

MANISTEE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8TH, 2026
8:30 A.M., WSCC EDUCATION CENTER
400 RIVER STREET, MEETING ROOM B

PRESENT: Kyle Mosher, Ben Crowley, Deanna Marsh, Bill Gambill, Brandon Ohman, Sammie Lukaskiewicz (Zoom, Non-voting attendance)

ABSENT: Lindsey Swidorski, Jamil Alam

Also Present: Andrew Stafford, Nicole Kaminski, Carmen Kott, Councilmember Grabowski,

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 8:33 AM

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Ben Crowley second by Bill Gambill to accept the agenda as presented.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

a. None.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MARCH 11, 2026, MEETING**

MOTION by Deanna Marsh, seconded by Bill Gambill to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2026, regular meeting.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

5. **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

a. March 2026:

- i. MIClass Account: **\$708,142.87**
- ii. The total of the unpaid bills in the packet was **\$20,583.55**
- iii. Expenses this month included:

Recurring:

1. Quickbooks: Monthly Fee: This is taken out as an ACH payment. - \$115.00
2. Manistee Area Chamber: Monthly Executive Director Fee - \$6,666.67
3. Richards & McDougall: Monthly Accounting Fee - \$425.00

Additional:

1. Manistee Area Chamber: Economic Development Quarterly - \$5,000.00
2. City of Manistee: City Service Agreement - \$8,376.88

MOTION by Bill Gambill second by Ben Crowley to accept the March 2026 financials.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

6. EXECUTIVE REPORTS – Andrew Stafford

a. Board Update

- i. **Match on Main** – Opportunity to submit two applications to the State of Michigan.
- ii. **Streetscape Project** – A pre-construction meeting is scheduled for this Thursday.
- iii. **MEDC Grant** – The grant will be officially closed out by the end of this month.
- iv. **Target Business Attraction Event** – An invite-only event will be held on May 6, aimed at attracting regional businesses interested in expansion opportunities. A list of 50 small businesses has been identified and invited, with available spaces to be showcased.

7. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

a. Facade Grant - Andrew Stafford

a. 457 River Street Application

- i. **The Outsider Application** – An application was submitted requesting funding for a new awning for the property, with a total request under \$14,000.
- ii. **Funding Priority Guidance** – It is recommended that the proposal presented at the last meeting be rejected. Moving forward, the focus should not be on “nice-to-have” or cosmetic improvements, but rather on projects addressing critical façade needs. Priority should be given to historic buildings requiring essential repairs, with additional consideration and higher scoring applied due to the increased costs associated with maintaining historic status and compliance.

MOTION by Bill Gambill second by Ben Crowley, to concur with the facade committee’s recommendation to not approve the 457 River Street grant application.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

b. Streetscape - Andrew Stafford / Bill Gambill

- a. **Construction Timeline** – Construction is anticipated to begin at the end of May and is not expected to interfere with Fourth of July activities.
- b. **Communication Plan** – Weekly updates will be provided by the construction team, along with consistent communication from the DDA to local businesses, with particular attention to those directly impacted.

c. Events - Andrew Stafford

a. Mother’s Day & Father’s Day

- i. These events will act in the same format Ladies and Men’s night operate with the Downtown Manistee Facebook acting as a promoter and it is up to the businesses to decide how they will participate and attract customers to their store. The

deadline will be strictly enforced for participation, and DDA staff will not go door-to-door to businesses to ask if they will participate.

- b. Farmer's Market
 - i. Location & Setup – The event will take place at the corner of River Street and US-31, utilizing the area near Scooby's, the former Chamber building, and adjacent city property.
 - ii. Event Hours – Fridays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - iii. Planning Status – Currently working through preliminary requirements, including insurance and other logistics.
 - iv. Seasonal Timeline – The event is anticipated to run from Memorial Day through October, with the official start date to be determined once all necessary preparations are finalized.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Discover Manistee Attraction Event
 - i. Targeted and intentional recruitment of businesses looking to expand. List of 50 businesses to invite, properties 308 river street 380 river street 415 ½ river street have committed to showing their spaces.
 - ii. Conversations had with other DDA directors to make sure it doesn't come across as poaching but rather only interested in businesses who would be ready to expand not move.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Journeys Project - Sammie Lukaskiewicz
 - i. Project Elements – The project will feature four monument themes: migration, vessels, fisheries, and industries. These elements are designed to enhance the Riverwalk while creating consistent signage that requires minimal upkeep.
 - ii. Location & Design Considerations – Installations will span from the Manistee Marina to the Maple Street Bridge and are intentionally designed to complement, not compete with, existing native plant species gardens.
 - iii. Maintenance – No significant maintenance is anticipated. The steel structures are designed to naturally patina over time, similar to the Origins installations, which have required no upkeep.
 - iv. Next Steps – A grant agreement is expected soon and will require City Council approval. Bill Gambill has requested that the DDA provide a letter of support to City Council.

MOTION by Ben Crowley second by Deanna Marsh to support the forward progress of the Journeys project also providing a letter of support for City Council.
Voice vote—Motion approved.

- b. Match on Main Grant
 - i. Local applications closed on March 31. The Target Business Committee reviewed and scored all submissions. A total of 11 applications were received, with 8 fully completed and eligible for scoring. DDA staff

provided ample support throughout the process to ensure applications were completed accurately.

- ii. Manistee Performance Gym specifically requested the funding for purchase of gym equipment.
- iii. ENDAAYING - a tribally owned retail concept, is proposing a space dedicated to showcasing and selling tribal art and craftsmanship.
- iv. Program Focus – The grant criteria are structured to prioritize new business development and the activation of currently vacant or underutilized spaces.

MOTION by Bill Gambill second by Brandon Ohman to recommend the approval of ENDAAYING application to be submitted on behalf of the Manistee DDA for the Match on Main Grant.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

MOTION by Bill Gambill second by Brandon Ohman to recommend the approval of the Manistee Performance Gym application to be submitted on behalf of the Manistee DDA for the Match on Main Grant.

Voice vote—Motion approved.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. Councilmember Grabowski - Inquired about the downtown building with the red walls. Bill Gambill informed that all items identified in the court order for removal have been addressed and removed accordingly.

11. **BOARD COMMENT**

- a. Sammie Lukaskiewicz - Extended her thanks to Bill Gambill and the City of Manistee for their help with the America250 Grant.
- b. Ben Crowley - It was noted that progress is being made on the corner property, which is encouraging to see. There was also positive feedback regarding the work and efforts of the Target Business Committee.
- c. Bill Gambill - Noted that the OPRA application was approved for Manistee Performance Gym and he appreciates Andrew Stafford's help on getting that moved forward.

12. **ADJOURN**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in the WSCC Education Center, 400 River Street.

MOTION by Ben Crowley second by Deanna Marsh to adjourn at 9:18 AM.

Nicole Kaminski


Acting Recording Secretary