2019-2020
Manistee Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
Facilitated Planning Report

DOWNTOWN MANISTEE
michigan

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"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new lands but in seeing with new eyes"
Proust

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to thank the DDA Board members, interim DDA Director and city representatives who attended and actively participated in the planning process. Everyone worked hard to acknowledge and address the challenges, keep an open mind, build relationships and get past the "Groan Zone". Thank you for your time and effort!

Summary and Purpose

Manistee DDA Policy 003 states that the DDA Board should "hold a strategic planning meeting to discuss upcoming projects and events of the coming fiscal year and set strategic objectives. The Mission and Vision Statement will be reviewed to verify both are accurate to the current program and that the organization is on course to achieve the vision and mission set by the strategic objectives."

The Manistee DDA Strategic Framework

History

In January the Manistee DDA Board inquired with Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) to assist with the annual Manistee DDA strategic planning session at the boards' February 2019 meeting. MSUE was unable to deliver on this date and retired MSUE educator Bonnie Wichtner-Zoia (Health G8, LLC), was contacted to provide the facilitated planning process.

The Deliverables:

- Information-gathering questionnaire emailed to DDA board members (January 2019)
- Compilation of questionnaire responses (February 1, 2019)
- Research, including information about other MI DDA's, DDA statute, Manistee DDA website, Manistee DDA documents and facilitation process tools (January/February 2019)
- Development of strategic agenda based on questionnaire responses (February 2019)
- Face-to-face one-day facilitated planning session (February 13, 2019)
- Compilation of final report (February 2019)

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- Email delivery of final report to DDA chairperson and DDA director (February 2019)

February 13, 2019 Manistee DDA Board Planning Session

The face-to-face planning session began the morning of February 13, 2019, after the regular DDA board meeting was finished. The agenda, based on conversations and responses from the information-gathering questionnaire that was emailed to DDA Board members prior to the planning session, was distributed and reviewed.

Manistee DDA Board Planning Session Agenda

I. Set the Stage

II. Appreciate the Past

III. Review the Present

IV. Plan for the Future
   a. Board Capacity
   b. Event Management
   c. Staff/Contract Services
   d. 2007 to 2012 Strategic Plan Review & Update, if time

V. Lunch (11:30 to noon)

VI. Plan for the Future (continued)

VII. Decisions and Commitments

Strategic Planning Session Notes and Documentation

<u>Morning Session</u>

Three items were covered during the morning session: (1) Introducing the Process; (2) Appreciating the Past; and (3) Reviewing the Present.

(1) **Introducing the Process** – The expectations of the planning process were reviewed, noting the agenda and purpose, as well as establishing group norms (or ground rules) and how the *parking lot* tool is used to keep track of off-topic items.

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- <u>Purpose:</u> To work together as a group to formulate a realistic plan for the year.

- <u>Objectives</u>
  - ➤ Build Board Capacity
  - ➤ Evaluate Event Management
  - ➤ Decide Staff/Contract Services
  - ➤ Review 2017-2020 Strategic Plan

- <u>Groan Zone -</u> Reviewed Sam Kaners' *Groan Zone,* which demonstrates that when new issues arise within a group, conflict is normal and often happens before decisions are made and change can occur.

- <u>Establish Group Norms</u> - Group Norms (also called shared expectations, working agreements or ground rules) are a powerful tool that help groups successfully and positively accomplish their goals. They are only effective if the whole group agrees to monitor themselves and each other by honoring these guidelines.

The following <u>Group Norms</u> were established by the Manistee DDA board participants in response to this question: ***What do you need in this space today to feel safe and fully engaged?***

- ❖ Equal respect for everyone's opinion
- ❖ Be honest with respect
- ❖ Have an open mind
  - o Less judgement
  - o Suspend beliefs/assumptions
  - o No personal agenda's or admit what it is
- ❖ Listen to understand
- ❖ Limit discussion time (to allow everyone an equal opportunity to speak)
  - o 2-minute per person - timed
  - o 30-second per person responses
  - o Mentioned, but not written on the flip chart, was that the group decides if further discussion should warrant another 2-minutes per person discussion or if the concept should be put in the *parking lot* for future review (see *parking lot* explanation below).

