

New goals set for Highland Station district

Josh Jackett

June 14, 2006 - After meeting with an organizational development specialist on Wednesday, June 7, the Highland Downtown Development Authority (HDDA) Board set six goals to be accomplished within the next three to five years in the Highland Station area.

The area includes land located two blocks in from either side of Milford Road from M-59 south to Colasanti's Market.

According to HDDA Director Jill Bahm, the authority's board listened to and worked with Milford-based Jackie Benkert, whom Bahm said works with organizations to help them with strategic planning, goal setting, and ways boards and committees can work together with others.

"(Benkert) helped the DDA board with its three-to-five-year planning," Bahm said. "She helped us identify and come to a common ground vision amongst the board members, although there was a pretty good commonality, anyway. Most of the board members have a strong vision of what Highland Station is going to be in the future."

Bahm said HDDA board member subcommittees — established when Highland was accepted into the Main Street Oakland County program last fall — will sort through the goals the HDDA board created during the meeting.

The goals, which she said the board hopes to have implemented by 2011, are as follows:

- Advocate for the installation of water and sanitary sewer systems, as well as underground utilities in Highland Station;
- Work with community stakeholders to achieve and verify 70 to 80 percent buy-in of the HDDA development plan's vision, and increase participation in revitalization activities;
- Develop strategies to develop business opportunities in the Highland Station area;
- Identify and make plans to improve green space within the Highland Station area;
- Work with township officials, neighboring communities, and Oakland County to complete a multi-modal trail network that will provide opportunities for people to reach Highland Station as a regional destination; and
- Identify and make plans for a multi-modal connection that will link the civic center complex to Highland Station.

"There may be tasks within those goals that are handled by different committees, but the board will oversee all of the goals, and there will be communication between the board and the committees so everyone knows what everyone is doing," Bahm said. "From this point we can scale it down and make a year-long work plan, which we'll be working on in the next two months."

She said completing the goals ties into HDDA budgeting. The DDA's budget has to be received by the township board by October, prior to the start of the HDDA budget year which starts at the beginning of January.

"Each task may have costs associated with it that we want to make sure we include in our budget so we're adequately funded," Bahm said.

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