

**BATTLE CREEK DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS – Meeting Minutes**

Monday, April 22, 2024 at 3:30pm – Room 302A, City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Edward Guzzo, Nelson Karre, Ross Simpson, Dr. Kimberly Carter, Kara Beer, Ezra Bell, Rebecca Fleury, Monique French

ABSENT: Paul Conkey, Cody Newman, Commissioner Chris Simmons, Commissioner Carla Reynolds, Dr. Terence Lunger, Kelli Scott

OTHERS PRESENT: Ted Dearing – Assistant City Manager, Aaron Kuhn – Revenue Services Director, John Hart – Development Director and Patti Worden – Executive Assistant

Call to order: Edward Guzzo, Chair called the meeting to order at 3:33pm.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Kara Beer moved that the Battle Creek Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors approve the meeting minutes from January 22, 2024. Ross Simpson supported the motion. Unanimously approved.

Financials

Fiscal Year 2024 Interim Financial Statements through March 2024 (review and accept):

Aaron Kuhn presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Interim Financial Statements through March 2024.

Fiscal Year 2024 Estimates (review and accept):

Aaron Kuhn presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Estimates.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (review and accept):

Aaron Kuhn presented the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

MOTION: Kara Beer moved that the Battle Creek Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors accept the interim financials and the FY 2025 budget as presented. Nelson Karre supported the motion. Unanimously approved.

Project Updates:

Hollander Blue Light Development

Ted Dearing reported the Hollander Blue Light Development project was awarded tax-credits from MSHDA for their housing project at the former Kmart site. Three other LIHTC developers that submitted projects in Battle Creek in December of 2023 plan to apply again in October for the same properties.

River Restoration

Ted Dearing shared an update on River Restoration and advised that the current PAS study is nearing completion with a second technical assistance grant in the works. Site control has been secured for most of the property north of the river up to the current rail line.

The Study indicates that river naturalization is feasible, and the next PAS study will focus on environmental. Ted Dearing discussed grant options available and dollars that have been set aside for dam removal and river design. The project is still expected to take several years.

Kara Beer talked about the dam removal and underground tunnels.

There was discussion about river naturalization, the need to control flooding and water flowing over into the reserve areas. Ted Dearing shared that both the Railroad and MDOT are engaged in the project.

Ross Simpson mentioned his comments from the January Minutes about taking a road trip to Detroit to look at river restoration efforts. Ed Guzzo agreed that with the River Restoration designing stage coming next year, this would be good timing to learn about ideas.

Retail Incubator

Ted Dearing and John Hart briefly discussed the DDA retail incubator at 80 W. Michigan and BC Cargo operations for 2024.

The board discussed downtown return-to-work plans for larger employers, small project support and best practices in other communities.

Citizen (Public) Comments:

There were no citizen (public) comments.

Board Members Comments

The board briefly discussed potential new retail and commercial development including at Lakeview Square Mall.

Kara Beer discussed the Chamber's food truck program and the Hub of Home Groundbreaking event.

Edward Guzzo talked about the Kellogg plan for Return to Work. He noted he sees an opportunity to attract people to get out of the building over the lunch hour and promote the downtown area. He also suggested focusing on the safety in the parking lots/structures and things being done to promote safety.

Kara Beer shared that WACO Kitchen is closing in Battle Creek. The board also address downtown policing, safety issues and homelessness.

Adjournment

MOTION: Kara Beer moved to adjourn the meeting. Nelson Karre supported the motion. Unanimously approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:56pm.

DRAFT