

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

Held on Thursday, June 21, 2007
In Council Chambers at City Hall

Members Present: Barnes, Briggs, Clement, Dempsey, Dumas, Urie

Members Absent: Antaya, Kavanagh, Kolarik, Pontz

Guests: Kathy Parsons

Chairman Dumas called the meeting to order at 3:36 P.M.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Clement, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition of Request from Chamber for annual support for July 4th Fireworks, under New Business, and New Businesses opening in downtown Portland, under Director's Report.
All in favor. Adopted

Motion by Barnes, supported by Briggs, to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2007 meeting.
All in favor. Adopted

Motion by Dempsey, supported by Briggs, to approve the Treasurer's Report as amended with the addition of two invoices. Check # 681 to ECSC for \$125.00 for D.D.A. Director Christensen to attend a seminar in Novi, and check # 682 to the City of Portland for mailing the July 2006 On the Street.
All in favor. Adopted

D.D.A. Director Christensen stated that some members of the Main Street Chair Committees requested that the D.D.A. table approving the Internal Control Process while they draft a new one. Ms. Christensen stated she was asked to forward a copy of the Internal Control Process that she drafted to the Chairs at the April D.D.A. meeting. Not all members of the Main Street Committees had received copies, so she e-mailed a copy to those that did not receive them.

Mayor Barnes stated that is why they are asking that the Internal Control Process be tabled, because not everyone received a copy until June 14th. He said, "They need to have more time to review it".

Ms. Christensen supplied a copy of a DDA/Main Street Commitment Form for Board approval. She stated a copy of the Commitment Form is available on the Main Street website. She is suggesting that all the D.D.A. Boardmembers get involved in a Main Street Committee. She would like to have the D.D.A. approve this application which would be added along with the regular Board and Commission application to show commitment to the Main Street Committees.

Mayor Barnes said, "As we go through the process of making appointments to Boards and Commissions as City Council is currently doing, there are several applications and re-applications to people that are already on the D.D.A."

He added, “I talked to the City Manager about changing the form for applying to be on the D.D.A. to include the Board Member Commitment Form”. He stated a part of our accreditation review is that we have D.D.A. member involvement on Main Street Committees. Everyone here is pretty much involved in the different Main Street Committees. As Chairman of the D.D.A. Mr. Dumas’ involvement is at a high level because of the time and effort that is put into the position of Chair and to the extra meetings that go on. He said, “This is an important part of the Main Street Review, the kind of involvement that we have”. We are going to probably be recontacting those that have applied and ask them to complete this form as well. He stated that is why we left the positions open as long as we have because we didn’t want to appoint someone to the D.D.A. unless they were actively involved in the Main Street Program. He also said this form will be incorporated in the application process. He said, “That way we can ensure that those appointees are committed in the involvement of both the D.D.A. and Main Street”.

Chairman Dumas said, “By taking action we are approving this form and endorsing the expectation that if you are going to be on the D.D.A. Board you should also participate in a Main Street Committee”.

Boardmember Clement asked if all current Boardmembers should fill out the new Commitment Form. D.D.A. Director Christensen said, “I think that would be appropriate”.

Boardmember Urie asked if it was for all the Main Street volunteers as well. D.D.A. Director Christensen replied, “That is Correct”.

Chairman Dumas stated it is a good idea because it merges the old school D.D.A. to the new school Main Street Program/ D.D.A.

Boardmember Urie stated it is more than a good idea, it is important because when the Main Street opportunity became available to us, we committed to it. She said, “We may have been there financially but have not been managing the program”. She added we have a manager that we pay to do the day to day management, but as a Board we have been sitting back and not running the program. That is not what is expected of us. She said, “This should move us in the right direction so that we can be accredited, take an active roll, and all be on the same page”.

Motion by Urie, supported by Clement, that we accept that the D.D.A./Main Street Commitment Form be used for current and future Boardmembers and that a revised form, is used by all volunteers for the Main Street Committees.

All in favor. Adopted

Ms. Christensen stated that the D.D.A. Boardmembers received a copy of the before and after pictures of the Urie building located at 160 Kent Street. She stated that Boardmember Urie has submitted statements for the 50/50 Façade Improvement match that the D.D.A. offers. The total of the invoices are \$7,273.60, so she is asking for the D.D.A. 50/50 match for reimbursements of \$3,636.80. Ms Christensen stated that Distinctive Occasions has done a phenomenal job in transforming their façade. She stated it fits in well with our town, and the Historic Preservation District.

