

**Fenton
Downtown
Development
Authority**

**FENTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
PROCEEDINGS
Tuesday, June 15, 2021
Electronic and Telephonic Meeting**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Craig Schmidt at 6:00 pm

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Andrysiak (Fenton), Bertschy (Linden), Green (Fenton), Henderson (Fenton), James (Frankfort MI), Osborn (Fenton), Owocki (Fenton), Ricketts (Tyrone Township), Schmidt (Linden), Steffey (Fenton), Strayer (Fenton) *(in late)*

ABSENT: Penwell *(excused)*

OTHERS: Michael Hart, DDA Director/Assistant City Manager;
Lynn Markland, City Manager; Jon Satkowiak, Treasurer
Dan Brisson, DPW Director
Denise Coole, Recording Secretary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Hart offered condolences from the DDA Board to Craig Schmidt for the passing of his father, Walter Schmidt.

Hart reminded of the new fiscal year (FY) beginning July 1, 2021. Hart will be working with the Treasurer's office, processing payments within the next thirty to sixty days to complete FY20-21.

Schmidt thanked the Board for their kind words, for those who reached out to him and his family, and for the flowers sent in remembrance of his father. It was greatly appreciated.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Satkowiak reviewed the financial report from the packet.

Owocki asked if there is an external financial audit performed on the City finances. Satkowiak replied yes, performed annually.

CONSENT AGENDA

Craig Schmidt reviewed the consent agenda for the meeting minutes of April 20, 2021.

Motion by Osborn and Supported by Ricketts to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

YEAS: Andrysiak, Bertschy, Green, Henderson, James, Osborn, Owocki, Ricketts,
Schmidt, Steffey
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Penwell, Strayer *(In late)*

Motion was carried by Roll Call Vote

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

FENTON COMMUNITY eGIFT CARD PROGRAM UPDATE

Hart said the analytics were forwarded to him from Chelsea, owner of Behind Your Design, as she had a conflict with today's meeting. Hart reported that the eGift bonus cards will expire the end of June 2021. Those cards that were purchased, go on perpetuity, but the matched bonus cards will expire if not expended by the end of this month. Schmidt said it appears about \$175,000.00 went to the restaurants, so that was a help to them.

THE FENTON STREET EXPERIENCE EVENT STAFFING CHANGE

Hart reported that the city staff, public safety and DPW have done a phenomenal job on the street experience. Hart said they worked with the DPW on this opportunity and felt it had merit to investigate, adding this is an opportunity to save money.

Hart would like to open the floor to DPW Director Dan Brisson to answer any questions by the Board.

Owocki asked about the total cost and the time frame it will cover. Hart said the change would begin the end of June or beginning of July, on Thursday and Fridays. Hart added that programming costs and street closure items are currently picked up within the budget. This change offered is to reduce costs for personnel. Hart said as in some cases, this could cover two FYs, beginning in FY20-21. Hart said the current program runs through the middle of October 2021, however there is the option to use this third-party provider to provide staffing for other events as needed, as well.

Brisson said three personnel from Elite Parking Solutions would work and one employee from DPW to work and operate City vehicles, mobilize a truck and trailer, set up and break down traffic control device. Hart said when the final figures are in after October, the data will be shared to see the cost savings incurred.

Bertschy asked about the attendance on Thursday and Friday's and if it warrants having the event both days. Hart would like the Board members opinions on the event. He added that using a third-party provider, there will need to be flexibility. The agreement signed will give flexibility to use or change the days if necessary. Markland said that the owners of the restaurants and retail stores would need to be asked these questions. The question is how many people are dining in the restaurants and shopping in the retail stores. Markland said several restaurants have set up tables outside, but it may also have brought people inside the restaurants because of the downtown activity.

Green questioned about taking payroll from Fenton personnel and if part time personnel could be hired. Markland said he and Mayor Osborn spoke with the DPW personnel and they were interested in the opportunity to not have to work overtime every Thursday and Friday from May through October, with their workdays from early morning to late evening. Markland added that it is difficult to hire seasonal help. With advertisements, there was only one seasonal employee hired and he worked one day and quit. Hiring a third-party provider will free up three DPW employees per week to have more time to enjoy their summer.

Motion by Schmidt and supported by Andrysiak to approve the recommendation to hire Elite Parking Solutions at a cost not to exceed \$25,410.00 for the Downtown Street Experience for the 2021 season.

YEAS: Andrysiak, Bertschy, Green, Henderson, James, Osborn, Owocki, Ricketts, Schmidt, Steffey, Strayer
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Penwell

Motion was carried by Roll Call Vote

Schmidt said he has spoken with visitors to the city that liked the event being a two-day event because it gave them options on when to attend. There are also those that are apprehensive about returning to normal after Covid19. Schmidt feels keeping the events outside for two days is the right effort to keep the city safe.

