

**MANISTEE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH, 2025  
8:30 A.M., WSCC EDUCATION CENTER  
400 RIVER STREET, MEETING ROOM B**

PRESENT: Kyle Mosher, Sammie Lukaskiewicz, Ben Crowley, Jamil Alam, Bruce Allen, Lindsey Swidorski, Deanna Marsh

ABSENT: Tyler Leppanen, Bill Gambill

ALSO PRESENT: Andrew Stafford, Nicole Kaminski, Carmen Kott, Jim Pawlowski, Councilmember Grabowski, Sara Herberger, Kyle Kotecki

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 8:30 a.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Ben Crowley, to accept the agenda as presented.  
Voice vote—Motion approved.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR JUNE 11, 2025 MEETING**

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2025, regular meeting.  
Voice vote—Motion approved.

5. **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

a. **June 2025:**

- i. The total of the unpaid bills was \$61,556.67
- ii. Expenses this month included:
  1. Richards & McDougall's monthly fee
  2. QuickBooks: monthly fee
  3. Manistee Area Chamber: monthly Executive Director fee
  4. Spicer Remaining Streetscape Expense
  5. Dwelling Realty Facade Reimbursement

*MOTION* by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, second by Deanna Marsh, to accept the June 2025 financials.  
Voice vote—Motion approved.

6. **ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**a. Chairperson**

*MOTION* by Ben Crowley, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz to nominate Kyle Mosher as Chairperson. No other nominations were made.

Voice Vote - motion approved.

Yes: Sammie Lukaskiewicz, Ben Crowley, Jamil Alam, Bruce Allen, Lindsey Swidorski, Deanna Marsh

No: None

**b. Vice Chairperson**

*MOTION* by Kyle Mosher, second by Lindsey Swidorski to nominate Bruce Allen as Vice Chairperson. No other nominations were made.

Voice Vote - motion approved.

Yes: Kyle Mosher, Sammie Lukaskiewicz, Ben Crowley, Jamil Alam, Lindsey Swidorski, Deanna Marsh

No: None

**c. Treasurer**

*MOTION* by Lindsey Swidorski, second by Deanna Marsh, to nominate Sammie Lukaskiewicz as Treasurer. No other nominations were made.

Voice Vote - motion approved.

Yes: Kyle Mosher, Ben Crowley, Jamil Alam, Bruce Allen, Lindsey Swidorski, Deanna Marsh

No: None

**d. Secretary**

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

Voice Vote - motion approved.

Yes: Kyle Mosher, Sammie Lukaskiewicz, Ben Crowley, Jamil Alam, Bruce Allen, Lindsey Swidorski

No: None

**7. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEES**

**a. Budget**

i. No action or discussion.

**b. Streetscape**

i. No action or discussion.

**c. Facade**

i. No action or discussion.

**d. Target Business**

i. No action or discussion.

**e. TIF Gap Financing**

i. No action or discussion.

**f. Downtown Events**

i. No action or discussion.

**g. Sammie Lukaskiewicz recommends the creation of a marketing/communications sub committee. No motion or action taken on this suggestion.**

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

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Deanna Marsh to change Article 7 Section 2 *Funds* of the DDA Bylaws to reflect the current practices of the DDA Board in which “All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the Authority shall be signed by any two members of the Executive Committee. In the absence of designated signatories, other members of the Board may be authorized to execute documents as needed. Account transactions require two signatures. All funds of the Authority shall be placed in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as selected by the Board and consistent with the legal requirements for the deposit of said funds.”

Voice Vote - motion approved.

9. **EXECUTIVE REPORTS** – Andrew Stafford

a. June 2025:

i. **OPRA Designations Secured**

Property owner engagement led to OPRA designations for four key sites: the former Wahr Hardware, PNC Building, 417 Water Street, and Dairy Jones properties, streamlining access to tax incentives.

ii. **Increased Business Interest**

The Taphouse Boutique has moved into the River Street Marketplace. All available spaces downtown are now considered redevelopment sites, and inquiries from new and existing businesses continue to grow.

iii. **141 Washington Progress**

Stabilization and construction are underway at 141 Washington, supported by activated State Land Bank funds.

10. **REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

a. Facade Grant - Andrew Stafford

a. Dwelling Realty Reimbursement

- i. This project came from the 2023/2024 Façade Grant round supported by MEDC funding. This is the second of five projects completed from this grant round.

b. 319 ½ River Street Recommendation

- i. Ruddiblush Art Gallery requested \$2,000 toward a \$4,000 window replacement project. The subcommittee recommends full approval of the request.

*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Ben Crowley, to approve the 319 ½ River Street Facade Grant for \$2,000.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

b. Streetscape - Andrew Stafford / Bill Gambill



- a. Completed stakeholder presentation with Right Side Design. Finalized RAP Grant proposal with Spicer; construction details expected to be ready for review at the next meeting.
- c. Events - Andrew Stafford / Bill Gambill
  - a. Run the Town Pink 5K.
    - i. The DDA is requesting to shift the Saturday, October event street closure (9–11 AM) from Maple Street to Pine Street to allow more flexibility for businesses on that block. No formal action was taken by the DDA Board, just a request to adjust the closure.
    - ii. For the Fall Festival, a scarecrow competition using the downtown light posts has been proposed. Approval for this activity falls under the DDA Board's authority. A more formal proposal will be made at the next meeting.
- d. Gap Financing - Andrew Stafford
  - a. No updates at this time.

#### 11. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Riverwalk - Bill Gambill
  - i. Work on the breakwall under the college building is delayed due to unidentified fiber optic cables, no party has claimed ownership, holding up progress.
  - ii. Railing and riverwalk light repainting is underway. Loose boards have also been identified behind the Golden Stag switchback and will be addressed.
  - iii. The section behind the marina did not get new boards replaced because the city did not get an easement from the owner.

#### 12. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Social District Signage - Andrew Stafford
  - i. City Council and Bill Gambill have requested updated signage at the US-31 intersection to clarify riverwalk access and crossing points. Four new signs would need to be purchased.
- b. Vacation Mode Promotion Update - Nicole Kaminski
  - i. In June, a total of 22 cards were distributed, with 5 cards redeemed, resulting in \$371.00 spent.
- c. OPRA Destinations for Downtown Properties - Andrew Stafford
  - i. Overview of the next steps for properties in the DDA to be designated as OPRA districts.

d. Pedestrian Signs for River Street - Nicole Kaminski  
*MOTION* by Bruce Allen, second by Ben Crowley to approve the purchase of six pedestrian signs.

- i. Request by Kyle Mosher to address the crooked signs and request DPW fix them.

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. Jim Pawlowski noted that the hanging baskets are not looking healthy and were not watered over the Fourth of July. He recommends getting petunias for all planters next year.

14. **BOARD COMMENT**


- a. **Jamil Alam** – Expressed enthusiasm about joining the Board.
- b. **Ben Crowley** – Appreciated officers committing to a second year of service.
- c. **Sammie Lukaskiewicz** – Reported a busy summer; will prepare and share tourism statistics at the next DDA Board meeting. Also noted the Tourism Board approved an additional 200 barricades, bringing the total to 450.
- d. **Deanna Marsh** – Welcomed Jamil Alam and expressed excitement about progress on the Northern Hotel project.

15. **ADJOURN**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. in the WSCC Education Center, 400 River Street.

*MOTION* by Deanna Marsh, second by Lindsey Swidorski, to adjourn at 9:16 a.m.

Nicole Kaminski

  
Acting Recording Secretary