



# Downtown Development Authority

## City of Ecorse, Michigan

# Minutes - APPROVED

Ecorse Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board Meeting

Thursday, May 6, 2021 – 8:30 am via Zoom

Zoom ID: 3886354369, password: 5555 or call in at 312-626-6799 ID: 3886354369

**1. Meeting Call to Order at 8:40 a.m.**

**2. Roll Call:**

Johnny Gewarges, Chairman

Kosta Callis, Vice-Chairman

Jackie Brown, Secretary

Lamar Tidwell, Mayor

Darcel Brown, Mayor-Pro Tem

Dan Brown

Bob Reed

Kelly Rose

Also present: Larry Steckelberg (Michigan Treasury); John Jackson (McKenna); and Stephanie Peña (McKenna), Marilyn Oliver (City Treasurer), Dominic Romano (MEDC), Tim Sadowski (City Manager)

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved by Member Darcel Brown and seconded by Secretary Jackie Brown to approve the agenda for the DDA Board regular meeting on May 6, 2021. Ayes all.**

**4. Approval of the Minutes of the April 1, 2021 DDA Meeting**

**Moved by Member Darcel Brown and seconded by Secretary Jackie Brown to approve the minutes for the DDA Board regular meeting of April 1, 2021. Ayes all.**

**5. Guest Speaker: Dominic Romano, Community Assistance Specialist – Region 10, MEDC**

- a. Dominic presented on community development efforts and resources by MEDC. Ecorse is already engaged in MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities, but meeting or adhering to the best practices is not a concern of the DDA until the City becomes certified. Romano recommends engaging with Elizabeth King, the RRC Planner for Ecorse.

MEDC also houses the Michigan Main Street Program, a volunteer driven technical-assistance program to promote downtowns, with an emphasis on historic preservation. Business retention tool, Northern Initiative, assists with tracking business expenses; accepting applications for Fall cohort but Romano would suggest having a business association established first, to use the tool. MEDC can connect communities to SBDC Michigan that provides assistance to small businesses. Romano discussed the various funding opportunities they have for communities, as well as what is accessed when determining if a community is funded.

Public Spaces Community Places (PSCP) is a crowdfunding platform for communities to fundraise for placemaking projects. Romano suggests visiting Patronicity to see all the projects MEDC has helped fund. Romano suggests visiting miplace.org, as a great resource.

**6. Invoice Review: McKenna**

**Motion by Member Darcel Brown and seconded by Chairman Johnny Gewarges to receive and file the received invoice. Ayes all.**

**7. Report of Earth Week Cleanup Celebration Participation**

Member Kelly Rose reported that 43 volunteers attended, with great representation by the DDA, U.S. Steel, and people from outside of the City. While the event recorded 392.2 pounds collected from inside and around the Detroit River, there were several bags and three tractor tires not weighed. Anthony Dejure took great pictures and a video of the event. Member Rose presented a quick slide show with before and after photos of the day's cleanup efforts. Member Rose brought up the development of a new potential kayak launch near the Rowing Club where immense cleanup was achieved. Member Rose indicated that the event was successful in recording a new list of contacts and have great potential for more cleanup opportunities in the future.

**8. Discussion: Refuse Containers Along West Jefferson**

John Jackson explained how the DDA would like to have an impactful project within its first year, and that this is a project the fundraising committee can easily take up. There remains a need to identify what type of trash cans we would like along West Jefferson Avenue, with costs ranging between \$500-\$800. Mayor Tidwell has approached the City to coordinate the collection of refuse. Jackson further explained that this project would be a great opportunity to include Dingell Park, if we could get some decorative containers, it could be a visual indicator that something is going on in the DDA. In summary, this is an accessible and feasible project for the DDA.

Mayor Tidwell spoke about looking to obtain donations from corporations in the City. A small project lets people know that we are moving the DDA forward and taking action. Mayor Tidwell explained that there is a need to identify cans, determine cost estimates, finalize the number of cans, and finalized where they will be located. Mayor Tidwell emphasized that focusing the trash cans near existing businesses and strategically next to restaurants is important. Other cans always add in the future when the Fundraising Committee can engage sponsors.

Member Kelly Rose asked for clarification on which areas of the DDA we can focus these efforts. Jackson suggested West Jefferson as the Corridor Plan can be viewed as Phase 1 of the project. Secretary Jackie Brown suggested procuring garbage cans with large openings and locating them near the bus stops.

**9. Public Comments**

McKenna Staff Member, Stephanie Peña, discussed engaging with the Wyandotte DDA Executive Director, Joseph Gruber. Gruber will be reaching out later this summer to invite Chair Johnny Gewarges and Secretary Jackie Brown to their informational meeting. Peña also discussed the progress of updating the DDA's website alongside City Staff.

**10. Board Member Comments**

Chairman Johnny Gewarges asked Mayor Tidwell about the possibility of moving to in-person meetings. Member Darcel Brown mentions that there is a convenience with meeting online, and would greatly appreciate if it continued. Secretary Jackie Brown agreed with Member Brown. John Jackson indicated he will look into the process of meeting in person as it may require action from City Council. Member Brown offered to also look into what the Wayne emergency order entails.

Additionally, Chairman Gewarges asked regarding the recent dispensary licenses presented at the past City Council meeting. Mayor Lamar Tidwell and Member Darcel Brown are not able to discuss the matter. Chairman Gewarges indicated an interest to connect with the new owner of the shopping center recently purchased, to better understand their future plans.

**11. Adjournment**

**Motion by Member Darcel Brown and seconded by Secretary Jackie Brown to adjourn the meeting at 9:41pm. Ayes all.**