

MANISTEE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13TH, 2025
8:30 A.M., WSCC EDUCATION CENTER
400 RIVER STREET, MEETING ROOM B

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

ABSENT: Lindsey Swidorski

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

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 8:32 a.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, 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 JULY 9, 2025, MEETING**

MOTION by Ben Crowley, seconded by Bruce Allen to approve the minutes from the July 9, 2025, regular meeting.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

5. Approval of Financial Reports

a. Krista McDougall will present the Annual Compiled Financial Report at the September meeting.

b. July 2025:

i. The total of the unpaid bills was **\$9,490.29**

ii. Expenses this month included:

1. Quickbooks: Monthly Fee: This is taken out as an ACH payment. - \$115
2. Manistee Area Chamber: Monthly Executive Director Fee - \$6,666.67
3. Richards & McDougall: Monthly Accounting Fee - \$425
4. Eagle 101.5: July 2025 Downtown Promotion - \$500
5. City of Manistee: Reimbursement for Pedestrian Signs - \$1,783.62

MOTION by Bruce Allen, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, to accept the July 2025 financials.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

6. **EXECUTIVE REPORTS** – Andrew Stafford

a. July 2025:

- i. New Business Activity
 - 1. Three new business contacts established in the DDA district.
 - 2. Significant progress on the northern hotel project.
- ii. OPRA District Creation
 - 1. Received support from City Council.
 - 2. Purpose: Provides a property tax freeze on the taxable value of a property.
 - a. Freeze is set to predevelopment tax value.
 - b. Maximum term: 12 years.
 - 3. Process:
 - a. Create an application.
 - b. Obtain local approval.
 - c. Submit to the state for final approval.
- iii. Consumers Energy Prosperity Awards Grant Round
 - 1. Letters of intent are due this Friday.

7. **REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

a. Facade Grant - Andrew Stafford

- a. 334, 336, & 338 River Street Facade Application.
 - i. Purple Paintbrush, Clean Lines, received \$13,822 last year for window replacements. The Sub-Committee recommends not approving the current application, as tuckpointing is considered general maintenance.

MOTION by Bruce Allen, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, to deny the 334, 336, & 338 River Street Facade Application.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

b. Streetscape - Andrew Stafford / Bill Gambill

- a. Spicer Group - RAP Grant Final Implementation Proposal
 - i. \$40,000 is allocated for complete engineering work and to finalize the bidding process for the RAP Grant, with project groundbreaking anticipated next spring. This amount represents a portion of the required match funding.

MOTION by Bill Gambill, second by Bruce Allen, to approve the Spicer Group - RAP Grant Final Implementation Proposal.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

b. Spicer Group - Trip Hazard Evaluation Proposal

- i. The Sub-Committee discussed identifying the worst portions of River Street. If a full repair cannot be completed immediately, the

suggestion was to pinpoint the most critical areas and develop targeted solutions. The recommendation at this time is not to move forward with the proposal.

- c. Gap Financing - Andrew Stafford
 - a. No updates at this time.
- d. Target Business Group - Andrew Stafford
 - a. The discussion focused on end users for two key projects: the Northern Hotel and Wahr Hardware. For the Northern Hotel, once the building is activated, efforts will focus on securing tenants to occupy the space and continuing efforts to further activate Division Street.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Riverwalk - Bill Gambill
 - i. Painters are continuing their work down the area. Proofs for the signage, developed in collaboration with Tourism, are in progress. There is a consumer box that needs to be moved before the shade structure is installed by the new plaza. The conversion of Riverwalk lamp posts to LED has been completed.
- b. Social District - Andrew Stafford
 - i. Sticker Allocation
 - 1. 22,000 stickers have been purchased and distributed to our participating businesses.
- a. Vacation Mode Promotion Update - Andrew Stafford
 - i. A total of \$2,649.82 was spent in July 2025.
 - ii. Cards Distributed in June 2025: 22. Cards Distributed in July 2025: 62.
*Based on two inbound flights per day, the program kicked off on June 20th.
 - iii. Number of Cards Activated and Used since July 31, 2025: 32 cards
 - iv. So far the DDA has contributed \$791.16 / \$5,000.00

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Banners Quote
 - i. Estimated 47 banners needed for a cost of \$3,515.16. The banners also encompass the Riverwalk. Will act as rebranding and wayfinding for the DDA.

