

**Village of Bellaire And
Village of Bellaire Downtown Development Authority
BELLAIRE COMMUNITY UNIFIED ACTION PLAN STEERING
COMMITTEE**

- Louise Wenzel, DDA Member • Joe Short, DDA Member • Mark Irwin, DDA Member •
- Dave Ciganick, Village Council • Tricia Drollinger, Village Council • Eldon McPherson, Village Council •
- Nicole Essad, Village Clerk • Terry VanAlstine, District 5 County Commissioner •
- ____, County Commissioner • Robert Joyce, Chamber of Commerce Representative •

**DRAFT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2020
5:00 PM**

I. Call to Order: Elise Craft called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

II. Roll Call - Attendance: Elise Craft welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked that the members of this Committee introduce themselves and state something they found joyful. The members of this Committee and staff then introduced themselves, and stated what they found joyful that day.

Present: Dave Ciganick, Tricia Drollinger (arrived at 5:30PM), Nicole Essad, Mark Irwin, Eldon McPherson, Joe Short, Terry VanAlstine, Louise Wenzel

Absent: Robert Joyce

Staff Present: Elise Craft, facilitator and Jennifer Hodges, engineer

Public Present: Bradley Keiser, Village DPW Supervisor, “CO”, and “Caller 01” (“CO” and “Caller 01” did not identify themselves)

III. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

Motion by Wenzel, seconded by McPherson to approve the agenda. Motion Passed by unanimous voice vote.

IV. Approval of Minutes: This was the first meeting of this Committee, as such there were no minutes to approve.

V. Conflict of Interest: Ms. Craft asked Nicole Essad to explain what this item was. Ms. Essad stated that this is generally where a member of this Committee would state if they had a conflict of interest with anything on the agenda, and by doing so that member would not be able to vote on that item. No conflict of interest was presented.

VI. Public Comment: None presented.

VII. Old Business: There was no Old Business as this was the first meeting of this Committee.

VIII. New Business

- a. **Election of Officers:** Ms. Craft stated that the officers would be Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Ms. Wenzel made a motion to nominate Nicole Essad as Secretary, Mr. VanAlstine seconded. Mr. McPherson asked about having Ms. Craft as Chair. Ms. Essad stated that Ms. Craft is not listed on this Committee, she is a staff person. She stated that the Chair and Vice-

Chair need to be people on this Committee. Ms. Wenzel made a motion to have Eldon McPherson be Vice-Chair, Mr. Ciganick seconded the motion. Ms. Essad asked if this Committee wanted to vote on the two motions or have the vote for all three position at once. Ms. Wenzel stated to have all three at once. Mr. McPherson nominated Dave Ciganick as Chair; Mr. VanAlstine supported. Mr. Ciganick respectfully declined the Chair position because he does not have time to do the position justice right now. Mr. VanAlstine nominated Mark Irwin as Chair; Mr. McPherson seconded. Ms. Essad stated that there were three motions to be voted on: 1. To nominate Ms. Essad as Secretary; 2. To nominate Mr. McPherson as Vice-Chair; 3. To nominate Mr. Irwin as Chair. She stated that there can be a voice vote or roll call vote. Ms. Wenzel and Mr. McPherson stated to do a voice vote.

- 1. Motion by Wenzel, seconded by VanAlstine to nominate Nicole Essad as Secretary.**
 - 2. Motion by Wenzel, seconded by Ciganick to nominate Eldon McPherson as Vice-Chair.**
 - 3. Motion by VanAlstine, seconded by McPherson to nominate Mark Irwin as Chair.**
- All Three Motions Passed by unanimous voice vote.**

