

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Record of the March 20, 2024, Regular Board Meeting**

APPROVED

Members Present: Supervisor Hamill, Chris Hamill, Cassie Blascyk, Roscoe Smith, Michael Zurek, Taylor DeHaan, Jennifer Frederick, Andy West, Michael Zeolla

Members Absent: Matt Barnes, Dale Feigley

Staff Present: Cathy Tiderington, Recording Secretary

Staff Absent: Melissa Dashevich, Executive Director

Guest: Crystal Proxmire, Oakland County Times

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 6: 20 pm

ROLL CALL

Taylor DeHaan, Andy West, Supervisor Hamill, Chris Hamill, Michael Zeolla, Jennifer Frederick, Cassie Blascyk, Roscoe Smith, Michael Zeolla

OAKLAND COUNTY TIMES DIGITAL NEWS

Highland DDA reached out to Oakland Times when Spinal Column discontinued. Ms. Proxmire reported on the Oakland County Times, an online news website.

In 2009, Oakland County Times started in Ferndale and went countywide in 2015. In 2016 Oakland Times worked with Holly DDA and the Chamber. Their businesses grew. The site is a mix of communities including art suburbs, such as Ferndale and Royal Oak; urban areas of Pontiac and rural communities. The Huron Valley Council for the Arts, Highland DDA, Highland Township, Hoffman Farms and Highland Activity Center were brought on in 2023. In reference to the Stats reviewed earlier, the White Lake numbers may also include Highland numbers. In closing the most recent highly reviewed articles for this area was the Highland Recycle Truck Fire. As well as the Boy Scout Troupe 42 that had 398 readers.

Mrs. Blascyk stated to increase awareness, the Oakland County Times could be added to resources such as the Township website and newsletter. It will also have stories that have our ads on them.

Ms. Proxmire continued that approximately 315 to 400 people read the articles consisting of Master Plan processes, business plans or stories in general. Highland is comparing to how Holly was first covered in the first year. Every year Ms. Proxmire does candidate interviews on Oakland County Times for people running for office during election information. If we have a story, press releases, etc. it is important we contact Ms. Crystal Proxmire. Mrs. Blascyk started a blog and Ms. Proxmire said she could use it.

APPROVE REGULAR BOARD MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2024

MRS. HAMILL MOVED TO APPROVE the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2024, as presented. MS. FREDERICK SUPPORTED THE MOTION and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote; Supervisor Hamill-yes, C. Hamill-yes, Michael Zeolla-yes, J. Frederick-yes, C. Blascyk-yes, R. Smith-yes, M. Zurek-yes, T. DeHaan-yes, and A. West-yes (9 yes votes).

Approved HDDA Minutes - Board Meeting Unapproved of March 20, 2024.

DIRECTORS REPORT

In Mrs. Dashevich's absence, no Director report was given.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mrs. Hamill gave the treasurer's report of February 21, 2024.

SUPERVISOR HAMILL MOVED to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. **MR. ZUREK SUPPORTED**, and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a unanimous roll-call vote: Supervisor Hamill-yes, C. Hamill-yes, Michael Zeolla-yes, J. Frederick-yes, C. Blascyk-yes, R. Smith-yes, M. Zurek-yes, T. DeHaan-yes, and A. West-yes (9 yes votes).

New Business:

Board discussed renewal of Oakland County Times digital news:

Most Board Members thought using Oakland County Times would be beneficial when written articles of Highland were posted. Mr. Smith had concerns due to others he's spoken to not having heard of Oakland County Times. Mrs. Blascyk stated that one article from a freelance writer can cost \$250 where this membership is \$1,500 for the year.

MR. HAMILL MOVED TO SUPPORT the expense of \$1,500 per year with the Oakland County Times. **MS. FREDERICK SECONDED THE MOTION**, and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a roll-call vote: Supervisor Hamill-yes, C. Hamill-yes, Michael Zeolla-yes, J. Frederick-yes, C. Blascyk-yes, R. Smith-yes, M. Zurek-yes, T. DeHaan-yes, and A. West-yes (8 yes votes and 1-Nay).

Mural - Veterans Park:

Ms. Blascyk stated there is a roadblock with the train bridge mural, we are still waiting for approval from MDOT. The contract with Mr. Zach Curtis, the artist, expires on July 17, 2024, as not to lose these funds, another mural could be placed on the old fire station. It was noted Mr. Zeolla proposed a rendering of veterans leaving on a train and having luggage as an interactive piece, for an alternate mural.

Mrs. Blascyk stated the ticket station with the mural would tie into Highland's history. In interim, the Design Committee needs Townships approval. Ms. Blascyk will meet in mid-April with the artist.

Supervisor Hamill said it will be painted on a siding board that is placed next to the building. Personal intent is there's a Town Square. It develops a core for the downtown. There will be green space, areas to sit and a gazebo for the park.

