

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Record of the February 1, 2022 Special Board Meeting**

DRAFT - APPROVED

Members Present: Supervisor Hamill, Chris Hamill, Matt Barnes, Roscoe Smith, Jennifer Frederick

Members Absent: Michael Zurek, Dale Feigley

Staff Present: Melissa Dashevich, Executive Director
Karen Beardsley, Recording Secretary

Visitors Present: Tim Colbeck, Main Street, Oakland County, Michigan
Elizabeth Chase, Main Street, State of Nebraska

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

Mr. Colbeck began by thanking everyone for attending this evaluation of our DDA organization. MSOC performs this to be sure requirements are being followed and to determine what additional assistance they could provide to DDAs; as well as to gauge community perception of DDAs in general.

Ms. Chase introduced herself and wanted to discuss the following specifics:

- What's going well
- What's not going well
- What kind of challenges lie ahead
- Are we doing well in general
- Are there any areas that would benefit from additional assistance from Oakland County
- Do we feel like we accomplish what we need

Discussion took place regarding the challenges during Covid and all of the ways that the HDDA was able to assist our businesses. Board members each spoke of accomplishments that were well received.

Ms. Chase commended Mrs. Dashevich on the Business Information presentation she prepared and encouraged the HDDA to use it as a presentation for others, i.e. volunteer meetings, as a refresher for all to see what the HDDA has accomplished.

Ms. Chase asked if our businesses might continue to rely on assistance they received during COVID. Board members felt that our local businesses were grateful for what they received and the HDDA has focused on many ways to drive business to our community and provide informational assistance.

Regarding the Work Plans, Ms. Chase asked why the Shop Local Campaign was listed under Economic Vitality instead of Promotions? Mrs. Dashevich felt that it was perhaps a crossover type of campaign.

Ms. Chase offered that rental assistance, business grants (which we have already done/are doing), and real estate development (helping coordinate people with places) are appropriate programs under Economic Vitality. Mr. Colbeck also added that anything that has a direct impact on business growth, retention, or support are examples of Economic Vitality. Ms. Chase also suggested that Economic Vitality might benefit from a market analysis to

determine who our customers are, what they're buying, etc. After studying the results of this data, a better determination can be made as to where our time and money should be spent.

Seeking volunteers with leadership, interest in committees, and general help makes more sense for us to have Volunteer Recruitment under Organization, while communities who are more event driven might have that under another area.

Discussion took place regarding the differences with main street programs, corridors, business improvement programs, non-profit groups, etc.

Ms. Chase asked about our fundraising plans and how we are progressing in that area. Mrs. Hamill mentioned that we do have a 501c3 and it was used very heavily most recently for fundraising for Chill at the Mill. Mrs. Dashevich mentioned our *Live Highland Shop Highland* campaign as well as Highland Pickles. Also, Supervisor Hamill's real estate redevelopment deals were a great source of income for the HDDA and also put properties back on the tax rolls.

Ms. Chase suggested a review of our by-laws; she didn't see anything needing attention - it's just a good exercise to review them periodically. Also, re-examine Vision Statement (a paragraph that paints a picture) and our Mission Statement (a short, concise, statement of who we are and our reasons to exist). This would be a good project for the Organization Committee. They can do the work and present to the board for approval.

Ms. Chase suggested we identify areas of need, if any, i.e. help for Mrs. Dashevich, Board Member training, etc. Mrs. Dashevich said that with additional work continuing for business assistance and regular events, etc. starting back up, she could use additional help; perhaps a part-time 'assistant'. She also suggested a 'Board Member 101' type refresher or guidelines, such as roles and responsibilities for effective board members.

Mr. Colbeck felt that a binder that contains such things as by laws, TIF summary, mission/ vision statements, committee outlines and responsibilities, commitment levels and hours, volunteering responsibilities, etc. is a very helpful tool for new board members to refer to throughout their term.

Perhaps 'How to Be a Better Board Member Training' and a board commitment letter.

Ms. Chase mentioned that turnover will happen and need to prepare incoming, as well as succession plans, transfer of responsibilities, etc. This applies to board members and directors.

Ms. Chase brought up the topic of historic preservation which we might want to begin looking at. There doesn't seem to be an issue currently since sewers are needed to make properties more attractive and viable for all types of businesses. But if/when sewers become available, issues might arise as to which buildings are valuable to our character and identity. Having an overall historic preservation plan would be a benefit to both the Design and the Economic Vitality committees, with a goal to be able to manage change and avoiding unintended consequences. Supervisor Hamill suggested looking at a map and identifying key properties.

Mr. Colbeck spoke of all DDAs developing an economic positioning statement: what they're basing their work plans on, i.e. art, recreational, serve a downtown population, etc.

Discussion took place regarding the usage of our community sign for featuring each individual business and highlights.

Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Roscoe Smith
RS:kb

UNAPPROVED