

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

Held on Thursday, April 20, 2006
In Council Chambers at City Hall

Members Present: Antaya, Barnes, Briggs, Dempsey, Dumas, Hoppes, Kavanagh, Pontz, Urie, Williams

Members Absent: Clement, Kolarik

Guests: Kathy Parsons

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

Chairman Dumas welcomed Margery Briggs to the D.D.A.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Kavanagh, to approve the agenda as presented
All in favor. Adopted

Motion by Barnes, supported by Antaya, to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2006 meeting.
All in favor. Adopted

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

D.D.A. Director Bennett stated there has been a response from Megan Melinat from the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the buildings located at 216 Kent Street owned by Brian Grapentien, and 220 Kent Street owned by Tom Fryover. She stated that drawings have been received and photos have been sent back to Ms. Melinat showing changes to the brick on the building. She stated hopefully compromises will be made to the drawings and the plans will be sent to the Design Committee for comment, and then back to the D.D.A.

D.D.A. Director Bennett requested funding from the D.D.A. to attend the 2006 National Main Street Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana June 4-7, 2006. Director Bennett submitted an estimate of \$1,639 for airfare, hotels, registration and food. She also stated she would be doing some volunteer work while she is there for the Katrina Relief Efforts, and will be paying her own expenses for the volunteer work. She stated the funds are available in the D.D.A. Dues & Membership Fund.

City Manager Dempsey stated he knows it is a lot of money to send Ms. Bennett to the conference in Louisiana; however, he is supportive of professional development because it does pay benefits down the road.

Motion by Dempsey, supported by Urie, to approve sending the Main Street Manager to the National Main Street Conference based on the budget she has outlined and proposed.

All in favor. Adopted

D.D.A. Director Bennett thanked Julie Clement for attending the 3-day Downtown Conference and stated it was well worth their time. She also stated that Julie was nominated as “Volunteer of the Year”; however unfortunately, she did not win. She stated that Julie has volunteered her time and efforts to many events in Portland. Director Bennett highlighted the events and programs of the conference.

D.D.A. Director Bennett stated there is an opportunity to receive grants from the State of Michigan CAT Team. She stated the CAT Team has been transferred from M.E.D.C. and M.S.H.D.A. She stated the programs include a Land Assembly Program in which you could acquire and demo blighted property, it requires a 25% local match and no job creation required. She stated this grant required two appraisals and all grants must be submitted by May 12th. The second grant is a Façade Improvement Initiative with a \$200,000 maximum investment with 50% local match and job creation. She stated the third grant opportunity is called Signature Building, which would require the purchase of a building in the downtown area with a maximum investment of \$300,000, requires a local match of 25%, requires two appraisals, and would require job creation by December 2007.

Mayor Barnes stated we should consider purchasing a building in the downtown area to house a Portland Welcome Center, and the D.D.A. Director. He said even though the D.D.A. is a separate entity, people should feel comfortable in dealing with Economic Development outside of City Hall instead of coming to City Hall to talk. He stated we should file our Notice of Intent (NOI) to pursue these grants, so someday we don't miss an opportunity to benefit the City. D.D.A. Director Bennett stated it is in our best interest to take advantage of every opportunity to help the City. She stated there are two obstacles to overcome. One is to get two appraisals of the building, and to have a signed letter of agreement to purchase a building in the short time frame to file for the grants. The costs of appraisals were discussed, along with several Brownfield sites, and the possibility of attracting a developer to take advantage of single business tax credits. D.D.A. Director Bennett stated she has contacted the owner of the property on E. Grand River, but has not had a response to see if they are willing to sell the property. Ms. Bennett stated the property is assessed at \$49,000. She said the property is on a potentially contaminated site in Ionia County.

Mayor Barnes questioned what we can do to facilitate giving Ms. Bennett the opportunity to pursue these grants. Ms. Bennett reiterated that the properties would need two appraisals. Boardmember Kavanagh stated that appraisals cost from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each, and would take up to 30-days to complete and receive. Boardmember Antaya stated in dealing with Marathon Oil in the past, he does not believe that we would get a response from Marathon Oil in 30-days. City Manager Dempsey stated the logical first step is to discuss the upcoming D.D.A. Budget, and our ability to consider any financial participation in the grants. He said we have to decide what money we have available to determine what grants to apply for. Boardmembers discussed the City of Portland Façade Program, and that \$30,000 in this year's budget has already been committed for façade improvements.

City Manager Dempsey suggested putting the property owners on notice that if they want to proceed with their Façade Grants, they need to have their buildings completed by a certain time period, and that we would not be carrying the façade money into another fiscal year.

Motion by Dempsey, supported by Briggs, to authorize the Main Street Manager to send a letter to the previously approved façade applicants to let them know that their facades must be done by July 1, 2006 if they expect to receive funding from the D.D.A., and if they cannot meet the deadline they must come to the D.D.A. to give a project plan and request an extension to preserve their funding.

All in favor. Adopted

Motion by Barnes, supported by Dempsey, to pursue the CAT Team Façade Improvement Grant and authorize D.D.A. Director Bennett to survey the downtown businesses to see if there is adequate interest in pursuing the grant on behalf of the D.D.A., and because a N.O.I requires a local match done by resolution of the body that is providing the local match, to have the Chair schedule a special meeting so that the D.D.A. could approve the local match if the interest and money is available.

All in favor. Adopted

D.D.A. Director Bennett provided copies of the proposed budget worksheet for past, present, and future D.D.A. budgets. The worksheet included Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances. After much discussion the proposed budget was adopted.

Motion by Dempsey, supported by Antaya to approve the 2006-2007 D.D.A. Budget.

All in favor. Adopted

City Manager Dempsey stated if there is a need we can make budget amendments in the future. He stated the budget will now be forwarded to City Council for consideration, and a Public Hearing to adopt the budget is scheduled for May 15th.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Williams, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 P.M.

All in favor. Adopted

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Pontz, Secretary