

MANCHESTER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

January 23, 2013
7:30 PM
Unapproved Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:33

Members in attendance: Ray Berg, Susan Fielder, Karl Racenis, Russell Rhoton, and Pat Vaillencourt.

Agenda Approval: Reorder agenda to discuss old business first. Motion by Berg, seconded by Rhoton, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: September 26 unapproved minutes: corrected spelling for Krista and expanded. Rhoton moved and Vaillencourt support to approve minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Public Participation: Janet Larson and Ron Fielder present.

Larson, president of Manchester Chamber, asked about a formal MDot ribbon cutting event to celebrate the new downtown improvements. Dates in April, May and June were discussed. The preferred target would be Thursday, June 6th as part of the Business Expo. One potential conflict would be High School Graduation events on the same night. Karl will ask Jeff Wallace to contact the engineering firm and others to verify availability. Invitations will be sent after the date is confirmed.

Larson also expressed interest in coordinating the Chamber and the DDA's Five Year Plans. She announced the High School Botany class will help with the flower plantings on the bridge again this year. The new Dollar General is expected to open this Sunday. Larson is hoping they will share market information as to why they targeted Manchester so that information might be useful in recruiting other businesses in the future.

New Business:

2012 Projects:

Downtown Parking: Racenis suggests the DDA consider the enforcement of the 2 hour parking limit in the downtown area. Some employees have been parking for long times in front of other store fronts. The loading zone in front of Dan's River Grill has been inconvenient at times. Unfortunately visitors (shoppers) from Tecumseh have received parking tickets. The area between the old village hall and the old NAPA store is not public parking areas. A cohesive plan between the DDA, the Chamber and the Planning Commission is recommended.

Downtown Economic Development: Now that the transportation enhancement project has been completed Racenis suggests the DDA refocus on the economic develop discussions included in the DDA 5 year plan. Programs like the MEDC's Blue Prints Plans are no longer available. MEDC does schedule workshops, but the expense and other factors for a Manchester location are prohibitive. Even large stores like K-mart etc. are impacted by on-line shopping. Other

communities with a larger population-bases like Chelsea and Ann Arbor are converting downtown store fronts to restaurants. Numerous Manchester non-profits are hosting taco nights, etc., although appreciated, local restaurants can't compete. We need to identify what kind of businesses can survive. Following discussion, Vaillencourt will contact Ann Arbor Spark to help identify a demographic planner that may be invited to speak at the Chamber/DDA. Fielder was asked to contact the University of Michigan to see what economic development programs may be available. Karl would like to update the list of business properties that are available on the Chamber and DDA Websites.

Old Business:

Downtown Enhancement Project Status:

Water is collecting in low areas near the curb and freezing. Karl took pictures and sent them to Jeff Wallace. Light are missing along the old Buss Property and near the intersection of Riverside and Main.

The broken light bulb near the Marathan station has been replaced and extra bulbs will be kept on hand.

Additional parking spaces in from of Manchester Eye Care have been marked.

Shared-Use Trail Status:

Following the Public Hearing on Monday, the Village Council approved the 5 year plan which excludes the pedestrian bridge over the mill pond. The walking trail was included, although erroneously excluded in the Manchester Enterprise article. The Parks Commission is seeking volunteers from a number of civic organizations to provide input to the Buss Property development. Fielder volunteered to represent the DDA. Vaillencourt mention the pending work on the Main Street bridge, which may also provide an opportunity to clean up the mill pond. Berg confirmed that the \$302K raised for the shared-use trail is still available and that part of the project will continue. He will attend a council meeting to confirm the schedule and engineering options, and hopes to begin the trail this year. The Village will be the contracting agency. Berg is proposing observation deck overlooking the river will remain in the plan. He also expressed hope that the other parts of the Park Commission's 5 year plan will receive the same critique.

Downtown Way Signs:

The Downtown way signs are included in our 30 year plan. Racenis would like to identify likely vendors. He asked DDA members to look around, identify signage and take pictures in other communities. He expects the cost to be less than \$5,000 and is hoping the Village Council will allocate the revenue. Racenis will contact Jeff Wallace to see if catalogs are available.

Board Membership:

Racenis reminded members in attendance, that his term expires in June. We currently have two open seats. Vaillencourt will contact individuals who have expressed an interest and try to recruit full membership.

Reports:

Treasurer: Fielder has nothing to report at the current time. Racenis mentioned the Board of Revue in March may have information regarding potential revenue from the Dollar General and Funeral Home properties.

Chairman:

Racenis suggests scheduling meetings every other month: Jan, March, May, July, September, and November on the 4th Wednesday of the Month at 7:30 pm. July will be the vote for future officers.

Administration:

Vaillencourt attended the Michigan State of the State Address. Gretchen Driscoll, our new Representative expressed an interest in connecting with Manchester, perhaps attending a Village Council Meeting etc in the future.

Berg mentioned the proposal of various service clubs pool revenue for matching funds for one of the major projects proposed for Kirk Park. The Wellness Foundation grants focus on youth activities are still available. The application deadline is in April.

Vaillencourt announced that the Manchester Run would like to schedule a two-day event in August, possibly working with the Riverfolk Festival.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Fielder, Treasurer and Interim Secretary.