

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
Record of the September 7, 2005 Meeting  
Highland Station

**Members Present:** Keith Rhodes (Chairman), Sharon Greene, Susan Happel, Neil Kajy, Paul Mecklenborg, Gail Perrin, Patricia Pilchowski (Township Supervisor), Roscoe Smith

**Members Absent:** Jim Gorman, Mike Hickox

**Staff Present:** Jill Bahm (HDDA Director)

**Visitors Present:** David Blossey, Joseph Salvia, Larry Shew, Susan Bennett

**Chairman Rhodes called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.**

**Approve Meeting Minutes of August 3, 2005:**

**Motion by Greene, seconded by Smith, to approve the minutes of August 3, 2005 as submitted. Motion carried, 8-0.**

**Financial Report:** Ms. Happel stated that there is currently \$77,289.85 in assets through August 2005. Ms. Bahm will verify that outstanding light fixture invoices have been paid.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

2006 HDDA Budget: Ms. Bahm outlined the proposed budget for 2006. Light fixtures should be added to the 2005 proposed and actual amounts. Interest will also be added to 2005 and 2006.

Mr. Rhodes explained the rationale for the HDDA director's salary for 2006. Ms. Bahm will increase her hours from 20 to 30 hours per week. The cost of living percentage will be researched further, but will hopefully be approximately 3%. The amount of \$50,000 is the highest the salary could go, given the 30 hours and cost of living increase. The director's work load is certainly ample for at least 30 hours, given the likelihood of Highland received a Main Street designation. Mr. Kajy and Ms. Happel agreed that 30 hours is sufficient and are comfortable to give Ms. Bahm the same cost of living increase that the township gives its employees.

Discussion ensued regarding the \$50,000 in civic center improvements and the need to redo the civic center boulevard off M-59 for safety reasons. In as much as this is something in the HDDA development area, the HDDA will support funding all or a portion of this project.

*Sparks in the Park:* Mr. Rhode began a discussion of Sparks in the Park. He explained that he felt drained by the efforts of this year's event. Even with Ms. Bahm's involvement, it was an inordinate amount of work and he expressed concerns whether this event is a good use of the HDDA's time and money.

Ms. Pilchowski agreed that while this is a wonderful event, the HDDA has bitten off more than it can chew and have not had the kind of volunteer support that is needed to pull an event of this size off. She thinks the HDDA should reassess the type of event that can be supported by the community. She asked the board members to form a subcommittee with the support of an event planner. Highland Township cannot provide funds or staff to take this event over. If the community believes that this event is worthwhile, the community should support it. The bulk of the work should not be left to one or two individuals. She noted that from here on out, this board will need to become more involved and be willing to give more time to HDDA events. Mr. Kajy asked about downsizing the event and several members agreed that might be a good idea. Ms. Pilchowski offered that many of the activities included in Sparks like the softball game, the run and the performances could take place downtown or on other days.

Mr. Smith compared Sparks to Milford Memories, which brings many people into downtown. He questioned whether the money should be spent so far from the downtown area; this event does not bring in people to the downtown or do much for our businesses. He suggested charging admission as a way to defray costs.

Mr. Rhodes reiterated that the money spent should go towards promoting goals and objectives of the HDDA. Sparks is a great show and is great for the community, but the HDDA should not be the sole group responsible for its continuance. He suggested hiring an event planner. Mr. Smith remarked that charging admission might be a way to fund such a position.

Ms. Happel said an event planner would cost about \$7,000-8,000 and added that the HDDA will need to take a look at fundraising for the years ahead. Ms. Greene agreed and said that there are events that could be had in the downtown and will go much further with promoting downtown.

Mr. Rhodes said raising the issue with the public may generate enough volunteers to save the event. At the next meeting, the HDDA will make a decision on the future HDDA efforts for this event. All board members agreed to bring their thoughts and recommendations on how to proceed beginning in 2006 to next month's board meeting.