[**Note -**The DDA Board could adopt this working document as is or further refine it as a guide for all future board and committee meetings]

- <u>Parking Lot</u> - Meetings sometimes get off-topic or groups can use precious time discussing items at length that may be better suited for committee discussion.

By noting the items in the *parking lot,* the group can stay focused on the task at hand and still review the *parking lot* topics later.

(2) Appreciating the Past – Reviewing the recent past provides the opportunity for a group to reflect on and acknowledge their accomplishments. The Manistee DDA Board worked in pairs to discuss and report to the whole group their responses to the following two questions:

Over the past few months, what have we accomplished? What has been our greatest achievement? What outside factors helped us achieve those successes?

- ❖ The SPARK Event - its success was mentioned several times ("thanks Valerie!")
- ❖ The Events outline completed
- ❖ Two business start-ups happened as a result of SPARK
- ❖ Business development has occurred in the DDA district
- ❖ Administrative clean-up was accomplished ("thanks Tom!")
- ❖ All the work "our" committees do
- ❖ Moving the TIF forward
- ❖ Forgiving the Vogue Theater final payback
- ❖ A building that was purchased
- ❖ Just talking about the positive is nice

What lessons did we learn during our recent work?
What excites us most about the opportunities ahead?

- ❖ Enough here to press forward and thrive as an organization
- ❖ To focus and not try to do too much
- ❖ The possibilities of change
- ❖ The fact that we bought "that" property
- ❖ The partnership between the City and DDA
- ❖ Learning the needs of other organizations and how to work better together
- ❖ Getting us back on track
- ❖ Understanding each other's roles

[Note: The DDA board may wish to expand this list, keep track of new success, as well as take time to celebrate those successes and even post them on the website]

(3) Reviewing the Present – These bulleted items guide the DDA in their current strategic planning efforts:

- A required yearly planning session, per DDA Policy 003.
- The information-gathering questionnaire that was emailed to the DDA Board prior to this planning session, whose input was used to compile a meaningful agenda.
- The 2017-2020 DDA strategic plan, which was distributed to participants. It includes the mission and vision – as well as committee strategies - to be regularly reviewed and updated by the board.

Below are benchmarks that may be used to review an organizations mission or vision statement. Following the benchmarks are the current Manistee DDA mission and vision statements.

Benchmarks for any mission statement

The mission statement should:
- Be described from the customer/client perspective
- Express the organizations purpose
- State the organizations focus
- Be used for clarity when making strategic decisions

The Manistee DDA Mission Statement

The mission of the Manistee Downtown Development Authority is to foster the development and promotion of an identifiable and attractive downtown area that will strengthen business and a sense of community ownership.

Benchmarks for any vision statement:

The vision statement should:
- Answer the question "what will happen when the mission has been achieved?"
- Describe the verbal picture of the destination – "where do you want to be?"
- It should NOT be written as a process, but instead the vision provides clarity for determining a process or next steps for the organization.

The Manistee DDA Vision Statement

Downtown Manistee is the hub of activity in Manistee County. The historic, traditional, core downtown is a year-round destination for shopping, dining and entertainment for area residents and visitors alike.

Those who experience downtown Manistee are engaged by an aesthetically-pleasing physical environment where the classic Victorian architecture is well preserved, making residents and visitors alike feel like they are someplace special. The bend in River street meanders as the river flows, inviting pedestrians to explore further. Public spaces, such as the band shell and art garden, are centers of activity during the day and into the evening.

Manistee's downtown commercial mix is led by an entrepreneurial spirit and a can-do attitude, with many new businesses complimenting the veteran merchants of the district. Small, independent retail and service businesses attract customers seeking authenticity, selection, top-notch service and value. Storefronts are popping with attractive displays in large panoramic windows, and merchandise spills out onto the sidewalks to entice shoppers inside.

