

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

Held on Monday, June 30, 2025  
In the Council Chambers at City Hall

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

Members Absent: None

Staff: Director ConnerWellman, City Clerk Miller

Guests: Mary Teachout and Laurie Reeves of Scrappy Divas and Portland Civic Players, Shannon Cunningham of Cunningham Insurance, Bobbie Hoskins

Chair Williamson called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Briggs, to approve the agenda with the addition of DDA Director Job Description under Old Business, and parking at the fireworks under New Business.  
All in favor. Adopted.

Under Public Comment, Mary Teachout followed up on comments she made several months ago at a DDA meeting about DDA support of new businesses.

Motion by Schneider, supported by Barnes, to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2025, regular meeting.  
All in favor. Adopted.

Member Schneider inquired about the mileage reimbursement.

There was discussion.

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

Under Team Reports, Chair Williamson stated the fireworks went very well. He has received good feedback on the event.

Director ConnerWellman thanked Chair Williamson and his team for their efforts in coordinating the event.

City Manager Dymczyk provided an update on the Looking Glass Plaza Project. The river crossings as part of the wastewater portion of the project have been completed. The next step will be to tie in the new infrastructure at the manhole located at Kent St. and Grand River Ave. This work is expected to be completed mid-July and then the intersection will be open. The plaza is expected

to be finished in August. The dumpster for the River House Grill will be in the originally planned area, in the plaza.

Director ConnerWellman stated that due to the weather and construction activities at Two Rivers Park, related to the wastewater infrastructure work, the attendance at Sounds of Summer has been sluggish. She suggested changing the location to the Red Mill until the construction activities are done.

Mary Teachout suggested the Portland Civic Players theatre could be used as a backup location.

Under Old Business, Director ConnerWellman noted Member Sandborn submitted his resignation from the DDA effective 06/23/25. She further noted Member Ward's term is expiring but she has applied to Council for reappointment.

Member Williamson presented his memo outlining the recommendations from the DDA subcommittee regarding the evaluation of the DDA Director Job Description and proposed Communication Policy.

City Manager Dymczyk provided information on the review process and rationale for the need for a Communication Policy. He cited the example about the Facebook communication of misinterpretation related to the ongoing issue of vehicle key fobs intermittently not working. There were originally some questions by the public about whether the issue was caused by Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) recently installed by the Electric Department. The City did reach out to its AMI vendor as it was related to radio frequency waves to provide guidance. There was no singular solution. He noted his feeling there should be transparency through communication. The proposed Communication Policy outlines the efforts to outline expectations as a board.

There was discussion.

Director ConnerWellman thanked the subcommittee for their due diligence in their review and stated she will happily move forward with their desired recommendations. There was a misunderstanding regarding the key fob issue, what was paid for, who was helping, etc. When the issue came up on the Facebook Portland Community Page she was called so responded in what she felt was effective information except that one sentence.

Director ConnerWellman stated she was informed by the Subcommittee that in relation to the communication goals they are things she is already doing effectively. She further stated that no other board in the City has a Communication Policy. The practice has been that the DDA follow City standards. In reaching out to other DDA's throughout the State she found that no other similar size community has a Communication Policy, communication is considered part of the job description.

Regarding the recommendation by the subcommittee for an annual review, Director ConnerWellman noted she hasn't had a review since 2019. She has been told in the past that a review has not been needed because the board has been happy with her work, but she is happy to have one. If the board decides to move forward with reviews, she would prefer to have one immediately and then on an agreed upon timeline.

Mayor Barnes stated he has been involved with the DDA since 2003. Communication has been an issue with past DDA Directors, before social media. At one point, the DDA Director didn't issue any statements without review by some of the board members. He further stated that when the DDA Director issues a statement it represents the entire Board so when a statement is made it is important that it is accurate. This is not the same situation with other City boards.

Motion by Dymczyk, supported by Barnes to adopt the DDA Director Communications Policy.

There was discussion about whether to move forward with voting tonight or at the next DDA meeting.

Member Schneider asked about the recommendation in the memo to move the DDA Team meetings from regularly established dates to meet on an "as needed" basis with a focus on event planning.

City Manager Dymczyk explained the motion on the floor is only for the Communication Policy, not for the other recommendations outlined in the memo.

Member Briggs asked about the requirement in the proposed Communication Policy under Social Media & Website Management to, "Regularly update the DDA and/or City website with meeting minutes, upcoming projects, and community resources." Her understanding was that this requirement is something the City Clerk does.