Light Fixtures Policy: Mr. Rhodes stated he believed that the HDDA should not be in the lighting business and that a better solution may be to identify the resources who can provide the fixtures and then the developer/property owner will be responsible to purchase. Ms. Bahm will research additional manufacturers.

**Motion by Happel, second by Perrin, to authorize the increase of the HDDA director's salary to 30 hours and the township-approved cost of living increase. Motion carried 8-0.**

**Motion by Happel, second by Greene, to approve the budget as submitted with the changes discussed during the meeting. Motion carried 8-0.**

Streetscape Plan: Ms. Bahm discussed items beyond light fixtures that are involved in the streetscape plan including benches, trash receptacles, street trees and landscaping. She hopes to be able to work on such a plan this fall.

Sewer Update: Highland has a letter from the MDEQ stating that they have no issues with the permit request. The deadline for public comments has passed with no comments received. Discussions have begun with business groups and associations to educate the public on what will be entailed. It will likely be a special assessment district. Levy will build the structure that will cover 300,000 gallons/day with the township to provide additional capacity. The water main hookups are also under review.

### **Director's Report:**

Main Street Oakland County Update: Ms. Bahm reported that the application was submitted by the HDDA on Thursday September 1, one day prior to the deadline. The community interviews are scheduled for September 19 in the afternoon and the selection announcement will be made on September 21. She said that even if Highland does not receive the designation this year that the HDDA should move forward with the Main Street Four-Point structure. Mr. Rhodes asked the board members to select their committee and be prepared to meet within committees after the October 5 board meeting.

Proposed Milestone Report: Ms. Bahm shared a sample of a work plan or milestone report that she would like to begin preparing. The Main Street approach creates a good structure that will make it easier for the community to understand what is planned for the HDDA and what projects the HDDA has underway. Once developed, this current projects milestone report will be made available on the HDDA website.

Upcoming events/conferences/seminars: Ms. Bahm announced that there are a few conferences coming up, including the Oakland County Heritage Conference, the Michigan Downtown Association meeting in Grand Rapids, a Small Town Success conference in Mt. Pleasant and a Michigan Festivals and Events conference in Kalamazoo.

**Motion by Happel, second by Smith, to approve \$1000 for the director's attendance at the four conferences presented. Motion carried 8-0**

Ms. Bahm asked the board to consider reimbursement for a portion or all of a personal organizer she recently purchased.

**Motion by Happel, second by Smith, to reimburse the director \$360 for recent PDA purchase. Motion carried 8-0**

Development District Reviews: There were no projects to review.

## **Community Reports:**

Ms. Pilchowski reported that she and Ms. Bahm will be conducting HDDA board member interviews in the next month.

Ms. Pilchowski also reports that Eileen Kowall of White Lake is asking business owners to document problems with the Oakland County Health Dept. as Ms. Kowall would like to pursue positive action to affect change.

Ms. Greene distributed the current Highland Equestrian Conservancy newsletter and announced that the Highland Equestrian Barn Tour and Art Exhibit is scheduled for Sunday, September 25, 2005. Jill and Tammy will be doing presentations during this event and cider and doughnuts will be provided. Tickets will be available at the Highland Station in advance for \$10 and at the door for \$12. There are six barns scheduled for tours.

Ms. Greene also noted that the grant application for the proposed "Highland Oaks" park is halfway through the process and things are looking good.

Ms. Happel reported that over \$400 was donated by the Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce to breast cancer research as a result of water sales at Milford Memories.

## **Call to the Public:**

Introduction of visitors: Susan Bennett, Highland resident for 18 years introduced herself and described her interest in the HDDA and expressed her desire to become involved in the HDDA. David Blossey, president of the Huron Valley State Bank, also expressed interest to be more involved with the HDDA.

**Adjournment: Motion by Happel, seconded by Mecklenborg, to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Motion carried 8-0**