

MANISTEE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8TH, 2025
8:30 A.M., WSCC EDUCATION CENTER
400 RIVER STREET, MEETING ROOM B

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

ABSENT: Karen Goodman

ALSO PRESENT: Andrew Stafford, Nicole Kaminski, Sara Herberger, Councilmember Grabowski

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Andrew Stafford noted an amendment to the agenda under item six. The addition of the presentation by Anderson, Tackman & Company, PLC on the 2023/2024 audit.

MOTION by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, second by Bruce Allen to approve the addition of the amendment to the agenda.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

MOTION by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, second by Bill Gambill to adopt the amended agenda.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR DECEMBER 11, 2024 MEETING**

MOTION by Ben Crowley, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2024, regular meeting.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL DECEMBER 11, 2024 MEETING**

MOTION by Bruce Allen, second by Lindsey Swidorski to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2024, special meeting.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

6. **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

MOTION by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, second by Lindsey Swidorski to accept the December 2024 financials.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

7. **AUDIT REPORT** – Anderson Tackmen & Co PLC

- a. **Clean Audit Opinion:** The DDA received an unmodified (clean) opinion for 2024, indicating accurate financial statements and compliance with government auditing standards.
- b. **Strong Financial Health:**
 - i. **Cash:** \$682,000.
 - ii. **Fund Balance:** \$699,000, up by \$83,147, exceeding recommended reserves.
- c. **Revenues & Budget:**
 - i. Revenues exceeded projections due to unanticipated grants and strong tax capture.
 - ii. Spending stayed within budget, reflecting effective financial management.
- d. **Tax Capture Stability:** Tax capture remains healthy, supporting long-term financial stability.
- e. **Good Documentation:** All spending and projects align with policies and are well-documented.

8. **EXECUTIVE REPORTS** – Andrew Stafford

- a. **Facade Grants:** All 2024/2025 contracts are submitted, with 90 days to begin construction.
- b. **Music Vault:** Window wrap updates in progress, awaiting approval after receiving quotes.
- c. **Love Wines, LLC:** Secured local government approval for their license.
- d. **401 River Street:** On track, business commitments finalized.
- e. **Properties for Sale:** 340 and 380 River Street are now on the market.
- f. **Northern Hotel:** RFP reissued by the county land bank per state land bank requirements; bids due January. With MEDC funding involved, the developer faces strict timelines, and stabilization work must begin soon.

9. **REPORTS FROM SUB COMMITTEES**

- a. Facade Grant - Andrew Stafford
 - a. **Facade Grants:** 2024/2025 contracts submitted, with 90 days to start construction; awaiting completion of prior year projects.
- b. Streetscape - Andrew Stafford / Bill Gambill
 - a. EPR from Spicer Group
 - i. **Streetscape Grant Preparation:** Engineering designs for Marina Plaza, Oak, Pine Streets, and streetscape sections must be 90% complete to qualify for a \$1 Million MDOT Shared Streets grant (50% match).
 - ii. **Decision Needed:** DDA determined to support to proceed

with funding designs, which will eventually be required regardless of grant award. Grant Applications due end of January; results announced in March.

MOTION by Bill Gambill, second by Ben Crowley to support the grant application through the 60,000 DDA funds and to write a letter of support for this project.
Voice vote—Motion approved.

- c. Gap Financing - Tyler Leppanen / Andrew Stafford
 - a. Schedule a public hearing and secure City Council approval. Review deemed the plan a positive addition, but language updates are needed.

10. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Shine - Andrew Stafford
 - i. No updates.
- b. Riverwalk - Bill Gambill
 - i. Contracts for the project have been approved by the council, and it is set to proceed pending final approval from the EDA, expected by the end of this week.
- c. Social District - Andrew Stafford
 - i. Present a proposal at the next meeting, outlining the allocation and spending of social district stickers for businesses in the next fiscal year.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Board of Directors Terms expiring in 2025
 - i. Bruce Allen - Term expires 6/30/25
 - 1. Resident Member
 - ii. Karen Goodman - Term expires 6/30/25
 - 1. Interest Member
- b. Economic Development Contract - expires 12/31/25
 - i. A discussion will be needed in February to plan for the next fiscal year budget for the economic development contract.
- c. Downtown Banners
 - i. Sammie Lukaskiewicz presented Downtown Banner options to the Board.

ii. The board has reached a consensus to move forward with the addition of banners that represent Manistee Downtown as a whole. A plan will be developed to determine the optimal placement of the banners.

d. Special Meeting to follow the 2.12.25 Regular Board meeting

e. Strategic Planning Meeting

i. Bruce Allen believes the DDA can do more and wants to explore options to advance the TIF plan and clarify the DDA's goals. Kyle Mosher suggests hiring a facilitator if the plan moves forward, with a discussion scheduled for February.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Sarah Herberger thanked the Board for their work, collaboration, and their efforts in taking steps to leverage possibilities to enhance the downtown.

13. BOARD COMMENT

a. Kyle Mosher asked Andrew Stafford to write a letter of support on behalf of the DDA and solicit other partners to do the same for the grant application.

b. Bruce Allen complimented the Sleighbell committee's efforts.

c. Bill Gambill shared that the buyer for the 6th Ave property backed out. He noted graffiti that has occurred downtown and that solutions will be implemented immediately.

d. Deanna Marsh noted that the Business Connect meeting is next Tuesday.

14. ADJOURN

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the WSCC Education Center, 400 River Street.

MOTION by Ben Crowley, second by Deanna Marsh **to adjourn at 9:36 a.m.**

Nicole Kaminski



Acting Recording Secretary