen's restaurant closed due to retirement; that Sandra Lee Photography moved to Bay Harbor; and that it is the highest occupancy rate downtown since she has been in Petoskey.

The Downtown Director also thanked Board member Dan Harris for volunteering and helping on the Trolley Task Force. She also read aloud former Parks and Recreation Director Al Hansen's thank you note for his retirement gift of downtown dollars.

Board members commented that it may be a good idea to publish a press release on economic development and the high occupancy rates in downtown.

Hear City Staff Report

The City Manager reviewed infrastructure projects throughout the community and that they were all on schedule; that City Council approved a \$5M bond ordinance at last night's Council meeting for Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements; and that DTE will be installing a new main gas line sometime in May.

There being no further business to come before the Downtown Management Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.