- b. Overview of Committee and Plan Process:** Mr. Irwin asked Ms. Craft to expand on this item. Ms. Craft stated that this Committee is tasked with what is in the Shared Dreaming & Doing: A Unifying Action Plan for Bellaire, which was approved by the DDA and the Village Council. She stated that the plan includes steps 1-7. She stated that this Committee membership has been confirmed (Step 1), this is the first meeting (Step 3), and that the next item on the agenda would be to go over the survey results on existing conditions (Step 2). Ms. Craft also stated that at some point there will be community engagement to gather what the shared priorities are through a series of community huddles (Step 4). She stated that after that the action plan will be drafted and brought back to the DDA and the Village Council for approval (Step 5 & 6). She stated this is the group the is tasked with quarterbacking that process through and keeping us on track. Mr. Ciganick asked about the last steps of the proposal and if that was when the Village and DDA will give their yea or nay. He was also wondering about the lines of communication along the way. Ms. Craft stated that Step 6 is when the DDA and Village Council officially get involved, but it would not be practical if there was not engagement of those two groups prior to Step 6. She stated that an important role of this group was to keep those lines of communication open. She also stated that this Committee may want to identify who is to bring updates back to the DDA and the Village Council. She also suggested that the Village Council and DDA are included in the community huddles. Mr. Irwin asked how the three community huddles were to take place – in online format, surveys, in person? Ms. Craft stated that this Committee gets to decide that. She would recommend not in person. Mr. McPherson stated that he thinks there would be more participation if it was in a survey. Mr. Ciganick stated that not everyone has been on a zoom meeting and it can be like herding cats, everything from muting your mic. He thinks that a survey would be the way to go. Ms. Craft stated that a next step would be to contact the people included in the community huddles and outlining that process. She stated for example sending a letter stating that this Committee wanted their feedback via survey on three occasions, asking them to commit to giving that feedback, and that the surveys would be sent to them by Ms. Craft. Mr. McPherson stated how was this Committee to reach out to these people. Mr. VanAlstine asked when these letters would be sent out, if it would be in October. Ms. Craft stated there was not a date set but tentatively it would be in October. Mr. VanAlstine stated he would make sure it would get to Kearney Township. Ms. Craft stated that first the Committee needs to identify who the people would be and finding one person to give this information out to the groups. Mr. Ciganick asked if it would be just one person from the group or everyone in the group to fill out the survey. He also asked when it comes to the general public, would it only be online and do we need to be concerned if there was someone

who was not online. Ms. Craft stated that she does not know, because this is the first time it has been discussed to have the community huddles as a survey. She stated that if the community huddles were in person or online then likely it would be one person per group. Mr. Irwin stated looking at the agenda and being respectful of everyone's time let's not get too down in the weeds on what the time line is, the methods, or who is contacted because we will need to deliberate after we have a place to start. He suggested it was time to move on to "Where Are We Now?" lets figure out where we are before we move in any one direction. (Ms. Drollinger joined the meeting) Mr. McPherson stated he agreed with that, but we do not want to not make it open to the general public. Mr. Irwin welcomed Ms. Drollinger and she introduced herself. Mr. Irwin then gave a synopsis of the meeting thus far. Ms. Craft asked Ms. Essad if she had anything to offer on the Committee structure. Ms. Essad stated that the agenda would look similar to what it was for this meeting and since these meetings are open to the public there would be public comment.

