

# **Manchester Downtown Development**

**January 15, 2020**

## **Approved Minutes**

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

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

**Public Participation:** Attendees included: Jeff Fahey, Kathy Lahaie, Linda Stevens, and Jennifer Wojtowicz. Fahey shared concerns regarding declining economic stability of the Central Business District. He discussed personal efforts to recruit another pharmacy and suggested alternative business models that might better serve our community, including a phone pharmacy service and/or pairing related businesses, as examples. The size of community limits interest from large corporate business chains. He asked if the Village Government had, or knew of, a financial source to help businesses get started here. Vaillencourt shared examples of past Village Government support for developing businesses, such as the Village \$1500 contribution to the recent Commercial Open House event. She also stated that in spite of a \$1.5M general fund balance, the Township did not participate in the Commercial Open House event.

### **Approval of November 18, 2019 minutes.**

LaRocque moved and Marvin-Manders seconded a motion to approve minutes as amended. All in favor.

**Approval of Agenda:** Following discussion Marvin-Manders moved and LaRocque second the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Worth Repeating was added. Kaboom Grant and Facebook page discussions were deleted.

### **1. Joint 2020 Planning Meeting with Chamber, Business and Property Owners**

Following discussion, the Planning meeting scheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm, will have an informal and informative, brain-storming format. Invitees include Chamber members, business and property owners, area Township Board members, representatives from 3 local banks, public school board members, Paula Holtz, of the MEDC, and Amy Karbo of Destination Ann Arbor. It was decided that snacks would not be served, and that the DDA board members would chair the meeting. Vaillencourt offered Julie Schaible's efforts to design a "postcard" invitation that would be mailed in the near future. It was suggested that additional copies of the invitation be available for distribution at local businesses.

2. **Cityhood Update:** Vaillencourt reported that we are still waiting to hear back from the State Boundary Commission regarding submitted updates. The Cityhood process is expected to take 2 to 3 years. She also reported that the Southwest Council of Governments recently met, and the resulting conversations were productive.
3. **CTAP Updates.** Berg reported on his quarterly updated to Amy Karbo of Destination Ann Arbor. The promotional video from the 2018-2019 grant has not been completed. We are waiting to hear from Rodney Kidd, whose video tapping opportunities were delayed due to poor weather conditions at last year's canoe race. Vaillencourt suggested "interchanging" funds from the 2019-2020 grant might give us time for completion after this Spring's canoe race.

2019-2020 Grants include kayak storage units. It was suggested that now with Riverfront Park completion, Berg could meet with Parks Commissioners to better visualize the location. The originally proposed location is less desirable now. Parks Commissioners' input regarding the

'Dutch Dairy area" south of the bridge would also be beneficial. LaRocque, Jennifer Wojtowicz and Steve Alber's input would be appreciated. The DD area project needs to be completed before the end of July. This year's allocation is \$2500.

Berg reported that the trifold *Barn Quilt* Brochure is ready for publication, thanks to Katie Hughes and Sue Maher for graphic layout and printing. The revised brochure will include biking and driving routes and 6 new barns. The *Tour de Birds* brochure is also very popular, and an additional 2500 brochures are being reprinted.

Berg also reported a CTAP community wide meeting/dinner is scheduled in February. He would like at least 2 – 3 more DDA Board members to attend.

4. **Worth Repeating:** Fielder reported on the reopening of the popular, non-profit resale shop. Thanks to Pat Sahakian's initiative and the enthusiastic support of future WR volunteers, we expect the new shop will open in March. The Board is filling LLC and 501C3 documents and expect to have our Tax ID number very soon. We are waiting for the building owners at 110 East Main to complete renovations before beginning our rental contract. We are looking forward to working with High School students, providing a 3-year, progressive training program that will include "business" responsibilities that parallel the High School Business class curriculum. High School volunteers will receive letters of recommendation for college admission requirements. All volunteers and board members will serve without financial compensation. Beneficiaries will be limited to Manchester area non-profit organizations.

5. **Grocery Store Update:** Berg reported that applications and financial/demographic information has been submitted to 8 grocery store chains, and only one has been rejected. Berg is hopeful that the Milan Kroger store model is a possibility. Franks Grocery Store in Grass Lake, Traders Joes, and Forest Fresh in Canton are other possibilities. Fresh Thyme in Ann Arbor was another suggestion, and Berg will send financial/demographic information to them as well.

**Moved to adjourn 8:50.**

**Next Meeting:** Following discussion, the next meeting is February 19, 2020.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Fielder, secretary