Chairman Dumas complimented Distinctive Occasions for restoring their building with a historic façade.

City Manager Dempsey noted that Boardmember Urie would need to abstain from voting because of a financial interest.

Boardmember Urie asked that the check be made out to the landlord Mr. Aaron Urie.

Motion by Dumas, supported by Briggs, that the D.D.A. reimburse the cost for the improvements to of the façade as agreed to previously for 50% or \$3,636.80.

All in favor. Adopted

Abstain: Urie, due to a financial interest.

Ms. Christensen reminded Boardmembers that Kenmark, Inc. is the company that has supplied the D.D.A. with its holiday decorations, pole wraps, and bows for a number of years. She said, “We’ve decided it is time for a change”. She stated in a meeting with Kenmark they have agreed to the change in decorations; however, the budget is already set for this year. Kenmark indicated they could accommodate the City with our current budget. She stated in signing the contract, the budget would be increased by \$1035.00 for next year. Ms. Christensen showed pictures of the decorations selected. She also stated that these decorations would be paid out of the D.D.A. budget.

City Manager Dempsey clarified that there would still be pole wraps but they would not be lit, and we would still be using the City owned holiday banners.

Mayor Barnes stated there is a recurring issue out there that there are no holiday decorations on the west side of town. He stated obviously the D.D.A. does not include the west side of town, but maybe it is something that City Council could look at funding especially because of the boardwalk.

City Manager Dempsey stated that the decorations we use are getting pretty old, and the increase in the cost would have happened anyway even if we had not changed the decorations.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Clement, to approve the plans for the 2007 Holiday Season decorations for the D.D.A. for the same price as last year for \$3,640.00.

All in favor. Adopted

Ms. Christensen stated she would like Board approval to attend the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) in Novi this year. She would like to attend the conference to see how this organization would work for our community to attract new businesses.

City Manager Dempsey stated he attended the conference last year with Carolyn Bennett and there are opportunities to network with all the people that are like National Retailers and not just the big box companies, but small franchise opportunities as well. He said there are opportunities to promote your own community to these people. He said you are making them aware of the market places that are here. Some of the companies that attend the conference are Kroger, Old Navy, Kohl’s, and Jimmy Johns just to name a few. You are getting a broad market of people that are not afraid to do business in Michigan, because they already have businesses here. They are not just national folks, but regional folks as well.

He stated they have a deal-making table where you can promote your community by discussion and information.

Boardmember Urie asked where the money would come from for Ms. Christensen to attend the conference.

D.D.A. Director Christensen stated it will come from the line item D.D.A. Miscellaneous, the same as her last conference.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Clement, to approve the request from the D.D.A. Director to attend the ICSC conference in Novi, to include a deal-making table as well.

All in favor. Adopted

Chairman Dumas read a letter from Wayne Brown asking the D.D.A. to match the Chamber of Commerce funding for the July 4th fireworks for \$2,500. He stated there is a line item in the D.D.A. budget for \$2,500 same as in past years.

Motion by Urie, supported by Dempsey, to support the fireworks through the Chamber of Commerce up to a maximum of \$2,500 matched dollar for dollar.

All in favor. Adopted

Mayor Barnes acknowledged Wayne Brown for all the work and effort that he puts into getting the paperwork around for the 4th of July festivities and Homecoming.

City Manager Dempsey stated that Portland has a much better fireworks display because of people like Wayne Brown soliciting donations from business owners.

D.D.A. Director Christensen stated we are moving along with SHPO Riverside Façade program. She stated in last week's R & O there was an article for release of funds for the environmental portion of the grant. She read that the public comment portion will expire on July 17th, we will be advertising for bids in the June 24th R & O, the sealed bids will be opened July 18th, and a contract should be awarded the following week.

City Manager Dempsey stated the background of the contractors will be checked and construction could begin the last week of July.

Ms. Christensen discussed briefly the Main Street Accreditation Status. She stated there were three issues that needed to be addressed. One was the Mission Statement, getting more volunteers involved in Main Street, and to get better training for the volunteers. She stated last year's Year End Review was in November and this year's review will be in August. She stated there is still time to get to where we need to be.

Boardmember Clement asked what kind of issues were there regarding training. Ms. Christensen stated the State was concerned that the volunteers were not getting the training that was offered by the State.

Boardmember Clement stated that we should be more pro-active in training for our new D.D.A. members as well as the Main Street Committee volunteers.

He stated when he came on the D.D.A. there was no structured training other than to sit quietly and listen for a few weeks until you could pick up on what was going on.