- c. **Public Comment Discussion:** Ms. Craft suggested to include public comment on any time there was discussion by this Committee. Ms. Essad stated she had a concern about doing the minutes because she did not have public's names. Ms. Craft stated would it be helpful if the public stated their name prior to talking. Ms. Essad stated that yes that would be helpful. Mr. McPherson stated that like in any other meeting the public needs to include their names prior to commenting. Ms. Craft stated that this could be included in the agendas.
- d. **"Where Are We Now?" Survey Review & Discussion:** Ms. Craft went over the results of the survey, which 6 members of the Committee took. She stated the survey asked about what excited people about the future of Bellaire, what worried them about the future of Bellaire, what the top priorities were, and communication. She stated that the group was excited about growth opportunities. She stated that the group was worried that the growth would benefit all people of Bellaire not just businesses, fear of change, losing focus and not getting things done. She stated that the survey indicated that the communication between the Village and DDA was "meh". She stated that the survey indicated how to make communication better. She then stated the top five (5) priorities: year-round tourism, parks & public spaces, infrastructure, housing, and improving communication. Ms. Craft asked the group what excites them about Bellaire's present and potential future. Ms. Essad stated that she likes that Bellaire has grown, there are more family friendly things to do in town. She stated that she can see Bellaire continuing to expand, but she also worries that it may expand too much and Bellaire will lose the small-town feel. She stated that there is a need to balance the need to draw tourist with the residents that want the small-town feel. Ms. Craft then summarized Ms. Essad's response and asked everyone in the group to share both what excites them and what worries them. Mr. McPherson stated he sees the same things and what amazes him is that Bellaire is busy year-round, but he does not want to lose the small-town charm. He stated that if there are going to be so many people here year-round then there needs to be a good public restroom and affordable housing. Ms. Wenzel stated that the momentum working together excites her and that will bring about change. She stated she is excited about working towards goals because all too often those goals sat on the shelf and did not go anywhere. She is really excited about this Committee and she can see positive growth and change while maintaining the small-town feel. She stated that she is worried about getting mired down in the weeds and not accomplishing the goals. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he is excited to see that there are no places to park because there are so many people in town. He is worried about the infrastructure handling growth, and housing. Mr. Ciganick stated that he is excited to see life in the town and the activities. He is worried about funding for the projects. He stated that items of interest are public restrooms downtown, and affordable housing is another goal. Ms. Craft stated that we have heard about public restroom and affordable housing. Mr. Short stated he is excited about

the potential for economic and community development opportunity, intelligent economic and community development projects. He stated that what concerns him is not thinking ahead for generations to come, not working with the county, as the host of the county seat, on projects they may have going that could have synergy with some of the visions of this group and making sure that any projects that we do initiate are part of a larger vision so they are not redundant when a better plan comes along. Mr. Irwin stated that he is excited about capitalizing on our four seasons of recreation to be year-round tourist or to actual relocate to our area. He stated he worries that the fear of change will stop growth for the future. Ms. Craft stated that fear of change came up throughout the survey. Ms. Drollinger stated that what excites her is the difference in the community and that there are businesses here. She stated that Bellaire is well known throughout Michigan. She stated that what worries her is that Bellaire could become a community that people cannot afford to live in. Ms. Craft asked the public what excited and worries them about Bellaire. The only public to comment was Bradley Keiser. Mr. Keiser introduced himself and stated that he is excited about the growth. He stated that he is worried about not taking advantage of the growing so that Bellaire does not have to rely on Shanty Creek or Shorts to draw people in. Ms. Craft asked about any reactions about what was said thus far. None were presented. Ms. Craft then stated what the survey results were for the two questions posed. She stated that it appears to her that there is a balancing act – there is excitement about potential growth but not losing the small-town feel. Ms. Craft then went over the survey results for communication between the DDA and the Village Council. Ms. Craft stated that there could be a clearer flow of communication established. She then went over what the survey results indicated could be done to improve communication. Ms. Craft then asked each member of this Committee what their reaction was to the communications. Ms. Essad stated that the minutes of the DDA and Village Council are posted on the Village website along with the Agendas. Mr. McPherson stated that he did not have any comments. Ms. Wenzel stated that the minutes are posted, and that she would like feedback on how to improve the minutes to be more specific. Ms. Craft stated that this could be discussed to get feedback. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he thinks that we are headed in the right direction. Mr. Short did not have any comments. Mr. Ciganick wondered if there could be links on the Village website to the DDA and Chamber so that could be the one stop shop. He also stated that its almost like you have to hand feed people. He stated that at some point people have to be willing to inquire, to go to a meeting, to go to the website to look at the minutes. He is all for transparency and communication but at some point, people have to inquire and interested. Mr. Irwin stated that there is a lot of good stuff here, but he questioned the focus of this Committee – is it to improve communication or is it to do cool things in the community? Ms. Craft stated that the reason we are talking about communication is because that came up as a potential barrier to working together. She stated that it is an unstated outcome of this Committee that communication could improve as a result of this Committee's make-up. Ms. Drollinger stated that we are making progress. Ms. Craft then went over the eleven (11) priorities that were shared goals, and how the survey results ranked them. She also reiterated the top five (5) priorities. Ms. Craft then went over the additional priorities as outlined in the survey results. Ms. Craft then went over the survey results regarding questions about this. She stated that there was one questions about the DDA having a "district" in which it needs to spend it money. Ms. Craft stated that it is true that development dollars and TIF dollars must be spent within the district. She stated that it is also true that other sources revenue like a grant or individual contribution or however else a DDA is earning dollars, a DDA can support projects that are outside its physical location or that are not physical in nature, like this plan. She stated that DDA can chip in to a regional economic development initiative, maybe that extends outside the DDA district. Mr. Ciganick stated that he was of the belief that any money spent the DDA had to be in the district and he is hearing that is not the case, so he is wondering how much latitude the DDA has to go outside the district. Mr. Irwin stated that TIF money

