

**Village of Bellaire
Downtown Development Authority
Minutes
August 30, 2023**

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Taylor Sutherland at 9:00 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance:

Members present: Michael Belanger, Dan Bennett, Michelle Dayton, Dave Gajda, Don Hoyt, Tracy Lareau, Doreen McGuire, Cindi Place, Taylor Sutherland

Members absent: None

Public present via Zoom: None

Public present: Jean Bedell and Janet Koch

Consent Agenda:

C. Place motion to approve the agenda, second by D. McGuire. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Gajda said he has no updates about the Financial report found in the consent agenda. T. Sutherland said he would like to talk about the winter salt as it relates to the budget and it has been added to “new business.” D. Hoyt asked that the next meeting included a conversation about Tables/Chairs removal.

T. Sutherland asked about the minutes and there were no changes.

C. Place asked if we should approve each item for the consent agenda and approve the consent agenda or separately. D. Hoyt explained consent

Motion by C. Place to approve consent agenda and second by D. McGuire. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

None

Unfinished Business:

Buy Local Update

Shelly Dayton shared that she has been working on identifying business that are pet friendly for stickers on the doors. The Music and Art stroll will not be taking place as Dayton will be gone. However, they will be doing a “Poker Draw” and it will take place on October 14, 2023 followed by the holiday open house in November.

Village Update

Dan Bennett directed the board’s attention to the pamphlet distributed (Village of Bellaire Police Department Millage). He shared that if the millage does not pass, they will need to cut the police department.

He shared that there is a person in the Village who is willing to donate \$12,000 for dug outs at the Ball Field but it will need to be matched. He talked about how the Village has been growing and especially on the weekends. Elk Rapids has five police officers. Bennett shared that it is difficult to hire police officers and the last officer they had to pay for their education, pay them to go to school and agree to stay here for five years.

T. Muscat asked if the Village is able to accept donations to support the Police. D. Bennett said yes. S. Dayton talked about how some areas have stickers about “I support the police” and perhaps people would support. Discussion about the brochures being distributed to local businesses.

Public Wi-Fi

C. Place had nothing to report.

Parking Committee

T. Sutherland shared that he has reached out to Gourdie Fraser, Inc. for the quote. D. McGuire shared that she is not in support of the parking survey and would like to see something in writing and educating people, putting maps up and more such as the website. M. Dayton said that she watches the parking all of the time outside of the business and has observed that people do not read the parking signs and about a RV staying for many hours and having signage about no RV parking, less expensive, and people just don’t know. D. Bennett said that he would also have to agree. He watched someone to double park and go into Short’s. M. Dayton said that people know they can get away with it and the band at Mammoth will leave their car on the main drag. D. McGuire said that the business owners

need to enforce it with their employees and their musicians. M. Dayton said we need to think about these things before we spend money on the parking survey. M. Belanger asked if there are open spaces behind the Bellaire Bar and M. Dayton said yes but that on the weekends it is more full and that people are just not parking correctly and a majority is by staff of businesses. D. McGuire said that there is four-hour limit signage and M. Dayton said that it could be changed to two hours. M. Dayton also said that the alley way behind businesses has turned into almost like a “race track” and there is a problem that customers park there. C. Place said she is also supportive of consultants but perhaps there is a lot of money for something that we already know.

D. Hoyt said that we do have something in writing but it has not been forwarded yet to the full board. D. McGuire had shared that the Village shared there was a study done and she went into files and there was a counting of spaces. D. Hoyt shared that he thinks this is a good idea and that downtown businesses say it is their number one issue and businesses say that my business is failing and there are no spots or other say there are empty spots and that he believes that we will have problems in the future and a study like this helps build to the future. M. Dayton said that it is often helpful to have someone come in with an experienced set of eyes.

C. Place shared that she will look to see if there are any grants out for a parking survey. She is not promising and even if we can get \$5,000 towards the \$10,000. D. Bennett shared that the elephant in the room is that the bank has been turned into a grass lot more so than parking. D. McGuire shared that when she had a business in Saline, MI, there was a designated area for employee parking. C. Place shared that although parking is the number one concern of businesses, some businesses are not doing their part. M. Dayton said that she has sent another reminder to business about where to park.

T. Lareau acknowledged the Parking Committee for their commitments at the last meeting

Grants Committee

- Outdoor Art

- D. McGuire said that the financial numbers from the grants committee and the Treasurer of the board agree. She shared some upcoming expenses related to printing and advertising and that it appears that the DDA will have approximately \$1,004 remaining. She asked if that we have additional expenses and go over—asked if we can go to the DDA budget to cover the additional expenses. D. Gajda shared that the DDA budget already has \$2,000 in it to cover expenses that has not been touched so that the monies are there.

D. McGuire shared that the online auction for the paintings will open on September 1, 2023 and passed out the brochure for the auction. C. Place asked about a \$350 expense for the online auction and where it is found in the budget. D. Gajda shared that it is found in the Marketing expenses.

D. McGuire indicated that Square was suggested as payment for the donations from the auction. M. Dayton said that Square is free until you

accept payment and that there are variable levels based on use and that there is a 10% fee per transaction and then a minimal amount based on the how the transactions are entered (i.e. manually). C. Place shared that people can still pay by check or cash but that you can still use Square to track all purchases. The Library has used Square for five years, M. Dayton for 10 years and that it is a great tool, has dashboards, and more and that we can set it up if we would like to use it in the future for other fundraising, i.e. at the DDA Meet and Greet. M. Belanger asked if this is a better deal than Venmo and similar. M. Dayton said that Venmo has some fees but that square is safer and people get receipts automatically. C. Place said that PayPal does not provide the same amount of reporting and she said that she does not believe they have a report if someone pays cash for something and goes into the report. M. Dayton asked if there is a difference for a non-profit for square? C. Place said it is not.

D. Gajda summarized and asked if they want the DDA to sign up for square in addition to cash/check. He asked if there is a contract for this? C. Place said no but you do need to provide the routing number and bank account number. M. Dayton shared that you need a “dongle” to run the cards and it costs approximately \$40. D. Gajda asked who should be setting this up? C. Place said that is why we are asking. D. Gajda suggested that we need a motion to set up Square to support something very specific and that the Treasurer will help collect the money but that the Treasurer does not have to set it up. D. Gajda asked what information do we have to see it? C. Place said that the auction doesn’t close until the end of November and we can look at information at the September meeting.

C. Place will bring information to the next meeting. D. McGuire restated that the monies on the “donate now” button will hold the commitments until they are paid later.

D. McGuire asked who is doing the September cleaning of the paintings. C. Place, M. Dayton, M. Belanger, and T. Muscat will help to clean in September.

M. Dayton shared that we were having an ad updated and there is a schedule moving forward. C. Place shared that the website for the auction is a plus and we do pay \$350 a year up to \$10,000.

T. Lareau shared that the College for Creative Studies (CCS) only hosted their Alumni reception in Bellaire due to the Culver Exhibition and that people were really impressed with Bellaire, the Rubber Ducky Parade, and more. A number of CCS alumni living in Bellaire and Alden attended (among others) and they are now going to create a local coffee club. Also, the College is interested in participating in the Rubber Ducky parade and many of the approximately 50 attendees had never been to Bellaire before and were really impressed with Bellaire and commented they are planning to

return.

D. Bennett shared that on Mackinac Island they have now put paintings up.
C. Place shared that this combined with the Art Walk brochures, this is good.

M. Belanger asked what is next. M. Dayton shared that we are looking a potential project with local artists.

New Business:

- Informational Meetings (Dave)
 - D. Gajda shared that the “act” that created the DDA in 2018 has been updated and has some requirements related to hosting informational meetings twice a year not fewer than two (2) informational meetings per year. C. Place asked if the DDA meet and greet would qualify? D. Gajda said that they could, but we need to invite the four entities. D. Gajda said we need to invite the Village, Kearney, the County, and the Ambulance Authority. Gajda said that there are also website requirements.
- Website update
 - Related to the above. D. Gajda shared that we are required to provide a synopsis of our activities. Gajda went ahead and created something and asked the Village Clerk to look at it and we could do it by fiscal year. We would need to do something and he just created something to get us going. D. Hoyt said that if he is reading this correctly, we can host an informational meeting as well as a normal meeting that would meet the requirements and that our newsletters do provide the updates. D. Hoyt shared that invites can be through mail or email.

T. Lareau made a motion that to comply with Act 57 of the State of Michigan related to DDAs, that the Bellaire DDA formally invite representatives of the Village of Bellaire, Kearney Township, Antrim County, and the Ambulance Authority to the two informational meetings of the Bellaire DDA twice a year. Second by C. Place. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Place shared that the Library would be happy to answer questions about the Culver auction. T. Lareau invited the DDA to consider to host a “informational meeting,” “meet and greet,” and “pick up and pay” for the Culver auction on the same date in November.

- Village Council Update
 - T. Sutherland will attend the Village meetings to provide the updates.

- DDA Newsletter
 - C. Place shared a proof of the newsletter for the DDA. C. Place will talk to M. Dayton about the Buy Local events. M. Dayton shared that the M88 Outdoor market is not a Buy Local event and that C. Place could include the Poker Run and the Holiday market. T. Lareau asked that the potential meet and greet go in the newsletter.

Miscellaneous Business of the Authority Board:

T. Sutherland suggested we talk about Salt. T. Lareau offered to educate businesses about the Village rule about businesses being responsible for their sidewalks and entrances. She is willing to go to businesses to identify “who” is the contact in the winter, get a phone number, that the Village is going to be possibly enforcing the Village rule about snow removal, etc. D. Hoyt shared that we have looked at melt away previously and could be a possibility and whether or not the DDA can cover the full bill but that the Village needs to focus on the roads first and then the Village gets to the sidewalk.

C. Place said that perhaps we add a question when T. Muscat is going around about if the businesses are using melt away. M. Dayton said we are opening up a can of worms.

T. Lareau offered to educate the businesses, share the Village rule, share the potential progressive enforcement, etc. M. Dayton liked the idea of the progressive enforcement.

T. Lareau talked about coordinating with the Bellaire Chamber on the messaging in addition to Buy Local. T. Sutherland shared that there are services, such as a Corner Bistro employee. M. Dayton is happy to share the information that T. Lareau suggested through Buy Local and can email it out. T. Lareau will share something with M. Dayton and then T. Lareau will follow up with the business owners who do not respond to the questions for contact information for snow removal, etc. that M. Dayton will send out.

D. Gajda asked if this can go in the newsletter and C. Place said yes for both sidewalks and parking and will include something related to checking with the Chamber for snow removal services.

D. Gajda shared that he sent along information about how the City of Brighton merchants have created their own website and if that is something the DDA is interested in doing this in the future and providing some funding for the website along with the local businesses, it could be one way to support the downtown and if there is interest we should talk about it. T. Sutherland said that it would be based on cost. D. Gajda said, for example, if the cost is \$10,000 but then the merchants would help to pay for changes such as business hours, etc.

D. Gajda said that the “merchants” in Brighton put it together and since the DDA is limited in scope so if there are businesses outside of the DDA zone, those outside of the district would pay to be included. M. Dayton said that she is also interested in cost but that it is also helpful to have businesses shown in various areas. C. Place shared that individual owners could have access to their own pages and that cost may have gone down.

M. Dayton asked if anyone would be willing to set up a site. D. Gajda shared that we asked the Village to break out a DDA website but that has not happened at present. C. Place said that it might not be hard to show the Village how we could change the Village page on their website to be more dynamic for the DDA landing page and perhaps as an interim.

T. Lareau asked if the new website part of the top items identified by the businesses in the DDA and asked if we should focus on those items? D. Gajda shared that Marketing is part of the top items. C. Place said that we have things such as the DDA landing page that perhaps can be improved and this would support that. M. Dayton said that the Buy Local group has taken over Downtown Bellaire Facebook page IG and the Applesauce Inn (Jamie) has taken the lead on this and it’s making a difference. C. Place acknowledged D. Gajda for bringing this forward.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

Janet Koch shared that with the big trial going on at the County court house is not impacting parking. The Sherriff has suggested that perhaps when things go to the Jury for deliberation, things might change related to parking but it is not known at this time. The construction areas are very secure—even if someone got behind the fencing, all of the doors are bolted shut and the metal framing will begin to go up next week. The color of the metal siding will match the storage building that is being painted currently. The overall construction project is still on schedule thus far. C. Place asked where the main entrance is for the County building. J. Koch shared that it is still off of Cayuga at present.

Koch also shared that there might be a “friendly lawsuit.” Due to State Laws, the County must go through the courts for individuals and other that owns a plot of land between certain areas related to the vacating of Grove street. Koch shared plans if the County is not able to vacant Grove street and this is also contingent on a millage. This is more about the long-term planning and “if” Grove street is vacated and long-long-term that the County Building (in 40 or 50 years) will need to have a new building and the “concept” site plans provide for things like this...but it really starts with the vacating of Grove street. The County can’t guarantee that this would happen 40 or 50 years from now but this first step helps to create opportunity for later. Koch shared that the “friendly lawsuit” letters will be going in the near future and postcards about surveying for a millage asking people on a scale of 1 – 5 about the feelings toward a millage.

Jean Bedell said that 85 people came to the history museum during the Rubber Ducky parade.

Adjourn:

Motion by M. Dayton to adjourn meeting. Second by D. Gajda.

Meeting adjourned by T. Sutherland at 10:30 a.m.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 9 am.

Approved: September 27, 2023

Meeting minutes compiled by T. Lareau