

**MANISTEE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2024  
8:30 A.M., WSCC EDUCATION CENTER  
400 RIVER STREET, MEETING ROOM B**

PRESENT: Kyle Mosher, Bruce Allen, Bill Gambill, Deanna Marsh, Tyler Leppanen, Ben Crowley, Sammie Lukaskiewicz

ABSENT: Karen Goodman, Lindsey Swidorski

ALSO PRESENT: Andrew Stafford, Carmen Kott, Nicole Kaminski, Councilmember Grabowski, Theresa Waldo, Barry Lind - PEG TV, Sara Herberger, and Anita Shaffer.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 8:31 a.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*MOTION* by Tyler Leppanen, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz to adopt the agenda as presented.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 19TH, 2024 REGULAR MEETING**

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen second by Deanna Marsh to approve the minutes from the June 19, 2024, Regular Meeting.

5. **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

a. The invoice from Urban Vinyl should reflect \$1,075.90 instead of \$1,200.00 which is indicated on the unpaid bills report.

b. Tyler Leppanen inquired about the availability of the balance sheet. It was decided to postpone the release of the balance sheet until August to ensure all financial year-end entries are included. He had also inquired about outstanding loans from the Revolving Loan program mentioning that downtown members have expressed uncertainty about the amounts they owe to the program. Further communication will be made to clarify the amounts owed.

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Tyler Leppanen to approve the June 2024 financials.

Voice vote—Motion approved

6. **ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

a. **Chairperson**

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz to nominate Kyle Mosher as Chairperson. No other nominations were made.  
Voice Vote - motion approved.

b. **Vice Chairperson**

*MOTION* by Kyle Mosher, second by Tyler Leppanen to nominate Bruce Allen as Vice Chairperson. No other nominations were made.  
Voice Vote - motion approved.

c. **Treasurer**

*MOTION* by Bill Gambill, second Deanna Marsh to nominate Sammie Lukaskiewicz as Treasurer. No other nominations were made.  
Voice Vote - motion approved.

d. **Secretary**

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Ben Crowley to nominate Deanna Marsh as Secretary. No other nominations were made.

- e. Chairman Mosher asked for the slate of candidates to be approved.  
Voice Vote - motion approved.

7. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEES**

At the annual meeting, committees will be evaluated and reappointed or dissolved. A number of Ad Hoc committees currently exist: the Facade Grant committee, the Streetscape committee, the Social District / Event committee, the Gap TIF Financing committee, and the Riverwalk committee.

Discussion included:

- Dissolving the Riverwalk Ad Hoc committee. Stating that going forward the Riverwalk committee shall be seen as a stand-alone item in old business with updates from the City.

Chairperson Mosher made the decision to dissolve the Riverwalk as an Ad Hoc committee.

8. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF RULES GOVERNING THE MANISTEE MICHIGAN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

The governing rules should be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors, and they may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new rules adopted, by a majority of members present at any regular meeting, to be effective upon approval of the Manistee City Council.

Discussion Included:

- Section 7, regarding board member attendance to board meetings.

- Discussion on the number of meetings missed; whether it should be consecutive or non-consecutive, excused or unexcused, the total number of meetings missed and the procedure of action to take in the event a board member does not adhere to the bylaw
- Discussion also included confirming the change in Article 4, section 2, page 6, the change from an 8:00 a.m meeting time to an 8:30 a.m meeting time.

*MOTION* by Bill Gambill, second by Bruce Allen to confirm the change in Article 4, section 2, page 6, from an 8:00 a.m meeting time to an 8:30 a.m meeting time.  
Voice vote—Motion approved.

*MOTION* by Deanna Marsh, second by Bruce Allen to change Article 2 section 7.3, page 4 verbiage from three consecutive absences to two consecutive missed meetings, removing the word “excused absence.”  
Voice vote—Motion failed.

Yes: Deanna Marsh, Bruce Allen, Sammie Lukaskiewicz  
No: Ben Crowley, Tyler Leppanen, Bill Gambill, Kyle Mosher

*MOTION* by Deanna Marsh, second by Bruce Allen to change Article 2 section 7.3, page 4, verbiage from three consecutive absences to two consecutive absences.  
Voice vote—Motion approved.

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Deanna Marsh to change Article 2 section 7.3, page 4, the number of total missed meetings from six meetings to four meetings.  
Voice vote—Motion approved.

## **9. EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- a. Nine retention visits to downtown businesses were completed last month. Several property owners have reached out to seek assistance in finding new tenants once lease terms are up.

## **10. REPORTS FROM AD HOC COMMITTEES**

- a. Facade Grant
  - i. Extensive list of businesses in the downtown who are interested in this next round of funding through the Facade Grant. For the 24/25 fiscal year, there is \$100K allocated to the facade grant program.
  - ii. The Ad Hoc committee will meet on July 11, 2024, to review the program and finalize this year’s application for the Facade Grant.
  - iii. Suggestion to review the Revolving Loan program to evaluate its effectiveness and use. Decide on if the money allocated for that program could be better used in the Facade Grant program. Currently, there is a balance of approximately \$27,000 in the Revolving Loan program.

- iv. Andrew Stafford will review the Revolving Loan program, taking into consideration downtown business input on awareness of the program, and share an update at the next meeting
- b. Streetscape
    - i. The Ad Hoc committee will meet July 11, 2024 to discuss the next steps. The renderings quotes were higher than expected, and the committee will reevaluate which firm will be contracted for the renderings. A concrete direction for the renderings will be presented at the next meeting
    - ii. Discussion occurred on the signage downtown. Consensus is, a need for uniform, easy-to-read, up-to-date signage providing clarity for entrance to downtown from the parking lots, more visible signs for parking and pedestrians, and potentially adding kiosks with locations of businesses in the DDA District
  - c. Social District / Events
    - i. The brochure will contain crucial information such as deposits, inventory, insurance, and other essential details for those seeking to plan an event in the Downtown District.
    - ii. Proposed phase one list of items to purchase that includes: 1 heater, 4 foldable picnic tables, 4 portable signs, and a portable PA system.

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Deanna Marsh to allocate \$8,000 for the purchase of the first phase of event trailer items.  
voice vote—Motion approved.
  - d. Riverwalk
    - i. The Riverwalk project second round bids are due July 26. The EDA has changed the condition of substantial completion for the grant from March 2025 to September 2025. A total of \$240,000 has been budgeted for the updates, including new boards, switchbacks, and an additional switchback.

## **11. Old Business**

- 1. Downtown Window Appearance
  - a. Andrew Stafford presented the initial letter and the more direct letter that will be sent out to business owners on the presentation of window appearances downtown.
  - b. He will conduct a meeting with two property owners downtown, in which he will initiate the window appearance conversation to gauge how receptive business owners are to the suggestion.

## **12. NEW BUSINESS**

None

### **13. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Anita Shaffer, owner of Riverside Toys, Shaffer House, and Port City Emporium: Reported on the Fall Festival, provided an update and a packet of information listing the intentions of the Fall Festival. She is seeking recommendations and information on obtaining a banner to be hung at the front of River Street and seeking approval from the City of Manistee to shut down the street from the Vogue Theatre to Tjs Pub.
- Theresa Waldo, Community Development Director for the City of Manistee, provided a letter to reiterate the historical district, ensuring property owners check with the City, and the Historic District Commission, obtain a certificate of appropriateness, and gain the knowledge of what is permitted downtown and the instances in which a permit is needed.
- Barry Lind - PEG TV, proposed a question regarding the beautification of downtown Manistee. Specifically questioning the lack of banners, the presence of trash cans at the social district exit points, and the change of location of the flower planters from the street to business buildings, he felt the planters were more attractive on the street. He made a recommendation that the Revolving Loan fund be reevaluated, and he expressed concern about transferring the funds to a one-time use program like the Facade Grant.

### **14. BOARD COMMENTS**

Carmen Kott, provided an update on the rebranded banners for the social district that was made possible by a collaboration with the Manistee Tourism Authority. Stating that the DDA has purchased new banners and is working with DPW to hang the banners when they arrive. This year businesses were contacted on whether they would like to have a planter or not, which is why the change was made from the planters being located on the street to against the buildings. There was an issue of cars bumping into the planters in past years.

Chair Mosher announced his excused absences for the September and October meetings, stating potentially an absence from the August meeting.

Bill Gambill expressed his satisfaction with the Shared Street Grants application proceeding and the collaboration of the DDA and City Council repealing the ordinances needed to continue with this project As well as satisfaction of the DDA and City Council approving the City Services Agreement.

Bruce Allen expressed satisfaction with the event trailer committee moving forward with the first purchases for the trailer

Sammie Lukaskiewicz shared that there is an agreement with 9/10 News to install a weather cam in downtown Manistee, which will feature Manistee during the weather forecast, and include event promotion to bring visibility to Manistee County.

Deanna Marsh thanked the Manistee Tourism Authority, and the Economic Development committee for their work during the Forest Festival and continued work in elevating Manistee.

**15. ADJOURN**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in the WSCC Education Center, 400 River Street.

*MOTION* by Bill Gambill supported by Ben Crowley **to adjourn at 9:49 a.m.**

Nicole Kaminski  
Acting Recording Secretary