

Manchester Downtown Development

August 21, 2019

Approved Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Ray Berg, Denise Collins, Susan Fielder, Leslie Kiesel, Aaron LaRock, Sue LaRocque, Julie Marvin-Manders, and Pat Vaillencourt were in attendance.

Public Participation: Mary Jo Crossno, representing the Manchester Area Garden Inspiration Club, and Jamie Schmidt, a new resident, were present.

Approval of June 18, 2019 minutes

A motion was made and second to approve minutes as presented. All in favor.

Approval of Agenda

Agenda items were reviewed. The Vacant Building Ordinance discussion was removed and will be discussed at the next Village Council meeting. Kiesel moved and Marvin-Manders supported the motion to approve the agenda as amended. All in favor.

CTAP Updates

Berg reported the remaining projects from 2017 – 2018 CTAP are expected to be completed in September. He is working with Barry Allen to complete the kiosk and lockable, enclosed cases for brochures and maps. Berg will meet with Jeff Wallace to confirm the expenditure of the remaining \$2200, which was allocated for quarter-mile marker signs and condo access signs along the shared use trail. Berg also mentioned the need for “walking, biking and motor wheel chairs only” signs.

Berg reported the 2018-2019 CTAP grant has \$280 remaining for the KJ House Museum and \$200 left after completing the Ally Mural preservation project. Now that the Riverside Park is completed, Vaillencourt has been working with Rodney Kidd regarding the promotional video. The Village is planning a “Park Dedication” event for the 3rd Thursday in September. Berg will present the current invoices to Village Council at the September 3rd meeting. Any remaining funding will be redirected for the Historical Museum improvements.

Berg reported the portion of the 2019-2020 CTAP grant funding the construction of a canoe/kayak storage unit will be reevaluated after Labor Day. The location of Over the Edge's recycling area may necessitate relocation of the storage unit. The Men's Club has offered to help with the construction and/or installation. Delaying the storage unit will not affect the grant requirements.

Another aspect of the 2019-2020 CTAP Grant included developing a "park extension area" along the east shore of the river, south of Main Street. Plans for the park extension will be confirmed after the new DD (former Dairy Queen) reconstruction is completed. This portion of the 3-year grant will provide \$2500 for improvements. We need to spend the money before May of 2020.

Berg reported that Katie Hughes is working on the *Tour de Barns* brochure. The new brochure will also include unusual area barns west of M52. Biking and driving tours will be featured, and the draft will go to print by end of September.

The Manchester Community Update book was previously co-funded by the Chamber, the DDA, and Manchester Community Schools. School officials have announced, they will not sponsor the publication this year. The chamber wants to continue sponsorship. Vaillencourt will consult the Council regarding funding. Berg reminded us that CTAP money cannot be used for this project.

Following discussion, it was decided to postpone revising and reprinting the Downtown Business Map brochure. The estimated cost of \$800 was previously co-sponsored by the Chamber. Postponing publication until next Spring would allow current business recruitment efforts to continue and be included in the reprinted brochure.

Cityhood Update

Vaillencourt described the August 5th Cityhood Town Hall meeting as very well attended, with standing room only. Members of the Citizens' Commission and other Village government representatives explained the motivation for exploring cityhood status. Discussions focused on 1) the unique needs of the village residents, 2) understanding government structure and taxing, and 3) examples of costs and tax distribution. Vaillencourt reported that the majority of village attendees expressed support. It is expected that cityhood status would reduce

taxes on downtown businesses. Vaillencourt estimates minimal loss to the township, and they might even save money when not doing assessing etc.

Village Council authorized up to \$10,000 to obtain an updated state boundary line map and to contract a surveyor to officially define the Village limits. The State Boundary Commission is exclusively responsible for processing potential annexation requests from property owners. Future steps include a petition signed by sufficient number of village property owners, before the long process of community involvement would continue. The process may require 2 – 3 years for completion. Vaillencourt will be available to answer questions every Wednesday morning at 9 am and for a half hour before Village Council meetings.

Kaboom Grant Update

Kiesel, lead applicant facilitator for the village, reported we official we won the \$80,000 grant. Although a draft design was developed for the grant application process, Kiesel will be planning community engagement events and recruiting children's ideas for the final design our projects. Completed is expected by July of 2020. All planned features will be implemented/installed in one day.

3RD Thursday Update

A ribbon cutting, park and trail dedication event is planned for the 3rd Thursday in September (time is to be determined). The Chamber is also sponsoring a catered, appreciation event on Sept 5 at 6:30. Shared marketing strategies regarding the *Make it Manchester Facebook* page were discussed. LaRocque recruited Jason Heinrich's continued involvement through September. Although he offered a reasonable cost to continue managing the Facebook page, lack of DDA financial resources, prohibit our ability to pay for his previously donated professional services. Kiesel offered to continue working with Chamber representatives to maintain the page. It was decided to remove the Village Office contact number.

Grocery store update

Berg sent site analysis information, the Gibbs retail study, current building specifics, and information on four potential M52 locations to marketing managers at 8 different grocery store chains. Aldi's reply was the only negative response. Kroger managers are seriously considering the potential. Other potential grocery stores include Kroger's (located in Milan - food market model), Trader Joes, Spartanash (Franks Shop Right in Grass Lake), Borchartts (located in Blissfield),

Busch's (located in Clinton), the Country Market, (located in Brooklyn), and Meijers, all of whom are still evaluating Berg's proposals. Berg has prearranged support from the MEDC and from local legislators, who will write support letters when needed.

A potential "mini market" alternative is the ACORN store currently under consideration. It is estimated that renovations to the building on the corner of Main and Union Streets will cost \$50K. ACORN organizers have received \$25K from a 5 Healthy Towns grant and have obtained 501C3 status. To continue applying for additional grants through an association with the Village, the Village must comply with "Ready Development" standards. The Village Council has passed a resolution to meet the state required standards and will rewrite some of the Village ordinances as needed. The Village will not be liable, if the market doesn't prosper. ACORN organizers will have a 60-day window to raise additional needed revenue.

Beautification Award

Fielder presented the Beautification Award to Manchester Area Historical Society board member, Sue LaRocque. New landscape and building improvements are visible. Fielder also expressed appreciation for all the work LaRocque had dedicated to developing the Historical Society Museum.

DDA members discussed the next Beautification Award recipient. Although the DD Ice Cream renovations may not be completed, it was decided to present the award now, so it can be seen by the public during their busy commercial season. We will wait for the scaffolding to be removed, which is expected to happen soon, before the Walk to School Program begins. Fielder will work with Jeff Fahey to write an article for the Mirror. She and LaRocque will present the award in the near future.

The next DDA meeting is scheduled for September 18 at 7pm in the Village Hall. Vaillencourt announced the Community Resource Center has invited us to an Open House that evening beginning at 6pm in their offices at the Riverside Elementary School. Vaillencourt encouraged DDA members to attend both meetings. Also, of potential interest, a nonprofit round table meeting is scheduled for September 17th in the Village Room.

Adjournment: 8:45

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Fielder, secretary