Green said he stayed open a few nights, but given his business, he felt it was not going to be helpful to him. Green said he would like to see downtown slow the traffic down like the City of Brighton does, enforcing pedestrian walkways. Green said the road construction is causing the city to have complaints at this time, even though it is for the good of the city. Schmidt said he does not fault a business not to remain open, it is their decision but thought it was a good program. Schmidt knows the construction on the roads are a bother to drivers but that it will be worth it to have the roads fixed.

Ricketts said he and his wife went to Caio the last few weeks and he saw that they were overwhelmed with people showing up to dine. He was told the volume of patrons was more than they could handle because of a shortage of employees, along with having new employees. Ricketts said he was told they may have to scale back on outside dining to handle the volume. Ricketts said it was a great experience there with jazz music from a Detroit Jazz Band, and he did see people using their eGift certificates.

Schmidt asked about a survey to inquire and report back next month to see if the restaurants want the two days. Ricketts said it would need to stay consistent for people to have the opportunity to come downtown. He feels it will continue to grow.

Strayer said he feels this is a big step to give support after the last year. He feels it is a unique experience and feels this could be done indefinite and not just for Covid19. He felt it should be continued this year and next year as well. Strayer added that Sarah with the DPW should receive credit for a fantastic job on the flowers this year. Fenton has the nicest display of flowers!

Markland thanked the Board for their comments. Markland said this program is for the business and they should reevaluate the program, especially for long term. Markland said the traffic did slow down when there were concerts because of the crowds of people. He added that it is a concern with the lack of available parking spaces when the streets are closed.

Hart said during Art Walk last year, there was a lot of discussion re street closing. The downtown was not shut down, but signage and cones were used in the middle of the street. That was a help to slow down traffic. Also, Hart would like to see schedules change so more businesses could be open during the street experience and felt it would help them.

NEW UTILITY TRACTOR PURCHASE

Brisson reviewed the Memo, an upgrade from the 2001 Tool Cat currently being used. Owocki asked about purchasing a new tractor and felt a Kubota Tractor would be a better purchase. Brisson said the Bobcat 5600 Series Tractor can use the attachments that are already on

hand. They have the following attachments; forks, snow blower, plow blade, auger, stump grinder, salt spreader, and a water tank. Brisson added that he has no experience purchasing used equipment for a municipality.

Hart said upgrading a piece of equipment that the city has used for two decades is a good move. This went to City Council last night and was unanimously approved. Schmidt added it is a wise investment to care for downtown and comes with reliability and good track record. Schmidt thanked those for their input.

Motion by Strayer and supported by Bertschy to approve the purchase of the Bobcat 5600 Tractor as presented.

YEAS: Andrysiak, Bertschy, Green, Henderson, James, Osborn, Ricketts,
 Schmidt, Steffey, Strayer
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Penwell
ABSTAIN: Owocki

Motion was carried by Roll Call Vote

GAZEBO AREA RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Hart said he and Markland have been working with Joe Wright and the Spicer Group. There will be opportunities to review design decisions. In addition to the gazebo, there are many other projects around that entire area, including making the area ADA compliant for handicap accessibility. Markland said they intend to provide handicap accessibility to the deck area and the bridge, widen the bridge and put a different type of bridge in, possibly building another bridge southwest of the gazebo in the open area, and raise the deck area to the concrete area with a handicap accessible ramp to the gazebo area. Markland said the area needs to be more usable and accessible. Hart said soil erosion needs to be addressed with the potential of boulders brought in, also decking for fishing, and work on the bridge.

Schmidt welcomed Joe Wright, thanking him for being instrumental with the downtown street scape. Wright said it was good to be back in Fenton.

Wright said the project on the gazebo would start this summer and as stated, there are many other projects within the project. Wright said there is room to make the area ADA compliant, creating one even surface where Grateful Fred is now, making a ramp parallel with the dam and to the bridge. There are ideas for a fishing boardwalk parallel to the river, sidewalk improvements, possible tying in the three or four styles of railings in the area to match the street scape. Wright said the walls at the north side are aesthetically bad and need to be fixed. Hart said it is great timing to improve the area with repair work on the concrete as part of the dam repair. Schmid agreed as the park is a focal point of downtown, often in use and has needed care for a long time.

Osborn said she would like to place a fisherman statue by the river, in honor of her late husband. She would like suggestions as to the placement, during this restoration.

Wright said they need to evaluate the approach and rethink the area. He asked about expanding the cement surface and the Board was in favor of that. Wright would like to see the green space in the area kept as grass only. He suggested using clay pavers to replicate the brickwork done in the street scape as they have held up so well and will for years. Osborn would like to see the brick around the gazebo. The Board agreed. Owocki liked the ideas and keeping grass on the north side of the dam and brick placement around the gazebo. Owocki also liked the potential deck area and asked about a bridge style, mentioning a Vermont style.

Markland said there are options to consider, with him favoring a stone bridge but open to ideas, adding cost may be more for some options but the bridge will last for many years.

