

AFFORDABLE HOUSING/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Place: Virtual Meeting-Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85900049275>
or by phone 1-877-853-5257 (Meeting ID: 859 0004 9275 Password: 751242)

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Committee Present: Micah Bartelme, Bob Guenzel, Tyler Kinley, Darren McKinnon

Committee Absent: None

Other DDA Present: Jessica A.S. Letaw

Partners: Shannon Gibb-Randall/CPC; Ali Ramlawi, Linh Song/City Council;
Brandon Tucker/WCC, Josie Parker/AADL, Mary Boonin/TheRide

Staff: Susan Pollay, Maura Thomson, Jada Hahlbrock, Sara McCallum, Kelley Graves

Others: Ron Stevens/SBDC, Travis Radina, Jen Eyer/City Council

Public: Members of the public were on the Zoom meeting but did not identify themselves.

Virtual Guidelines: Mr. Kinley read the guidelines for holding electronic meetings.

SBDC Presentation: Ron Stevens, Associate Regional Director, spoke to the committee about the services provided by the SBDC including assisting businesses with applying for PPP and CARES Act funding, low-cost counseling, website optimization and bookkeeping services and, benchmarking data. He provided information on government programs, grants, and other assistance that is currently available to businesses. Mr. Stevens shared insights into how small downtown businesses are doing amid the pandemic and, what strategies they are implementing to survive the winter. He said cash flow management, curbside service and having an online/website presence are essential. Links to grants and programs will be shared with the committee.

When asked Mr. Stevens said the best way the DDA can assist downtown businesses is to connect them with the SBDC and to keep them informed about programs, grants and other available assistance. Ms. Thomson reported that she regularly pushes out information about the SBDC to the downtown associations, business owners, and other stakeholders. Ms. Thomson said the DDA is sponsoring a collaborative effort by the four downtown associations to promote downtown businesses; the new showyourlovea2.org site and video went live today. Questions were asked and answered.

Mr. Stevens was asked about the potential for the DDA to partner with the SBDC to provide business micro-grants and what recommendations he had for how best to structure it. There was discussion about how the recent Washtenaw County and Song Foundation grants were handled. Ms. Pollay stated that per statute, DDA's are not allowed to use TIF/public funds to provide operational support to private businesses.

Partner Updates: Ms. Parker stated that given the recent spike in COVID cases the AADL has suspended vestibule services. Ms. Parker shared information about the online Tiny Expo event

providing access to 35 crafters' products for purchase. Ms. Song, a member of the AADL board, commended Ms. Parker's leadership, responsiveness and innovative ideas during the pandemic.

Ms. Hall summarized the guidelines of the recently approved Affordable Housing millage. When asked, she said the Lurie Terrace purchase is delayed until early 2021 due to HUD's requirement of approval from the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Officer).

Ms. Boonin reported TheRide continues to evaluate and adjust its routes during this time to best meet the needs of the public while being mindful of its budget constraints due to lost revenue. Ridership remains at 20-25% of pre-COVID levels.

Ms. Gibb-Randall stated the Planning Commission continues to press for projects including affordable housing and sustainability elements. A tiered approval system is being discussed for smaller projects to shorten the approval timeline and modify how responsibility for infrastructure is addressed. Questions were asked and answered.

Ms. Thomson reported work on First Street will end for the season by the end of November; construction north of Miller will be finished in the spring 2021. The State Street improvements project has been moved to 2022 to allow for comprehensive public engagement next year. The temporary curbside meter bags are being replaced with red bags on 12/1 for continued use by businesses during the winter and will be enforced by Community Standards to prevent long-term parking.

Mr. Ramlawi said that City Council voted to encourage a new transit-oriented development zoning strategy along key transit corridors. Ms. Song said she looked forward to being part of this Committee.

Public Comment: None.

The next Affordable Housing/Economic Development Committee meeting (DDA only) is scheduled for December 9 at 9 am.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director