must be spent inside the district. He stated that any other money the DDA collects, either through donation or grant, can be used for anything anywhere. He stated the DDA Board has a responsibility to do things that benefit their district, so it would be unwise for them to use those monies to support things that do not tie to the DDA district. He stated that a Special Assessment was considered, and that money by law must be used within the district. He stated that there is no Special Assessment in place for the DDA. Mr. Irwin further stated that 98% of the money the Bellaire DDA comes from donation and 2% comes from TIF, which means that 98% can go anywhere the DDA wants it to. Mr. Short stated, he speaks for himself as a DDA member, the DDA's interest is not specifically held to the district, personally he thinks that the entire Village is important to us, and all developments in the Village are important to us. He further stated that when the DDA was first established, the district was outlined from a previous DDA and we opted to not redefine the district in order to expedite getting the DDA back on track with the assumption that we would evaluate the district later on because if we expand the district then there is a lot more opportunity for the DDA influence other areas in the Village and he thinks that worth considering. Ms. Essad asked where was the authority that states that donations can be used outside the district because she had not heard of that until today. Mr. Irwin stated that he believes it is in the Act as far as the Act defines money collected from TIF, Special Assessment, any money collected from businesses through taxes or Special Assessment inside the boundary must be used back in the boundary, and by default the Act does not address donated money and where that donated money must be spent. He stated that it is allowed because it is not defined. Ms. Craft stated that was her interpretation as well. She also stated that she sees this as more of the DDA chipping in monies for programs or planning for regions that the DDA is a part of, because the DDA would benefit from the plan or program. Ms. Craft asked this Committee about where each member would like to help or what projects are done. Ms. Drollinger stated that her interests are the parks, and that does not really go with the DDA, and otherwise she is interested in helping in any way she can. Mr. Irwin stated he is interested in connecting downtown to areas of parks and recreation. He stated he thinks that parks do benefit the DDA, if there are great parks and there are easy connections to downtown, they both get utilized. He stated bringing infrastructure to connect glacial hills, the lakes, rivers to funnel people into town, and once they are in town then they have places to park, places to shop, places to eat, maybe open a business, maybe rent a condo. Mr. Short stated that he is innately a visionary, he likes the creative process of putting together everything that everyone wants in a harmonious and intelligent way that still retains the level of smallness, the charm that everyone loves but the technology that benefits users and residents for generations to come. He stated that that is what gets him excited about working with this community and because its small he feels that everything we'd want to do is completely achievable. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he wants to work towards getting broadband downtown. He also suggested working with the NLEA for that project. Ms. Wenzel stated she wants to work to achieve the top priorities and she will plug in where she is needed. Mr. McPherson stated that with so many families visiting the area, they cannot shop and eat all the time so parks. He stated that the Village is trying to save a little bit at a time to put toward redoing the playground but they are super expensive. He also stated that there are bathrooms there but when you have families and a lot of people in town you have got to get a public bathroom that can handle it. He thinks that should be top priority. Ms. Essad stated that she likes the idea of having internet downtown, and having public bathrooms downtown would be a great idea. Mr. Ciganick stated that he thinks that the public bathrooms should be number one priority, and that the internet is imperative. He wants the members to ask the community what they want. Ms. Craft asked Mr. Keiser if he wanted to answer. Mr. Keiser stated that he can plug in by upgrading the infrastructure and by doing whatever they can to help the community grow.