MRS. HAMILL MOVED TO SUPPORT the painting of the mural. **MR. ZEOLLA SECONDED THE MOTION**, and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a unanimous voice vote: Supervisor Hamill-yes, C. Hamill-yes, Michael Zeolla-yes, J. Frederick-yes, C. Blascyk-yes, R. Smith-yes, M. Zurek-yes, T. DeHaan-yes, and A. West-yes (9 yes votes).

Purchase of bistro tables for events/place making:

Mrs. Blascyk wants to purchase 12, three piece folding bistro sets and 6, two piece folding Adirondack chair sets not to exceed \$2,100 for Highland's festivals, concerts, etc. to put in front of food trucks or fire pits. Mrs. Blascyk will reach out to Five Star for a possible order, and she wants to take the purchase from the Design Budget Line.

MS. BLASCYK MOVED TO purchase the Adirondack chairs/bistro sets from the Design Budget, Line Item # 880.003 for \$2,100. **MRS. HAMILL SUPPORTED THE MOTION** and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a unanimous roll-call vote: Supervisor Hamill-yes, C. Hamill-yes, Michael Zeolla-yes, J. Frederick-yes, C. Blascyk-yes, R. Smith-yes, M. Zurek-yes, T. DeHaan-yes, and A. West-yes (9 yes votes).

DDA/Planning Commission Workshop:

Mrs. Blascyk will be meeting with Ms. Corwin (Planning Director for Highland Township) on Highland Station Design and Master Plan. Supervisor Hamill suggested to have packages ready by June 6, 2024. Ms. Frederick will email the Board Members a copy so it can be reviewed and discussed at the next Board Meeting of April 18th.

HWLBA Restaurant Week Partnership Request:

Mrs. Blascyk stated Highland White Lake Business Association wants to partner with us on our Restaurant week. We cannot spend money outside of the district, but we can partner with ours specific to the DDA area and they can pick up the rest to cover the businesses in the whole township.

MS. FREDERICK MOVED TO PARTNER WITH HWLBA on Restaurant Week supporting the DDA District. **MRS. BLASCYK SUPPORTED THE MOTION** and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a unanimous voice vote: Supervisor Hamill-yes, C. Hamill-yes, Michael Zeolla-yes, J. Frederick-yes, C. Blascyk-yes, R. Smith-yes, M. Zurek-yes, T. DeHaan-yes, and A. West-yes (9 yes votes).

Board Member Binders or Tablets:

Ms. Frederick asked if the Board would like binders or tablets. Mrs. Blascyk stated she will get to get a cost for tablets. Ms. DeHaan asked what the cost difference is of using paper for copies versus Tablets. Mrs. Blascyk will review at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

MSA/MOC Assessment of HDDA Notes from Elizabeth Chase:

Ms. Fredrick stated this is what guides us for the next year using highland accreditation notes and where we can improve based on what residents and board members said on what we are doing. This will be included in our binder on improvements.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Frederick and Mrs. Blascyk attended the Oakland County Main Street Summit where they were able to speak about Highland DDA. It was nice to interact with other Downtown Mainstreet Oakland Communities.

Mr. Smith spoke about Haven Hill Trail and showed pictures.

COMMUNITY REPORTS

Design

Colasanti's Boardwalk Update

Mrs. Blascyk stated that engineering is wrapping up their process and working on pulling permits. Then this will go out for bid in a month or two.

Train Viaduct -No Update

Economic Restructuring

Ms. Fredrick spoke about the Economic Vitality business Roundtable. Mrs. Tiderington set up and her efforts were appreciated. Eight businesses attend and all but one was new. The event went well.

Organization

Volunteer Fair

Ms. Fredrick stated we had ten volunteers show up to sign up; she will contact the schools for the next one.

Policy and Bylaws

Ms. Frederick will bring to the next meeting for approval.

Promotions

Concert Recruitment

Completed agreements are being prepared and marketing has begun per Mrs. Blascyk.

Festival Organization

Mrs. Blascyk stated this is going well and we've gotten a sponsorship from Feldman for \$4,000, Sniffer Station pledged \$1,000, Genysis is pledging \$1,000 for concerts and LaFontaine is pledging \$1,000 for Farmers Market. We're 200% above last year. The Farmer's Market Manager Jamie Globerson is doing a fantastic job.

Mrs. Blascyk stated that we had saddest parade in Highland last year. She suggested that the Board get out to the businesses and parent teacher organizations to join us. May 18th is the parade.

MSOC

Inclusive Horizons is coming up on April 10th. Mrs. Blascyk stated the Annual Awards Dinner for Oakland County is on June 6th.

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

Oakland Audiology is open now. It opened on April 1st.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mrs. Dashevich and Mrs. Blascyk went to the DDA for the Inside Out Program that will be launched in May for Art Open House/DIA walking tour.

ADJOURN -MR. SMITH MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN and MS. FREDRICK SECONDED THE MOTION.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:58 PM.