

Downtown Development Authority

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 21, 2015
Noon, Council Chambers



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order by Olson at noon

2. Roll Call

Present: Braun (12:07 p.m.), Burr, Frederick, Marcoux, Maxwell, Olson
Absent: Newton, Whiteford

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Burr, second by Marcoux to approve the October 7, 2015 regular meeting agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes – May 20, 2015 Workshop Minutes July 15, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes August 12, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Marcoux, second by Frederick, to approve the May 20, 2015 Workshop Minutes, the July 15, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes and the August 12, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.

All in favor. Motion carried.

5. Interested Citizens in the Audience Will be Heard on Items Not on the Agenda

None at this time.

6. DDA will be asked to consider approval of the Water Street Improvement Plan.

Davidson noted that there are factors affecting the DDA budget and it is difficult to report where the DDA is financially at this time. Factors include outstanding invoices for various projects such as the Baar's building demolition and Michigan Street repaving; cost estimates for a restroom building at the Baar's site; and a grant opportunity. Michigan Energy Office has announced a grant opportunity for upgrading existing municipal lighting to LED. The Broadway Avenue lighting would be a good project for this grant. Davidson proposed that a

workshop be held in the near future to inform the DDA Board about all projects, look at cost estimates and prioritize.

Davidson explained that the Water Street project is conceptual. This concept has been to the Parks Commission, and will go to Harbor Commission and then to City Council. Davidson asked for approval of the conceptual plan. The Board may be asked to approve a component of the plan in the future, based on budget and priority.

Davidson introduced Pat Cornelisse, Cornelisse Design, who reviewed the overall plan noting that the city asked what could be done to improve the hill side of Water Street. Cornelisse described that it was a difficult project as part of the process is about maintenance. About every three years the hillside will need to be pruned or managed in some way.

Cornelisse then reviewed several details including sidewalks, stairs, some turf, curb lines, a neater edge and the hillsides (remove dead stuff, invasive species, do not remove stumps so they help hold the hill in place, privet hedge and retain native species and items that will be useful) working her way from the water treatment plant on the west, eastward to Kalamazoo Street.

Discussion ensued regarding the steps from the Keeper's House property down to Water Street being wood, which would be replaced with concrete steps. Cornelisse noted the proposed addition of some handicap accessible picnic tables.

Cornelisse explained the use of dune grass and turf in the area below the American Legion, highlighting the WPA wall, perhaps some up-lighting, maybe a historical plaque including the WPA wall and the nearby area where there used to be a rail line. Cornelisse proposed cleaning up the wooded areas, trimming the trees up higher so the view can be seen.

Near Maple Street, Cornelisse recommended cleaning out the embankment, noting that it is too steep to mow, doing some rearranging and filling and clean up the stuff that has grown there over the years; replace the dilapidated rail fence and surround it with low plants so kids cannot get at the fence easily to jump over. Cornelisse noted that any walls added to this area would reflect the stacked stone walls that are already there.

In the next section, near the dumpster, the embankment is slipping, so Cornelisse recommends extending the existing stacked stone wall.

Access to and from Indiana and Eagle Streets down to Water Street could be done again with concrete instead of wood because concrete will not degrade. Cornelisse recommended starting over in this area, noting the topped pine trees and general unattractiveness of this section. Access was described as a series of steps and platforms. "Add some sidewalk and short retaining walls followed by eight (8) foot high retaining walls and steps down to a large landing. The dumpster will be hidden along with some electrical utilities in a continuation of the existing wall structures."

Cornelisse noted that there were citizens at the Parks Commission meeting who requested that the city not have any seating areas at the top or bottom so people cannot hang out there to smoke. Cornelisse said you need more input to address whether you have platforms or landings and whether the city wants to encourage the hanging out or not.

Shores had asked if there could be some landscaping done near their building that reflects the landscaping in the downtown. Cornelisse indicated how that would look on one of the concept drawings.

Regarding cost, Cornelisse said this entire piece should be somewhere around six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) but you cannot predict because it will depend on when you bid.

In response to questions, Cornelisse explained that in the case of residents along Water Street approaching us we have been able to accommodate their needs.

Burr explained some of the intricacies of the land ownership issues in the area. Cornelisse noted the residents have some concerns about views and there are compromises that can be made. There needs to be talk regarding the location of the dumpster, although there does not seem to be any real solutions or alternate locations.

Burr asked if there was a price on the concrete stairs and Cornelisse noted that embankment access is around \$200,000, but that is without soil borings which could reveal issues we are unaware of.

Marcoux asked about mowing, assuming we proceed with this and do it, whether the maintenance budget has been looked at. Cornelisse said her plan does not add a lot of grass mowing, but the maintenance program every three years or so will be an ongoing number and we didn't put a number to that. You could choose a block a year, and then next year do the next block; that rotation could be what will keep it in line. Cornelisse would have preferred to use dune grass in more areas, noting that most mowers do not like to do steep mowing, but the soil is not appropriate and sand would have to be brought in, so she stuck with more mowed areas.

Davidson noted that the DDA board is just being asked for approval of a concept.

Motion by Marcoux to approve the proposed Water Street plan/conceptual drawing, pending final approval once we understand the budget. Second by Braun.

All in favor. Motion carried.

7. DDA will be given an update about the following projects:

A. Grant opportunity for lighting improvements on Broadway Avenue

Tony McGhee, representing Abonmarche, explained various things that were considered, noting these would be the same lights as you have downtown but with LED bulbs. These would include directional boring for underground. The lights themselves would be a total of \$415,000. This project would not replace all sidewalks, but the sections affected would be replaced. The grant is \$50,000 which would put the funding for the balance of the project on the City, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Board of Public Works (BPU).

Davidson explained this request is for approval for submitting the grant application, which is due November 2. McGhee noted that a few weeks later we would know if the city got it. Burr noted the majority of this project would be funded by the Electric Fund. McGhee noted that

about half of the cost would be Electric. After a question from Marcoux, McGhee noted that the city would have one and one-half (1.5) years to spend the money.

B. Baars building demo and cost estimate for restroom building

McGhee related that the Baars building demolition was done without too many extras and the contractor did a good job keeping things in order and neat around the site. Additional asbestos was discovered during the demolition, so the extra asbestos abatement was another \$22,298.00. McGhee noted that the contractor stuck with his \$20,000 overage estimate and ate the balance. Discussion ensued regarding where the additional asbestos was located.

McGhee showed a concept drawing of the parking plan which Davidson noted was Option 2 that the board approved at the last meeting. At current market it is about \$125,000 just for replicating the Huron Street restroom. There is about \$300,000 for a 2,500 square foot addition for skate office/storage. With the parking lot the total would be \$575,000 which would include sealing and coating the existing parking lot to retain a uniform appearance. This is top drawer cost so there are things that could be changed.

Discussion ensued regarding whether more parking could be gained if the building were smaller which McGhee said had been reviewed and with all concerned it would not gain more than one more space. If the building size were reduced, there would just be more green space.

McGhee talked about bringing some budget ideas at the next meeting, including bidding the Black River Parking lot with this one to give the board a lot of flexibility in how you can budget this. Burr asked if the parking lot could be done soon with the building added later. Discussion ensued regarding getting skaters safely to and from the rink and a new skate rental building and the number of net gain of parking spaces. I has been suggested in the past to close off the north entrance into Huron St parking lot. If so, skaters would not have to cross in front of traffic.

8. General Comments

There were none.

9. Adjourn

Motion by Marcoux, second by Frederick to adjourn at 12:53 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary