

**Minutes of the Downtown Development Authority
City of Portland**

Held on Thursday, October 20, 2005
In Council Chambers at City Hall

Members Present: Antaya, Barnes, Dempsey, Dumas, Clement, Hoppes, Kavanagh, Kolarik, Urie, Williams

Members Absent: Schrauben

Guests: None

Chairman Dumas called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Dempsey, to approve the agenda as presented after adding Report from Karen Hoppes for Holidayfest, under presentations.
All in favor. Adopted

Motion by Kavanagh, supported by Barnes, to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2005 meeting.
All in favor. Adopted

Motion by Dempsey, supported by Urie, to approve the Treasurer's Report.
All in favor. Adopted

Karen Hoppes representing the Promotion and Marketing Committee stated they would be setting up luminaries for Holidayfest. She stated that all the schools are involved along with the National Honor Society to help set up the luminaries. She said they are looking for funds to light them. She stated that letters were sent to local businesses, and are already receiving some checks. She stated there are several options to consider. They would be able to purchase votives for about \$800, tea-lights could be purchased for about \$250- \$300, or glow sticks for about .25 each. She also stated they have found battery operated candles that could be purchased and used again in the future. She again reiterated that all the schools would be involved in lighting the luminaries, in hopes of bringing both students and parents to town for the Holidayfest. She stated that any donations would be greatly appreciated.

Boardmember Hoppes left at 3:35 P.M.

Boardmember Urie updated D.D.A. members on the downtown Façade Improvement Project stating that Mark Lewanski's building is being worked on by a mason, the Agape and the Distinctive Occasions buildings have had their mansard roofs removed, and material have been ordered to finish the building. She stated they would have the buildings looking nice by the end of the year; however, the buildings will not be complete until next year.

Boardmember Urie stated the Promotion and Marketing Committee is currently working on Holidayfest.

She stated the west side of Lansing has a Business Association called the Delta Business Association, and they are having a Business Expo on November 5th. She stated they would be promoting Portland at that Business Expo. She stated there would be about 3,000 people coming through, and they are going to promote Portland as a great destination to visit.

City Manager Dempsey updated D.D.A. members on his interview with Amy Turner of Fox 17 News. He stated he gave her a tour of downtown Portland and informed her of the Main Street and Cool Cities efforts that the City has worked on, and is in the process of working on. Ms. Turner asked the City Manager if there was any benefit to being a Main Street or Cool City Community. City Manager Dempsey stated there certainly is especially with the extra exposure Portland was getting through the media. City Manger Dempsey continued to show Ms. Turner everything that was going on in the community. He said she was amazed at how busy Portland has been with masonry repairs to the downtown buildings, addition of Lakin's Condos, the removal of the Hengesbach Building to build the Golden Bridge Manor, and hoping to begin the Boardwalk Project after all the easements have been signed. City Manager Dempsey also discussed Portland's Historic designation, and EDC Director Flanders discussed the MSHDA Loft Apartment Programs and grants received.

Boardmember Kolarik informed the Board that ADM would be implementing a new \$250,000 automated system this weekend.

Economic Development Director Flanders updated Boardmembers on the Façade Design Services stating there were two applicants that met with the State Architect to discuss façade improvements. He also stated the State Architect would like to see us change our rules to make it more open as to timing. He stated the applications have been forwarded on to the Architect leaving one more building available for recruitment. He stated they are trying to make the program more user friendly, because the first year recipients experienced some problems with the program. Not only Portland businesses but other communities as well.

Boardmember Clement left the meeting at 3:50 P.M.

Mayor Barnes stated we are fortunate in being able to have the library house the new Business Resource Center. The library is probably the best place to have a Resource Center, because the materials that will be in the Resource Center will be needed beyond the normal business hours. He stated people that have day jobs would be able to access materials in the event they want to start their own business. Mayor Barnes stated Don Flanders and Chuck Dumas contacted Jan Mosser who in turned discussed the possibility of the Resource Center with the Library Board, who also thought the Library was the perfect place to have the Small Business Resource Center. He stated the program is through the cooperative effort of M.E.D.C. and another entity in Grand Rapids for the technology portion of the program. He stated computers, manuals, printers, and scanners are made available to the public. He also stated there would be a survey of the businesses in town to see what type of things they are looking for in Portland. He stated there is a group called Score, which is a group of retired executives that will provide workshops and be mentors for people interested in starting businesses.

Chairman Dumas stated the 22nd edition of the "On the Street" was mailed this month. He stated the Portland Garden Club was featured as volunteers of the month.

Director Flanders stated the City has secured funding of \$325,000 - \$350,000 for up to 14 additional loft apartments in the downtown. He stated that will probably be the conclusion of the program, because we are running out of buildings to put loft apartments. He said, "Our goal to make use of the second floors where possible for housing, which provides a market for our stores and shops". He stated that Marilyn Smith is meeting with potential property owners to set up a plan of action to move ahead with the project.

Director Flanders stated he is working with three prospects for store space in the downtown or E. Grand River area.

Boardmember Urie reported on the events for the Holidayfest stating the finale' of Holidayfest will be the lighting of the City Christmas Tree. She stated there will be a chili cook off, an international jewelry show, horse and buggy rides, children's cookie decorating and gingerbread house making, photos with Santa, make it and take it workshops, ladies wish list reception. She stated the luminaries will be added this year, and they are calling it Children's Luminary Lane. She also stated there would be a window decorating contest, and business hours will be extended. She stated this is a good family event, so bring the kids and grandkids and enjoy Portland.

Director Flanders stated he wrote a letter to State Director, Bob Trezise for the review of the State Main Street Plan, which is planned for November 23rd. He asked Mr. Trezise if it could be rescheduled a week later because of the Thanksgiving Holiday. He stated he is waiting for his response.

Mayor Barnes stated the Hengesbach Tractor Building has been torn down. He stated it was a bittersweet moment, because even though it was making way for new and necessary senior housing, it also marked the passing of an institution in Portland. He stated at one time there were as many as seven tractor dealers in Portland. He also stated even though it is difficult for the Hengesbach family to see their building coming down, it is making way for something that is going to be very positive for Portland.

Motion by Antaya, supported by Kolarik, to adjourn the meeting at 4:05 P.M.
All in favor. Adopted

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne M. Miller, City Clerk