Boardmember Urie agreed that training for the D.D.A. is a weakness in this community that needs to be corrected. She asked who would be qualified to educate new D.D.A. and Main Street Committee members.

Chairman Dumas stated that he along with the D.D.A Director, the City Manager, and possibly help from the State. He stated we can also check with other D.D.A's to see if they have some training materials. He said, "If new members were given a map of the D.D.A. District and a copy of the budget and explained how they work it would be very beneficial for them".

Mayor Barnes noted there are some training sessions offered through the MML and the MSU Extension Office that may be helpful for new members.

City Manager Dempsey stated he would be willing to help new Boardmembers and inform them how Main Street fits into the City to help provide them with a bigger picture. He suggested that the new Boardmembers take a tour of the D.D.A. District with Mel to get an idea of our district and what projects the D.D.A. has been involved in.

Mayor Barnes stated there are some boards that have mentorship programs where a new boardmember is given the opportunity to have a mentor that is an established boardmember.

Chairman Dumas stated between himself, the City Manager, and the D.D.A. Director/Main Street Manager they would come up with a training program for new members. He also suggested checking with other D.D.A. Communities and the State to see if they have a template for rules for Boardmembers.

Ms. Christensen stated there is a new Self Assessment Review for the Main Street Boardmembers. The form needs to be filled out by individual D.D.A. Boardmembers and herself for the State to find out how the Main Street Program is doing in Portland. The form needs to be received by the State by August 10th and she asked that the Boardmembers have the questionnaire finished by the July D.D.A. meeting. She will e-mail the addresses to the Boardmembers in the event they want to mail them in themselves. She also stated the date for our annual National Main Street Review is Wednesday, August 22nd.

Ms. Christensen stated that Portland Pay Day is going strong. We have had tons of entries and people are paying attention to the merchants involved in the program. The Promotions Committee is busy planning the Award Ceremony at the bandshell on August 1st at 7:00 P.M. An article will be appearing in the R & O highlighting each business that is supporting the Portland Pay Day.

Ms. Christensen stated that the Economic Revitalization Committee is working on the Small Incentives Program being launched. There will be an information session at the Peppermint Twist on July 10th for any of the businesses in the downtown that would like to attend. The information session will inform businesses how Main Street can work for them and offer them a free website for one year. All downtown merchants will be receiving an invitation soon.

There are three new businesses opening in the downtown. All State business owner Duane Hein has been here for a short time at 180 Kent Street. Iron Bridge Antiques has officially opened its doors at 205 Kent Street and will be open several evenings a week and on weekends. Ms. Christensen stated these gentlemen have been in the antique business for a very long time and know their business. The third new business in New To You Consignment located at 250 Kent Street. You can take your clothes there and will get 50% of the retail selling price.

Ms. Christensen asked Boardmembers for approval to move the July meeting date to July 26th in order to incorporate a conference that her husband is having in Denver into a family vacation. Boardmembers stated the 26th would be a good date for the change. Chairman Dumas stated he would not be at the July meeting; however, Vice-Chair Antaya would be able to chair the meeting. The façade bids would be available at the meeting.

City Manager Dempsey suggested changing the August D.D.A. meeting date to coincide with the Main Street Review on August 22nd. He stated it would be something to think about and make a decision at the July D.D.A. meeting.

Mayor Barnes stated that Mel's husband and family has done a great deal for the Main Street program in terms of volunteer hours and providing the tent for the Main Street Birthday Party. He wanted to publicly thank them for their efforts in supporting the Main Street program.

City Manager Dempsey noted that Ms. Christensen's husband Doug has gotten involved as a volunteer with the Main Street Design Committee taking minutes and passing them on to the other Boardmembers.

Boardmember Briggs stated that the 4th of July is fast approaching and the Chamber of Commerce's theme this year is Celebrating America's Freedoms and Traditions. She highlighted the events for the day, noting that the parade has been changed to 6:00 P.M.. She stated that the parade this year will begin at Portland Middle School and proceed to Bogue Flats. The rain date will be Saturday, July 7th. She also noted that several businesses will be open on the 4th.

City Manager Dempsey stated that Rivertown Book Store will be hosting a Harry Potter Party in honor of the release of the final Harry Potter book on July 20th. He stated it was well attended in the past and with this being the final book, they hope to have a bigger party this year.

Motion by Clement, supported by Urie, to adjourn the meeting at 4:32 P.M.
All in favor. Adopted

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Pontz, Secretary