Wright said the bridge would be widened to ten feet wide if budget allows, with new supports and keeping the existing abutments in place. Osborn asked about putting new boulders at the erosion spots. Wright said it could help reduce erosion but there will still be a measure of erosion, adding it could not be done around the point. Osborn thought this would be a very nice addition for weddings, asking about grants available to make the area ADA compliant. Markland said they are receiving a grant for the river walk. Schmidt asked for pictures of bridges to be emailed to the DDA Board. Markland would like the area designed this year and begin the work next year and completed for summer concerts.

Wright said grants are not a fast process. The next opportunity is April 1, 2022, and if the grant were given you would break ground 16-18 months after.

James asked about the area north of the bridge that leads to the parking lot, adding there is a lot of activity in that area. James asked if the area should be opened and if could be a part of the renovation. The Board agreed as the area is also used during concerts.

Hart said they had applied for a grant for park related improvement, the mill pond park where the swing sets are. Markland said it would cover that park area and the river walk area on East St, along the river by the Fire Hall to Leroy St, to Caroline St behind the Community Center. It includes wellness stations along the walk, for exercising. Brisson added the intent for a canoe/kayak launch on the upper and lower portion of the dam with open locker storage on the lower portion.

Strayer said 95% of people out there are fishing and a boardwalk around the entire area would be great, even connecting to the sidewalk. Strayer added the plaza area needs some multipurpose ideas for use. James said possibly expanding the seating for concerts.

Owocki asked about a boardwalk around the peninsula, at the water level as a dock but was not sure about access. Wright said access would be from either side, stating they drew up a boardwalk through the middle of the peninsula and another leg on both sides going out, a T shaped boardwalk. Wright likes the idea of a fishing board walk. Hart said the point area is complex, the trees need to be treated with respect and area may end up with a boardwalk at grade level and if possible incorporate LED lighting for nighttime fishing.

Schmidt asked the Board to go to the park and formulate their ideas and bring them to the next meeting. Schmidt thanked Wright for his expertise and attendance.

APPROVAL OF DIBBLEVILLE WOODWORKS ESTIMATE FOR GAZEBO RESTORATION PROJECT

Hart reviewed the recommendation and asked Terry Steffey, owner of Dibbleville Woodworks, for an overview. Steffey said there will be rehab, refinishing and replacing everything on the gazebo from the top going down. Six large panels need sanded, and the rest replaced. The rebuild will be done in the shop and will take a month for installation, anticipating from mid-August to mid-September.

Hart reported a separate proposal will be brought forward for complete staining and finishing of the product once restored. There will be future landscaping wrap around part of the gazebo that will help keep it protected from bicycles, etc. Markland said the camera installed in the gazebo several years ago greatly reduced vandalism. Hart said the gazebo will be barricaded off during that time and that reservations have already been stopped in anticipation of the project.

Motion by Owocki and supported by Osborn to accept proposal as presented.

YEAS: Andrysiak, Bertschy, Green, James, Osborn, Owocki, Ricketts,
Schmidt, Strayer
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Penwell
ABSTAIN: Henderson, Steffey

Motion was carried by Roll Call Vote

Schmidt thanked Henderson and Steffey for taking on this project.

CALL TO THE AUDIENCE - None

BOARD COMMENTS

Hart welcomed Chris Clonts to the City as Communications Coordinator. Hart said Chris' first priority is the website.

Clonts thanked the Board and for the opportunity to be in Fenton, stating it has been his goal. Clonts said he loves public service, he worked for a school district in CA, and in MI he worked for ten years at the Detroit Free Press. He considers MI his adoptive home state. Clonts said there is lots to do, and he is here to help in any way.

Schmidt welcomed Clonts to the City and is glad he is here.

Schmidt wanted to thank Sarah for the awesome job she does on the flowers in the city.

Schmidt let the Board know that Bridge Street Exchange opened a 2nd store in the Somerset Mall. They are growing but staying in Fenton and are online.

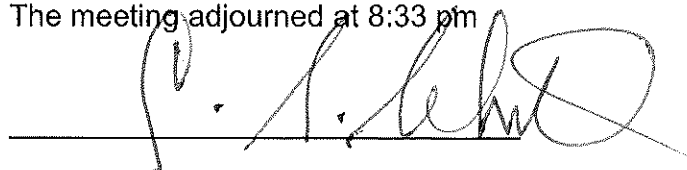
Schmidt would like the Board to think about signage downtown. With the improvements being made there are still signs needed.

Schmidt said when they begin meeting in person, they will have to get together to celebrate paying off the bond debt retirement fund for the new DPW and the Fire Station. Those two bonds were difficult decisions and they worked out fantastic. Markland said it would be appropriate to have on top of the Fire Hall, as that restaurant was possible due to the building of the new Fire Station and was part of the revitalization of the downtown area.

Owocki said with a 60% vaccination rate, he feels open meetings should begin. Markland said July will be an in-person meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm



Craig Schmidt
DDA Chairman



Denise Coole
Recording Secretary

Date Approved: 9/21/21