

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

JULY 18, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

The Oshtemo Charter Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors held a meeting at the Oshtemo Community Center, on Thursday, July 18, 2024. The meeting was called to order at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Members Present: Bill Cekola, Themis Corakis, Dick Skalski, Cheri Bell, and Rich MacDonald

Members absent: Ryan Winfield and Stephen Dallas

Also present: Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; and Leeanna Harris, Zoning Administrator

Agenda

Chair Corakis confirmed no changes to the agenda were needed and moved to the next agenda item.

Approval of Minutes: May 16, 2024

Corakis asked if there were additions or corrections to the Minutes of May 16, 2024. Skalski made a motion with support by MacDonald to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of May 16, 2024, as presented; motion passed.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

There were no members of the public present; the Chair moved to the next agenda item.

Treasurer's Report: May and June

Stefforia reminded the group that the meeting packet no longer includes copies of invoices for various services that were paid in the reporting period. Any Board member that would like to see an invoice may reach out. Invoices paid in the reporting period include the Atlantic Avenue extension design, accounting and auditing, Music in the Park, and lawn care. The May and June Treasurer's Reports were received.

2025 Budget Draft

Stefforia stated that the budget included in the packet is a draft for next year and when finalized will be submitted to the Township Board in September allowing the DDA more time to review the Capital Improvements Plan and the budget.

The group discussed whether there are any opportunities for the Township's property along Millard's Way to create additional lots. Different options for the property should be explored at a future meeting. MacDonald mentioned that the MEDC will create proposals and send RFP's out to different developers and that it could be an opportunity. Stefforia mentioned that the Township is currently looking into the Redevelopment Ready Communities program as well which could be an opportunity in this area. MacDonald discussed that the group and Township Planning staff should explore grant opportunities or grant matches that could help leverage DDA funds. Stefforia said staff will take a closer look at it for the next meeting.

Stefforia mentioned that a new item in the budget was added, which was \$30,000 to demolish structures on one of the Township's properties. Corakis asked what the status was on the text amendments in the Village Theme district. MacDonald said that the text was created, but not adopted while the Mixed-Use District was created and while the Master Planning process was underway. MacDonald suggested that the group revisit the text amendments. Bell said that every overlay would be considered during the Master Planning process. Stefforia mentioned that the consultants that they hired for the Master Plan were aware of the goals of the DDA, such as creating a walkable, cohesive, and attractive area. The group discussed that the major projects that the DDA should focus on are zoning and text amendments, considering opportunities with the land that the DDA and the Township has, continuing to plan around the Atlantic Avenue extension, and planning sidewalks in the area.

Update to Bylaws

Stefforia discussed the updates to the bylaws. She stated that there was an update to the number of members, from '12 required' members to '8 to 10' members. The new law, Act 57 of the Public Acts of 2018, is now referenced in the bylaws rather than the superseded Act 197 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1975. Stefforia mentioned that at the last meeting they discussed combining the positions of Secretary and Treasurer since Township staff assists with these tasks. Another update to the Bylaws was allowing the Director the authority to approve day to day items that the DDA has already authorized, such as renewing contracts.

Stefforia added that a new provision in the 2018 Act was that the DDA is required to have two informational meetings, which is now added to the Bylaws.

MacDonald asked for clarification about Article III and Article IV. He asked if they are planning to have a Director other than the Board. He suggested that language indicate that, in the absence of a Director, that the Director's role would be taken care of by the Township Planning Director.

MacDonald made a motion with support by Skalski to approve the Update to Bylaws as presented with the adjustments suggested by the group; motion passed.

Façade Grant Program

The DDA Façade Grant Program was discussed. Stefforia mentioned marketing the program whether by mailer, or posting, or similar would be beneficial to increase participation. The group also thought it would be beneficial to compile a list of businesses within the DDA for their reference. The group also wanted to confirm that the program would be available to leasers and renters, and not just owners. Stefforia confirmed that it would be available to all businesses within the DDA area if the property owner signed off on the application.

MacDonald asked if there was a limit on the amount that was provided by the DDA through the program. Stefforia said that \$10,000 was budgeted, so two projects could be approved yearly; she said that if they received numerous applications beyond that, that they could do a budget amendment to add more to the line item. The group discussed that the program was underutilized, and discussed ways that the program could be expanded, for example, to signage, awnings, or perennial landscaping adjacent to the rights-of-way, or adding a reimbursement clause. Bell suggested adding information to the Township newsletter to increase awareness of the program. MacDonald suggested engaging with a landscape architect on creating a DDA landscape beautification program. Stefforia said that there have been streetscape plans created for this area.

Stefforia said that she would bring an update on the Façade Grant Program to the September meeting.

Atlantic Avenue Extension Project Update

Stefforia stated that three concepts for the Atlantic Avenue extension were reviewed at the May meeting and feedback was received. Stefforia explained that the feedback was considered, a new concept was created, and next steps were currently being discussed while the Master Plan is being created. She mentioned that there are some safety grants that the Township may be applying for in the first quarter of the next year that would be helpful for the funding of the project.

Other Items/Updates

Stefforia mentioned that the DDA is one member shy of being a full board; it has to be a resident that lives within the DDA area. She stated that if any member of the group knows of someone that was interested, to refer them to the application and the requirements.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

Oshtemo Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority

Minutes Prepared: July 25, 2024
Minutes Approved: September 19, 2024