- e. **Existing Infrastructure/Amenities Review & Discussion:** Ms. Hodges went over the Village of Bellaire Park Inventory Map that was included in the packet. She stated that the map shows where the Village boundaries are, where the DDA boundaries are, and where the parks and amenities are. She stated that she like connectivity. She stated that Bellaire is very park wealthy. Mr. Ciganick stated that he thought that the Forest Home Township property by the Rotary park should be added. Mr. VanAlstine stated that the County approved the easement for Forest Home Township. He also asked about if there was anything promoting snowmobiles or ORVs. Ms. Hodges stated that was why the map was helpful, because then we can pinpoint where the gaps are. Mr. Keiser stated that there is ORV trail to allow access the downtown district, MDOT just needs to finalize it. He stated that once it is finalized then he will give that to Ms. Hodges. Ms. Essad stated that ORVs are allowed on Village roads, but MDOT had to approve ORVs being allowed on M-88. Ms. Hodges stated that if the map needs to be modified then she can do that. Mr. Irwin stated that all recommendations should go through him until this Committee gets its feet under it.
- f. **Desired Outcomes of this Process & Next Steps Discussion:** Ms. Craft asked the Committee if they wanted to keep it one County Representative, or to each out to the other Commissioner directly. Mr. VanAlstine asked if there as a reason for Ed Boettcher, who lives in Elk Rapids to be on this Committee. Mr. Irwin asked Mr. VanAlstine if there is someone that he see on the County Commission that would be good for this Committee. Mr. VanAlstine stated that it would be good to get someone local. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he can ask around the County Commissioners to see if anyone is interested. Ms. Wenzel stated that the idea was to bring in the County into the whole thing and since Mr. Boettcher is the Chair it would be important to have him on this Committee. She stated that we should still try to get Mr. Boettcher. Mr. VanAlstine stated he could talk to him. Mr. Irwin stated to start there and see what he had to say. He also stated that because Mr. Boettcher is the Chair of the Commission it would take the burden off of Mr. VanAlstine reporting back to the Commissioners and getting some buy in from them down the road. Mr. VanAlstine asked about having Mr. Boettcher specifically or just having the Commission Chair be on this Committee. Ms. Essad stated that Mr. Short typed that Mr. Boettcher has experience working with TART and he agreed with Ms. Wenzel. Ms. Essad also stated that Mr. Short typed really whoever can be present and most engaged. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he will talk to Mr. Boettcher on Thursday. Ms. Craft stated that Rob Joyce will be the Chamber representative but was unable to make tonight's meeting. She went on to ask how to facilitate the community huddles. She stated that she could come back to the next meeting with making contact with the partners included in the community huddle and bring a proposed survey. Ms. Craft wanted this Committee to brainstorm the list of partners. Ms. Craft stated that a proposed list of partners would be: Village Council, DDA, Antrim County, Kearny Township, Forest Home Township, Bellaire Chamber of Commerce, Bellaire Public Library, Grass River Natural Area, Friends of Glacial Hills, local church groups, Paddle Antrim, Bellaire Schools, Conservation District. She further stated that if anyone thinks of another group that should be added to email Mr. Irwin and he will forward that to her. Ms. Craft asked if she could ask the Committee for contact information for these groups. Ms. Essad stated that she could disseminate information to the group and to other groups but there can be no discussion of that information until an open meeting. She stated that there should be no email chains discussing items. She also stated that the Committee members need to be responsible enough to not reply all. Ms. Craft stated that she could figure out who to contact, and she will reach out to Mr. Irwin if she had questions. She will contact these groups and update them on this Committee and why their input is needed. At the October meeting Ms. Craft will bring a proposed survey to go out to these people. She also thought at that meeting to brainstorm the roles and responsibilities for the

shared goals. She stated that way this Committee will be one topic ahead of the surveys going out to the communities.

IX. Correspondence/Reports: None presented.

X. Member/Public Comment: Mr. Irwin asked the Committee if the last Monday of the month at 5:00 PM ok with everyone. No one objected to it.

XI. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM to the call of the Chair.

Minutes compiled by:
Nicole E. Essad, Secretary

Minutes are subject to approval.

Approved: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT