

City of Ionia Downtown Development Authority

April 23, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The Ionia Downtown Development Authority's Special Meeting was called to order at 8:32AM by Chairperson Mike Kirgis. The meeting was held via teleconference due to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-15.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None at this time.

ROLL CALL: Roll call revealed the following DDA Board of Directors present on call: Dave Cook, Mike Kirgis, John Krueger, Paul Lentz, Ted Paton, Chris Sorrell, Theatre Manager Gary Ferguson, and DDA Director Linda Curtis. Guests included City Manager Jason Eppler and Finance Director Chris Hyzer.

CONSENT AGENDA: It was moved by Member Dave Cook, seconded by Member Krueger to approve the following:

Minutes from the DDA meeting of February 2020 as corrected to include reference to the status of the VISIT IONIA website by Member Krueger.

DDA accounts payable for January 26, 2020 – February 25, 2020 in the amount of \$14,341.62.

Theatre accounts payable for January 26, 2020 – February 25, 2020 in the amount of \$15,284.99.

MOTION CARRIED.

DDA DIRECTOR UPDATE: DDA Director's report for the months of March / April 2020 attached. In addition to the items listed, the DDA has been working with the Chamber of Commerce and sharing information relevant to the Stay at Home order and its effect on area businesses. Research and dialog with area DDA Directors on action plans indicates that the we are on target. Currently working to develop several business models to assist businesses with an online presence. This added exposure will expand their current target reach and can be continued once they re-open.

THEATRE REPORT: Theatre Manager Gary Ferguson provided the Board with an overview of the current status of the industry shutdown. An approximate date of July 24, 2020 will be the first new movie release for the Theatre (Mulan / Disney). If the Executive Order is lifted prior to that date, the opportunity to show older releases will be made available by the movie companies. Screen 2 is currently being repaired remotely.

BOARD DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS: None at this time.

OTHER:

1. Member Krueger provided the Board with an overview of a new group – Small Business Recovery Task Force – that holds meetings via teleconference. The committee includes representation from business owners, a non-profit organization, Chamber of Commerce and The Right Place. The DDA Director has been invited to attend the meetings. An action list is being created to assist businesses who are operating at a reduced level, those who are currently closed and those who remain fully operational.

The Ionia County Shoppers Guide provided a full page ad at no cost to the group to promote area businesses and the Chamber's Community Cash gift certificate program. The group hopes to provide a ZOOM conference opportunity that will provide attendees with FB / Social Media training in the near future. Updates on funding opportunities and resources will also be shared.

Member Krueger noted that at this time, the DDA should continue to meet as scheduled in order to fully serve the business community. A review of the DDA's financial status, Director's Report and action items must be provided and addressed. Areas of concern also included portions of the DDA By-laws and Rules of Procedure – 2.1, 2.4, 2.5 and lack of progress with each. It is imperative to show business owners and residents that the DDA is engaged in efforts to support them through a solid action plan, open lines of communication, and recovery assistance. A grand re-opening program could be implemented in phases and may include a promotional campaign, support of the Chamber's Community Cash certificates, movie passes and recognition of businesses each week. Several Board members showed interest in providing donations to assist with the promotion. The Board recognized the concerns and will move forward with the recommendations. It was requested that a full list of Board members and their contact information be forwarded so communication may be shared independently. A recommendation to send today's meeting minutes immediately was also granted.

2. Mural: The artist is spending less time on the project due to the current stay home order. The painting project continues to be on target for a June delivery. Grant funding opportunities are being researched as an alternative to seeking donations.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Member Lentz, seconded by Member Dave Cook.

MOTION CARRIED.

Submitted by Recording Secretary DDA Director Linda Curtis.