MOTION by Bruce Allen, second by Ben Crowley, to approve the banner quote and move forward with purchasing the banners provided by the Tourism Authority.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

- b. September & October DDA Meeting Rescheduled (Sep. 17th & Oct 15th)
 - i. There is a general consensus to move the DDA meetings back a week to accommodate board and staff absences.

- c. 2025 Taco ‘Bout It’s Halloween Fiesta Event Request
 - i. Friday, October 31st 7pm - 10pm From Division to Greenbush Street.
 - 1. The Board has inquired about the possibility of moving the closure down past the parking lot or switching to a one-lane closure to maintain parking lot access for Golden Stag and Blue Fish. DDA Staff will follow up with Chief Glass and Tarrah Hernandez to determine if a one-lane closure west of the DDA parking lot is feasible and to address any potential safety concerns.

- d. Thoroughbred Round Up Boat Show Event Request
 - i. The Community Fountain and triangle by the Manistee Marina is the requested closure space for the event from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on September 13, 2025.

MOTION by Bill Gambill, second by Deanna Marsh, to approve the Thoroughbred Round Up Boat Show Event Request.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

- e. Fall Festival Downtown Scarecrow Decoration Contest
 - i. Fall Fest is looking to incorporate a Scarecrow Decoration Contest, with participating businesses decorating the lamp posts. They have requested DDA approval to use the lamp posts for this purpose.

MOTION by Deanna Marsh, second by Jamil Alam, to approve the Fall Festival Downtown Scarecrow Decoration Contest, with the addition that businesses take responsibility to remove their scarecrow after the event is done.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

- f. Sleighbell Weekend Event Request
 - i. Approval of the Sleighbell Weekend and the Parade street closure.
Continuing to encourage businesses to participate and decorate downtown.

MOTION by Deanna Marsh, second by Sammie Lukaskiewicz, to approve the Sleighbell Weekend Event Request.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

- g. DDA Branding Sub-Committee
 - i. The DDA Board Chair has taken formal action to establish the sub-committee. Sammie Lukaskiewicz has been appointed as Chair, with Bruce Allen and Ben Crowley volunteering to serve as members.

- h. Fall Planters Quote
 - i. \$2,293.30 quoted from Weesies for Fall Planters. DDA discussion held on the upkeep in watering with the planters, asking downtown businesses to assist DPW in watering the flowers.

MOTION by Ben Crowley, second by Bruce Allen, to approve the Fall Planters Quote.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None.

11. **BOARD COMMENT**

- a. Jamil Alam is interested in learning more about the Target Business Sub-Committee and the Branding Sub-Committee.
- b. Deanna Marsh wished Bill Gambill a Happy Birthday. She mentioned a conversation with Jerry Bleau, the building inspector, noting that no one currently monitors window displays and that there are conflicting policies between the HDC and the Zoning Ordinance. Deanna is seeking clear direction. Deanna Marsh sees value in attending the meeting on September 17, 2025, and is asking if the Board also sees value in participating. City Council attends this meeting, Suggestions from DDA Staff to ask if Council would come share with the DDA Board the discussion held at the conference.
- c. Bill Gambill will connect with Jerry Bleau to issue a letter to businesses regarding the Zoning and HDC policy.
- d. Bruce Allen noted that the DDA is approving events and recommends conducting a post-mortem review for approved events to assess outcomes and improvements.

12. **ADJOURN**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. in the WSCC Education Center, 400 River Street.

MOTION by Ben Crowley, second by Bill Gambill, to adjourn at 9:33 a.m.

Nicole Kaminski



Acting Recording Secretary