

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

Held on Monday, February 5, 2025
In the Council Chambers at City Hall

Members Present: Williamson, Mayor Barnes, City Manager Dymczyk, Schneider, Vogl, Ward, Briggs

Members Absent: Sandborn

Staff: Director ConnerWellman, City Clerk Miller; Police Chief Thomas

Guests: Council Member Johnston, Kathy Parsons, Merry Hass of The Port, Bethany French of Busy Bee, Jeremiah Mergenhagen, Vicki Williamson, Mary Teachout and Laurie Reeves of Scrappy Divas, Mike Palm and Carol Abood of Hot Shots

Chair Williamson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Motion by Briggs, supported by Vogl, to approve the agenda as presented.
All in favor. Adopted.

Under Public Comment, Bethany French of Busy Bee shared thoughts around small businesses, the downtown community, and downtown events. Specifically related to her desire to have a Social District created, would like to see small business signs and other community amenities on the freeway signs. She further stated many visitors to her store are from out of town and her desire for the City to attract more business to the downtown.

Mike Palm of Hot Shots shared his experience related to the key job issue that was happening around the time of the Holiday Light Shows downtown. He stated he would like to see more people attracted to the downtown, the Spring Block Party brought back, and to see the construction on the buildings downtown completed.

Merry Hass of The Port read a statement outlining her displeasure with the DDA Director on several issues. She stated she would like to see the job description for the DDA Director be evaluated and updated.

Mary Teachout of Scrappy Divas noted they have been in business for 5 months and an email today is the first contact they have received from the DDA office.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Vogl, to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2024, regular meeting.
All in favor. Adopted.

Motion by Briggs, supported by Vogl, to approve the Treasurer's Report.

All in favor. Adopted.

Under Team Workshops, Director ConnerWellman stated the team discussed the issue related to the email that was distributed in early December regarding potential scammers that were soliciting to downtown businesses and efforts to improve communication in the future.

City Manager Dymczyk noted a professional has been contacted to help resolve the issue that was happening with key fobs not working in the downtown. Still waiting to hear back.

Director Conner Wellman stated the team also discussed events for 2025.

Director ConnerWellman noted that a new lead is needed for the fireworks event scheduled for June 27, 2025, as Council Member Johnston has decided to take a step back after much community involvement.

Under Old Business Director ConnerWellman stated that Small Town Saturday Night has been secured for the June 27, 2025, fireworks display at a cost of \$8,000.00. A new lead for this event is still needed. Discussion is needed to continue the fireworks display beyond 2025 through 2028.

Under New Business, Director ConnerWellman stated the Winter Digest – Semi Annual Public Presentation and Information Session will be held as part of the Monday, February 24, 2025 meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Director ConnerWellman stated the signers on the DDA account at Huntington National Bank and Independent Bank, for Portland Prime, need to be updated. Leo Madarang should be removed, Mayor James E. Barnes should remain on the accounts, and Dr. Jason Williamson should be added to the accounts.

Motion by Schneider, supported by Vogl, to remove Leo Madarang, leave Mayor James E. Barnes, and add Dr. Jason Williamson as signers on the DDA account at Huntington National Bank and the Portland Prime account at Independent Bank.

All in favor. Adopted.

Director ConnerWellman proposed an amendment be made to the DDA By-laws to change the definition of a quorum as it currently states a quorum is when there are six members present.

There was discussion.

City Manager Dymczyk suggested the quorum should be defined as the majority of active board members are present for a meeting.

Director ConnerWellman explained the issue related to the email that was distributed in early December regarding potential scammers that were soliciting downtown businesses. She further apologized to Merry Hass, The Port, and the Hass family for the impact her actions had on them.

Motion by Briggs, supported by Barnes, to accept/approve the statement made by Director ConnerWellman.

All in favor. Adopted.

Mayor Barnes stated the means for moving forward and the issues mentioned by the business owners should be taken into consideration. He noted there were comments made in October that the DDA role should be evaluated since moving away from the Main Street program several years ago.

Motion by Mayor Barnes, supported by Vogl, to form a subcommittee composed of Chair Williamson, Vice Chair Vogl, and City Manager Dymczyk to evaluate the DDA job description, ongoing issues, and develop action steps going forward.

Member Briggs asked if other Board members will be involved in this process.

Mayor Barnes stated there will be an opportunity for input by the board members after the subcommittee presents their action plan.

Chair Williamson held the vote for the motion on the floor.

All in favor. Adopted.

City Manager Dymczyk stated that communication is key and that outlining the expectations for the DDA and updating the job description with those expectations is necessary.

City Manager Dymczyk further noted a community survey for the creation of a social district may be helpful.

Director ConnerWellman provided the Director's Report which included a review and highlights for 2024.

Under Board Member Comments Member Briggs stated that when decisions were made to eliminate the Block Party and other events evaluations were made around the Main Street Program and its recommendations. Those decisions were based on what was happening at the time and the lack of community volunteers to take charge and manage the events.

Chair Williamson noted the lack of volunteers has always been an issue with holding events.

Member Briggs noted that community surveys are a way to evaluate and meet the community's needs.

There was discussion.

Vice Chair Vogl thanked everyone for attending the meeting and sharing their comments.

Director ConnerWellman noted she met with the new owner of the C Store. They are fully functional again and look forward to being a part of the community.

Motion by Ward, supported by Briggs, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 P.M.
All in favor. Adopted

Respectfully submitted,

Margery Briggs, Secretary