Proprietors continue to cooperate to promote the downtown marketplace to maximize consumer interest and generate sales. Store hours have been expanded to cater to the customer, which has also contributed to a growing night-life scene in downtown Manistee. A young couple can enjoy an Asian-inspired seafood dinner, catch a film at the Vogue Theatre, and meet friends for drinks at one of the multiple local establishments featuring live music.

While retail and high-traffic service businesses dominate the street-level, upper floors of downtown buildings house a variety of professional offices and residential spaces. The effective rehabilitation of upper-story rental units as well as owner-occupied spaces provide a built-in customer base that continuously patronizes downtown businesses.

The downtown Riverwalk is a destination in-itself and is utilized by early-morning joggers and tourists alike. Street vendors and entertainers set up shop along the river walk, creating a pedestrian-only entertainment corridor unique to Manistee.

Special events are a calling card for downtown Manistee, with several festivals attracting tens of thousands of visitors all times of the year.

[Note: The DDA Board may wish to review and update their mission/vision statements as they relate to the above-mentioned benchmarks.]

Adoption of a new Afternoon Agenda & Process Tools

During the morning planning session, other items, which were not on the original agenda, began to emerge. Specifically, misunderstandings within the DDA Board, as well as between the City representatives and the DDA Board. The facilitator asked the participants to think about these issues over lunch and determine if in the afternoon session they would like to continue with the original agenda or deviate slightly to discuss and hopefully clarify some of the ambiguities that had arisen.

After lunch the participants confirmed their desire to deviate from the original agenda and discuss the issues that emerged in the morning session, provided there would also be time to adequately explore how to move forward with the staff/contract services decision.

Communication is an intricate component of building board capacity. Therefore, since the newly identified issues were around communication, the first part of the afternoon focused on building capacity by identifying processes that can help a board communicate more effectively and efficiently. Some of the process tools were then utilized during the afternoon planning session to achieve greater understanding between the board/city and help them create action plans. Besides increasing board capacity, some of the following process tools were also used to address the staff/contract service decision.

Process tools:

- Taking the Temperature – Going round-robin in a group, asking for each participant, in one or two sentences, to share their thoughts about the discussion. It is okay for a participant to pass.
- The Change Process - a visual tool to help understand and evaluate the necessary components of a successful change process. Its purpose is to put the planning process in a larger context by understanding the group consequences if one component of the process is neglected. A copy of this tool was distributed to each participant.
- Defining Consensus – the definition of consensus is the minimum level of agreement to move a group forward.
- Gradients of Agreement – a *consensus* building tool whereby the minimum level of agreement for moving a group forward is determined based on the proposal. It is a collaborative and effective polling process. Instructions hyperlinked.
- Fist to Five – a quick voting technique that can be used when a roll call is not needed. It a simple way to move a group forward to the next steps. Instructions hyperlinked.
- The Basic Guidelines of Board Management (see Attachment B) – a useful tool to help new and existing executive board members evaluate their roles. Boards may review these suggestions and chose to adopt all or some of the guidelines.
- Positions and Interests – a *position* is the "what"; *interests*, are the "why" or the underlying concerns and goals. Oftentimes, the *interests* of two opposing *positions* can actually be very similar. Being able to uncover similar *interests* can help a group who may be in conflict find both/and solutions to a complicated problem.
- Sticky Dot Voting – a process for determining a group's priorities for action. Each participant is given a set of dots to allocate "votes".
- Sticky Wall – A visual brainstorming process in which ideas are put on cards, arranged in categories on a wall, and then processed in a variety of ways.

- <u>Decision Grid (see Attachment A)</u> – a matrix of critical criteria used to assess a set of ideas in order to determine which one(s) are most likely to offer the best solutions. Each potential solution is objectively judged against the same set of criteria.