City Manager Dymczyk noted there is a team that does various things in the City. Ultimately, the DDA Director is responsible for the communication/message.

There was discussion.

Chair Williamson held the vote for the motion on the floor.  
All in favor. Adopted.

City Manager Dymczyk provided a review of the proposed DDA Director job description, which has not been updated since 2017 when the City was a part of the Michigan Main Street Program. The salary range was removed, the minimum qualifications were changed, and language was added to require monitoring of legislation and trends and providing strategic response to both.

Mayor Barnes suggested looking into what types of oversight other DDA's have. He wondered if it is fair to have the DDA Chair handle the oversight of the DDA Director. He also noted in his feeling it is unfair to the DDA Director or other staff to require oversight of projects.

Director ConnerWellman noted that in her experience, she has not overseen any projects, including the Donation Agreement for 103 E. Grand River, or the TIF Amendment. The practice has been to collaborate with the City Manager, sit in on planning meetings, and share valid insights. She further stated she does not want the implication she is responsible for things she wasn't responsible for.

City Manager Dymczyk stated he would like to see how other entities have this issue structured.

There was discussion.

Motion by Dymczyk, supported by Williamson, to table consideration of the DDA Job Description until the July DDA Meeting.

All in favor. Adopted.

City Manager Dymczyk suggested that Team Meetings be moved from regularly scheduled to an as needed basis. He stated he doesn't see the value in regular meetings.

Director ConnerWellman stated that planning for events begins several months ahead of time.

Director ConnerWellman stated for many years efforts have been made to engage with the community and recently there have been community members who want to be involved and found the Team Meetings are a good way to engage them. Community members have stated they do not prefer to come to a DDA meeting and sit in the audience and have discussions with the entire board. They prefer the Team Meetings where there is more open dialogue.

Member Briggs noted her thought the Team Meetings were intended to allow more open discussion on certain projects and events. The DDA is not the same type of meeting.

There was discussion.

Motion by Dymczyk, supported by Vogl, to table further discussion and a decision on the need for monthly Team Meetings.

All in favor. Adopted.

City Manager Dymczyk outlined the next steps. The review that Director ConnerWellman has asked for should be done soon as well as a survey of the business owners in the DDA District.

Under New Business, Director ConnerWellman presented the board members with the Board Member Agreement and Conflict of Interest Policy to be reviewed and signed annually by the board members.

Director ConnerWellman presented information related to a potential budget amendment for the Plaza construction project. Information was not received in time to present the budget amendment for consideration at this meeting.

City Manager Dymczyk stated the fundraising effort to offer VIP parking for the fireworks for a \$100 fee was not approved by the DDA and feels that it should have been. He further noted his feeling this was an exorbitant fee.

City Manager Dymczyk made a motion all charges for service on behalf of the DDA District should be approved by the DDA body.

Director ConnerWellman stated that two parking spaces were sold. The idea came out of a Teams Meeting where many DDA members were present. Sponsorships for the fireworks have been lacking. Sponsors who donated \$100 were offered a VIP parking spot and the idea was well received. The offer was then extended to the public. She apologized if the board feels she made the offer to the public too soon without board approval.

There was discussion.

Member Schneider asked if any request for sponsorship should be approved by the DDA.

City Manager Dymczyk stated his feeling that should be the case.

Director ConnerWellman stated City Treasurer Tolan has stated the schedule of fees is very clearly defined and sponsorships do not fall under those. She further stated she has been operating as she always has in terms of fundraising citing the example of fundraising for the splash pad. Fundraising would be slowed considerably if it must go through the DDA for approval.

Motion by Barnes, supported by Dymczyk, to table discussion regarding the motion all charges for service on behalf of the DDA District should be approved by the DDA body.

All in favor. Adopted.

Director ConnerWellman provided the Director's Report and takeaways from conferences she has recently attended.

Under Board Member Comments, City Manager Dymczyk noted the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade will be held at 10:00 AM on July 4, 2025, and will follow the Homecoming Parade route.

Member Schneider asked if the bylaws have been updated to reflect change in quorum. If not, he asked that this issue be moved forward.

Motion by Williamson, supported by Dymczyk, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 P.M.

All in favor. Adopted

Respectfully submitted,

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Margery Briggs, Secretary