

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

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Paul Conkey, Nelson Karre, Ross Simpson, Ezra Bell, Commissioner Chris Simmons, Commissioner Carla Reynolds, Rebecca Fleury, Monique French, Cody Newman (arrived at 4:01pm)

**ABSENT:** Edward Guzzo, Dr. Kimberly Carter, Kara Beer, 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:** Paul Conkey, Chair called the meeting to order at 3:36pm.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION:** Nelson Karre moved that the Battle Creek Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors approve the meeting minutes from April 22, 2024. Ezra Bell supported the motion. Unanimously approved.

**Financials – no action required**

**Preliminary Year End Financials (FY 2024)**

Aaron Kuhn presented the Preliminary Year End Financials (FY 2024).

Aaron discussed the Accounts Payable cutoff being the middle of August, so these numbers are preliminary but he believes it was a successful year for the DDA.

**Project Updates:**

**Hotel Project**

Ted Dearing reported the hotel is hopeful to have a Certificate of Occupancy by August 5<sup>th</sup>. They have commitments as early as mid-August and are planning a big opening celebration on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

**34 East Michigan**

Ted Dearing shared the City expects to recover more funds for this property. The Court has stipulated the owners of the property (the Trust) market the property and that they will likely put it up for auction.

**Brass Band Funding Request**

Ted Dearing indicated the Brass Band of Battle Creek has sent information (included in the packet) requesting support from the DDA. Staff will model the Band's economic impact using a model from the CCVB for the board's consideration. Paul Conkey and Ross Simpson shared support for the Band. Commissioner Simmons inquired about past DDA support for the Band and staff indicated that they were not aware of any previous support.

The board discussed use of the Kellogg Auditorium noting that certain "use" policies may be a barrier to booking the facility.

Nelson Karre asked if the DDA was taking action on the Brass Band request. Ted Dearing indicated the request was for information only purposes at this time.

**80 West Michigan Update**

Ted Dearing discussed the status of rent payments by the tenant at 80 W. Michigan. Staff are recommending that the DDA consider suspending the rent or forgiving payments for a short period of time (2-3 months) to allow the tenant to get caught up. If that is not feasible, consideration will be given to terminating the lease and marketing to a new lessee. Ross Simpson suggested the DDA may want to consider repurposing the space for an alternate use.

**Citizen (Public) Comments:**

There were no citizen (public) comments.

**Board Members Comments**

Monique French shared that Consumers Energy moved their training facility from Battle Creek to Marshall, noting the training

facility brought in over 10,000 people to the Battle Creek area. With the facility moving to Marshall, it will affect businesses in Battle Creek.

Commissioner Simmons mentioned the deterioration of the old Lakeview neighborhood (Territorial and Capital Southwest). Ted Dearing advised that this year's DDA budget has funds allocated for weed control. John Hart spoke to SBD team's efforts to address the condition of buildings in this area.

Staff briefly shared information on the DDA Development Plan, state funding for the Youth Village, Kingdom Builders and Oak Hill Cemetery, the launching of Load-a-Spud in the DDA's retail incubator, BC Cargo tenants for the summer, and Kellogg Arena activity.

There was discussion about the homeless situation downtown. Paul Conkey indicated they have been advised to call 911 and get pictures to share, be aware of the areas and stay safe. Monique French noted they had experienced problems with people sleeping in the park by the church. Rebecca Fleury shared the City having some issues with the green space between the church and the new public entrance. Rebecca noted The Haven has been able to absorb many of the homeless people, if they are willing to accept help. City employees have been advised to call 911 to get someone sooner. Rebecca Fleury and Ted Dearing have both witnessed police interacting to redirect people. Ross Simpson commented there has been talk about the homeless situation, but no one talks about how to fix it as a country.

Staff responded to board member inquiries regarding DDA support for downtown policing, river restoration efforts and the status of the former Horrocks site and the Blue Light Special (Kmart) housing project.

**Adjournment**

Meeting Adjourned at 4:31pm.

DRAFT