<u>Afternoon Session</u> – Planning for the Future

The two items covered in the afternoon session were <u>(1) Building Capacity</u> and <u>(2) Deciding Staff/Contract Services.</u>

(1) Building Board Capacity

After reviewing and discussing some of the process tools listed above, the planning participants identified *two positions* related to the some of the misunderstandings between the DDA board and the city, specifically around the upcoming DDA sunset:

- ❖ The DDA should be eliminated
- ❖ The DDA should continue

The *interests, or underlying concerns or goals* identified from most participants in the room, no matter what their position, were similar:

- ❖ The desire for a vital downtown district that is well run. One that "fosters the development and promotion of an identifiable and attractive downtown area that will strengthen business and a sense of community ownership."

After discussion, including clarification of some assumptions and opinions, a better understanding of each other and future expectations among individuals in attendance were expressed. The following strategies were identified by the participants as steps for continued improvement of DDA/City relationships and to move the DDA District toward its mission:

- ❖ The DDA Board wants to clearly know what the city expects from them. A checklist of roles and expectations was suggested. (Linda will complete this in March).
- ❖ The two entities (City and DDA) should work with each other toward determining a mutually agreeable future of the DDA and the DDA District.
- ❖ Together determine what is needed to keep the DDA from sunsetting in 2020 by identifying common goals and expectations.

Facilitator suggestions for the next 3 months:
- Linda work with a DDA appointee (or two) on the expectations. As a team, check if other DDA's in the state have a similar checklist. Establish a timeline for completion – including reasonable expectations to prevent sunset.
- Also, create a similar checklist of what the DDA can expect from the city.
- Present the recommendations together to the DDA Board and the Manistee City Council.
- Use some of the process tools included in this document to aid with discussions, evaluations and adoption of board/city recommendations.

(2) Deciding DDA Staff/Director Services

The final 1.5 hours of the afternoon were dedicated to formulating a plan to move forward with the Staff/Director decision. The DDA Board realizes there are many moving parts to this situation, but also recognizes that they must make some decisions in the absence of perfect conditions.

Planning Process

Using the *Sticky Wall* tool, the participants were asked **to *identify the criteria (or interests) against which all the potential solutions (or positions) for the staff/contract services should be judged.*** The participants separated the criteria generated by the *Sticky Wall* into categories and *Sticky Dots* were used by the DDA Board members to determine their most important criteria.

The following are the categories and individual criteria created by the participants. The first three categories: Characteristics, Experience and Fiscal Responsibility to the District, were identified as the most important criteria to the DDA Board members in attendance.

- **Characteristics**
  - Loyalty to district
  - Ability to move the organization forward
  - Does not engage in social issues
  - Independent strength
  - Good organizational skills
  - Strong behavioral characteristics (interpersonal skills and leadership)
  - Leadership capacity
  - Ability to lead and say NO when needed

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- **Experience**
  - Redevelopment expertise
  - Update/improve buildings – no blight
  - Thriving business activity
  - Have the skills needed to perform the job/task well
  - Demonstrated and relevant experience in DDA economic development
  - Connections to developers

- **Fiscal Responsibility to District**
  - Solution needs to fit within fiscal restraints
  - Best use of tax dollars

- **DDA Management & Support**
  - Communication with employee is through the entire board
  - Employee has enough time/resources to do the job/task

- **Marketing of DDA District**
  - Good communication toward a vibrant downtown with consistent hours
  - Market the hell out of it
  - Find your identity with outside help first

- **Relationships (County, City, DDA)**
  - Supported by the City and DDA
  - Be a bridge builder not a ditch digger
  - Build bridges not walls

- **[Outside only]** – Clear SOW (Scope of Work) and accountability to the DDA

The participants then established six (6) DDA Staff/Director options that are currently under consideration. These options were placed along the left side of the Decision Grid (see Attachment A).

The Decision Grid with instructions for implementation are in Attachment A. It is important to each member of the DDA Board that they have a clear understanding of each criteria and each solution before comparisons are objectively judged.

Parking Lot

The following items were on the parking lot. Most of the items were discussed in the afternoon session. Nonetheless, the board may wish to review those that may require further dialogue.

❖ There are issues between the DDA and other entities that need to be worked on
❖ The DDA sunset is coming up and requires renewal by the city (2020)
❖ Need clarification of the roles of the players – what is the role of the city and what is the role of the DDA
❖ There is a lack of communication between city and DDA
❖ Important for the DDA/city to determine which responsibilities are most important
❖ The recently purchased property has some challenges for the DDA to address

Finally, as a reminder, there are two attachments, sent separately and referenced in this document.

A. The DDA Staff/Director Decision Grid with use instructions.
B. The *Basic Guidelines of Board Management.*

Basic Guidelines of Board Management

The Chairperson/President
- Guides the group through the decision-making process.
- Is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals in the group.
- Helps keep on the topic (off personalities) and focuses on issues.
- Ensures that each item allows everyone a turn who wants to speak, and that options are fully discussed before an item is closed.
- Considers that controversial matters may require several options be chosen, with a final decision being held until the next meeting.

The chairperson also works behind the scenes before meetings. He or she:
- Gathers data pertinent to an issue.
- Arranges for professional input or counseling.
- Confers with the vice-president and committee chairs.
- Confers with the secretary when preparing the agenda.
- Confers with the treasurer on the status of the budget.
- Discusses issues with members, as needed.
- Establishes an agenda using input from past minutes and from other group members.
- Takes care of the little things to help prevent them from becoming big issues.

Carries out tasks by:
- Being prepared and knowing the agenda
- Having the previous meeting's minutes or notes in hand for reference.
- Speaking with, not at, people.
- Showing enthusiasm.
- Being aware of his or her posture and gestures.
- Making other people look good.
- Setting people up to be successful.
- Communicating with frankness, sincerity, objectivity and candidness.
- Asking for clarification from members:
  I am not sure what you're saying about _____, would you mind re-phrasing that for me? Let me restate what I think you said....... Do I understand you correctly?
- Using committees, spreading the workload and involving resource people.
- Finding opportunities to encourage open disagreements as well as consensus building (great tool for this is "Gradients of Agreement" – what would it take by the person(s) who disagrees to change in the motion to vote yes? Would those who already voted yes, still agree if that change was made?)

The Vice-Chairperson (or Vice-President)
The vice-chairperson works/communicates with the chairperson and may be assigned other specific responsibilities.
The chairperson may use the vice-chairperson to:
- Work with committees.
- Help create group involvement.
- Locate information, human resources, materials and dollars.

- Assist with agenda preparation.
- Handle special assignments.

A successful vice-chairperson:
- Assists and follows-up with committees.
- Encourages involvement.
- Watches for problems and opportunities.
- Is open and candid with the chairperson.
- Is as knowledgeable about group activities as the chairperson.

The Secretary
Responsible for the minutes, retains all other written records and correspondence.
The secretary is the official keeper of all records, such as:
- By-laws
- Corporation papers
- Minutes
- Committee reports
- Correspondence
- Membership list and attendance
-

Takes and prepares minutes of meetings:
- Records motions. It's important that they contain the facts, such as amendments and whether a motion passed or failed.
- Documents discussions to indicate the council's thoughts and concerns, and to provide a record of issues.
- Reads minutes from past meetings or sends minutes out before the meeting and requests changes or corrections.
- Motions for corrections.
- Records acceptance after corrections.

Handles official correspondence for the group:
- Sends and receives official correspondence.
- Prepares clear, precise, accurate (purpose, persons, places, times, dates and dollars) correspondence.
- Calls on other officers to help compose correspondence, as needed.

Performs other duties:
- Sends notices to members.
- Works with news media.
- Accepts and files committee reports (they may result in motions).

The Treasurer
The treasurer keeps complete and accurate records of the revenues and disbursements of the organization using a standard, recognized accounting procedure.

The treasurer:

- Is the steward of the organizations monetary resources.
- Has the authority to disburse money only when granted by the organization in a motion and in accordance with the by-laws.
- Collects and disburses resources:
    - Receives all money received by an organization.
    - Deposits all money in a proper account and records properly.
    - Writes pre-numbered receipts for all money received and includes from whom, for what, date, amount).
    - Pays all accounts by check (records check number, date, to whom, amount, and purpose).
- Reports:
    - At every meeting what was received and what was spent per budget line item.
    - Provides a copy of the financial report for each member of the group attending the meeting.
    - Closing balances and any special funds (such as savings and certificates of deposit).
- Facilitates financial records:
    - Requires an annual financial review/audit.
    - Helps prepare the annual budget.
    - Keeps track of special grant funds (a system for earmarking the funds and checks written against grants).
- Performs other duties as assigned:
    - Assists with the acknowledgement of sponsors and donors.

DDA Staff/Director Decision Matrix

Criteria ➞ Options ⬇ Characteristics	Experience	Fiscal Responsibility to District	DDA Management & Support	Marketing of DDA District	Relation-ships (County, City, DDA)	[Outside Only] Clear SOW & Accountability	Total points per solution
ED Director and PT Administrative (2 people in DDA office)							
Combined ED & Administrative (1 Director in DDA office)							
PT DDA Event Manager & PT DDA Administrative with contracted ED Services (2 PT in DDA office and 1 contracted ED)							
PT DDA Administrative and PT ED with contracted Event Management							
DDA Marketing and contracted ED							
Contract it all							

Directions on following page

Direction for Implementation

1. Review each of the criteria, placed across the top of the grid, for clarity of meaning – be sure everyone is on the same page (no assumptions).

2. Review the options in the left column for clarity of meaning, add additional options if any were missed.

3. Consider if you would like to give extra weight to the first 3 criteria (Characteristics, Experience and Fiscal Responsibility to the District) as these were the only 3 categories which received votes by the DDA Board as their most important criteria.

4. Each option is then evaluated as to the extent to which it meets each criterion. As mentioned in number 3 – you may choose to give the first three criteria more weight. It is recommended the weight not be more than 3x the total.

5. Each individual board member provides a number rating:

   - 1 = does not meet the criteria
   - 2 = somewhat meets the criteria
   - 3 = good at meeting the criteria

6. Add the scores across each row. If you decide to give a weighted amount to any of the criteria, the score in that box is multiplied by the weighted amount. For example see the second criteria, "Meets Customer Needs (X3)"

Decision Grid Example:
Decision grid for assessing solutions to the challenge of getting 50 people trained in new software within 14 days.

Criteria	Cost Effective (x 1)	Meets Customer Needs (x 3)	Speed (x 1)	Lack of Disruption (x 1)	Totals per Solution
Shut down to give all staff two days' classroom training	1 2 1 1 ÷ 4 = 1.25	1 1 1 1 ÷ 4 = 1.00	3 3 3 3 ÷ 4 = 3.00	1 1 1 1 ÷ 4 = 1.00	8.25
Have experts on site for two weeks to give one-to-one support	2 2 2 1 ÷ 4 = 1.75	2 3 2 2 ÷ 4 = 2.25	1 2 1 1 ÷ 4 = 1.25	3 3 3 3 ÷ 4 = 3.00	9.25
Have only 10 people off for two days at a time	2 2 3 3 ÷ 4 = 2.50	2 3 3 2 ÷ 4 = 2.50	2 2 2 2 ÷ 4 = 2.00	2 2 2 3 ÷ 4 = 2.25	11.50

Choices

* Four individuals have rated here. The average was calculated by dividing the sum total of the ratings by the number of individuals participating (1 + 2 + 1 + 1 ÷ 4 = 1.25).

** If any of the criteria is more important than the others, it can be given a multiplier factor (i.e., x 3). In the above example, "meets customers needs" is three times more important than the other criteria.

7. Create an action plan to incorporate the top-ranked choice.