

CITY OF COOPERSVILLE
REGULAR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING
Coopersville City Hall; 289 Danforth Street, Coopersville, Michigan

February 9, 2021

Board Chair Veldman called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

Roll Call

Present:

Board Member Kelly	Board Member Grossenbacher
Board Member Buth	Board Member Slater
Board Member Noel	Board Member Fynewever
Board Member Du Pilka	Board Member Luther
Chairman Veldman	Ex-Officio Member Seyferth

Absent:

Board Members Dykstra and Ver Berkmoes

Motion by Board Member Buth with second from Board Member Fynewever to excuse Board Member Dykstra, Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Motion by Board Member Buth with Support from Board Member Grossenbacher to approve the meeting minutes of January 12, 2021 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Input and Suggestions

None

Petitions & Communications:

Social District Discussion

Ex-officio Member Seyferth gave an overview of the topic and how the communities that were highlighted in the memo by Director Wildeboer were selected, it was at Seyferth's recommendation.

Director Wildeboer gave an overview of the ins and outs of Social Districts and noted that she had heard from several businesses and community members that this is something they would like explored, or to have something similar done here in Coopersville.

It was noted that at least two businesses with a liquor license would need to support the idea and apply to be part of the Social District and that there were also roles for the City and DDA to play as well in the regulation and boundaries of the district.

Board Member Buth asked if there was buy in from the businesses that would need to support it, specifically 327 Pizza and Champs.

Director Wildeboer said 327 Pizza had expressed interest but didn't know where Champs stood on the topic. She also brought up the possibility of an interim step of allowing alcohol in City Parks.

Board Member Kelly: Would alcohol only be allowed during events?

Director Wildeboer: each community can set their own standards for that (both alcohol in parks and/or the Social District). It was noted that if alcohol was to be allowed in parks it would require a change to City Ordinance.

Board Member Du Pilka asked what that would look like.

Ex-officio member Seyferth went over the process to update the ordinance and said it could be targeted any way the City Council would like. But that it would take several months and that if a change were to occur it likely wouldn't be in place until May.

Board Member Luther: would there be the ability to have a time limit on alcohol in parks?

Ex-officio member Seyferth: yes.

Board Member Grossenbacher: would it be better to look at allowing alcohol in the pavilion rather than the parks?

Director Wildeboer: That might make things more complicated than they need to be. To start, the objective should be to make things a bit simpler and more open to allow for flexibility. She then went into an example of what Rockford, MI did with their Social District and how they got some additional buy in from not just the restaurants but also retail to extend hours and simplify aspects of the social district zone. It was noted the objective here wouldn't just be to pull people into the restaurants, but also into the retail businesses as well.

Board Member Luther: Is there enough room on Main Street to have a Social District?

Director Wildeboer: It would depend on that the district looked like. But, looking at allowing alcohol in parks might be the best starting point for Coopersville and then seeing how that might develop from there. Trying to leverage what we have and playing that up rather than starting something new right now in this regard could be very beneficial.

Ex-officio Member Seyferth, responding to Board Member Luther: City ordinance allows and encourages all Main Street businesses to use the sidewalk for sales or service. To date only a few have really taken advantage of that. And with a social district, it's more about the ability to walk from one establishment to another not just sitting outside an established, which is already allowed by ordinance if a business so chooses to do that.

Board Member Slater: What would the boundaries be of a Social District if it were to be established?

Director Wildeboer: That would be up for discussion/debate, but what some communities have done is anything from just allowing a walking district without any road or parking closed, all the way to closing streets. It would be a community decision and there would need to be buy in.

Board Member Fynewever: What parks would be included if we went that way in allowing alcohol?

Ex-officio Member Seyferth: That would be a decision of City Council. It could be as targeted or as broad as the Council likes.

Board Member Buth noted she'd like to see this start small with just parks and events only and have a time limit. Board Member Buth expressed concern about allowing/encouraging late night activity on Main Street. She noted she would support the change if its only to allow alcohol in parks for events in downtown parks specifically.

Board Member Du Pilka: if we could start at the parks that seems logical.

Board Member Slater: If the City were to allow alcohol in the parks, would that actually keep some people away?

No formal vote was taken as this was for discussion. Staff will present the idea to City Council of allowing alcohol in City Parks (times, restrictions, and which parks will be up to City Council). Given the timeline for review of ordinances, the earliest this would be changed would be at the May 2021 City Council meeting. Staff will keep the DDA board informed of the progress on this topic.

Chamber/DDA office Space

Ex-officio Member Seyferth presented on the idea of moving the Chamber/DDA office from the Community Services building to the Railroad Building on Main Street. He asked if the DDA board had any objections to this move. There were none.

DDA Information Packet

Motion by Board Member Slater with a Second from Board Member Fynewever to receive and file the DDA Information Packet. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen's Input and Suggestions

None

Director's Comments/Report

Director Wildeboer discussed the book *13 Ways to Kill Your Community* by Doug Griffiths and why she was giving it to each board member (Seyferth interjected to note that the Statewide City Manager's association was using this book as a training tool as well and he had intended to also get copies for the DDA board, and noted it was an excellent read).

Board members were invited to the ribbon cutting for the Walk Thru Park on Feb. 20. It was noted in addition to the ribbon cutting there will be ice sculptures in the downtown and other activities to attract folks downtown that weekend.

The director's written report was also highlighted

Director Wildeboer noted she wants to manage expectations and pointed out there's a lot of rebuilding that needs to happen. At this point she's really focusing on rebuilding relationships. She also noted Coopersville is really primed to be a success.

She's working hard on Social Media. She had set an internal goal of reaching an engagement goal by March 2021 – that goal has already been hit.

She's very excited to be working for the Coopersville DDA/Chamber and can't wait to help the community meet its full potential.

Board Member & Chair Veldman's Comments

Board Member Luther noted he's excited to have Rebecca on board and asked about how we reach folks who are already engaged in the community/live in the community but not coming into downtown?

Director Wildeboer noted the downtown needs to work on the "sizzle" of the downtown and the vibe when folks are on Main Street.

Board Member Luther asked how we can collaborate more, how do we pull people in?

Director Wildeboer noted that there needs to be good will between businesses which is something she has been hearing from a lot of businesses in the community

Board Member Luther asked about spotlighting businesses on social media to help build that good will.

Director Wildeboer noted this is something that's being done on the Chamber side and would be more appropriate on that side of the house as it's an extra resource.

Board Member Slater noted that the building of good will starts at the top, he encouraged local business owners to get on the Chamber board to help with the direction of that arm of the partnership.

Adjournment

Motion by Board Member Fynewever with support from Board Member Slater to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:12 P.M.

Chairman Ron Veldman