

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 8:15 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:18 AM with Chair Matteo Passalacqua presiding.

A. Roll Call Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Desiree Dutcher
Katie Forte
Chris Gross
Shawn Heath-Lee
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Todd Schaefer
Crystal VanVleck
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Scott Francis – *excused*
Lucas Gonzalez – *excused*
Katie Goodwin – *excused*
Anna Grace – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Janine Braun, Artsy Umbrella
Jennifer Finney, Interim DDA Executive Director
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison
Nate Mack, DDA Executive Director Candidate
Richard Pzczkowski, DPW
Jessica Stover, Director, Human Resources, City of Berkley
Adam Wozniak, Berkley DPW Liaison

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gross moved to approve the Agenda, VanVleck seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2025

Schaefer moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 11, 2025, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Financial Reports for June 2025

Gross reported revenues of @\$491,000, expenses of @\$495,000, resulting in a fund balance of @\$205,000. Last month she reported unexpected flower basket expenditures, but that was reversed, and so flower expenditures are more in line with budget. Revenues are @\$31,000 over budget; however, other revenues which are currently at \$zero are expected to rise. Expenditures are currently \$29,000 over budget, but several adjustments are in the works. For budget-to-actual the

DDA' revenues are @\$32,000, the tax capture portion being higher than projected and expenses were @\$32,000 over budget. There are still some projected expenses that haven't been allocated.

Dutcher moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report for June 2025, Heath-Lee seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. New DDA Executive Director

Passalacqua reported that after a months-long search and candidate interviews, the Organization Committee had agreed on a candidate (and contract) to bring to the Board for approval, Nate Mack. He has the recommendation of the Organization Committee to become the permanent DDA Executive Director.

Mack took the floor and introduced himself. He is currently Economic Development and DDA Director for the City of South Lyon, his position for the last five years. Prior to that he was Executive Director of the Jackson DDA. He is a member of the Michigan Downtown Association Legislative Committee and is a member of that Board. He also has a year of experience working for a non-profit theatre in Jackson.

He applied for the Berkley DDA Director position just prior to Mike McGuinness being selected and is excited about being chosen and given the opportunity to move forward with Berkley.

If approved by the Board and City Council, his first day on the job will be August 18. The majority of Mack's time will be spent working out of City Hall but the position is flexible in that he will attend evening meetings and events downtown.

VanVleck moved to approve the contract for Nate Mack to be Berkley Downtown Development Authority Executive Director, Schaefer seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B. Buns & Patties Façade Grant

Finney reported that the Art & Design Committee reviewed the Façade Grant application of Buns & Patties, located in the former Tubby's Sub Shop on Coolidge, and recommended that the full Board approve a grant request for \$3,200.00 to upgrade/replace the windows/glass on the building. If awarded, the grant will leave @2/3 of the Façade Grant budget remaining for the 2025/26 fiscal year.

Kapelanski noted that Community Development has reviewed the building renovations prior to the application coming to the Board.

VanVleck moved to approve a Façade Grant award of \$3,200.00 to Buns & Patties, Poirier seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. ArtSpace Landscaping Quote

Finney reported that after review of the contract with the DDA's current landscaper, Frank's Landscaping and discussions with them, it was determined that their current contract with the DDA does not include maintenance of the ArtSpace location at Coolidge just south of Catalpa. It has been repeatedly noted that the area badly needs weeding and upkeep.

Included in the Board's information packet was a copy of Frank's quote for maintaining ArtSpace from July through October 2025 at a cost of \$2,600.00.

Zifkin moved to approve the ArtSpace landscaping quote of \$2,600.00 from Frank's Landscaping, Gross seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported that Council's agenda was light. They approved the SMART contract that provides transportation services to seniors in Berkley. They are tying up loose ends such as rules and procedures for the volunteer handbook. For the Historical Committee cemetery tour on Oct. 18, volunteers will wear period costumes.

He also wished a Happy Birthday to Board member Ash Poirier.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Kapelanski had nothing to report.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Kempner had nothing to report.

Public Works – Adam Wozniak

Wozniak reported DPW is watering the Dorothea Pocket Park flowers daily, cleaning up, and getting ready for Art Fest on Coolidge July 12. One of the Dorothea picnic tables was flipped and had to be righted. They have no complaints about how Frank's Landscaping is doing their work. After discussion, he noted they could pull some of the large concrete barricades closing off Dorothea (pocket park) at Coolidge. They are only a temporary, safety solution to keep vehicles from trying to turn onto Dorothea.

D. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad

Absent – no report. In his place, Finney reported the DDA will have a tent and table at Art Fest, and she would welcome volunteers to join her for a time there.

VIII. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Absent – no reports.

IX. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Art & Design Committee

1. Subcommittee West 12 Mile

No report.

B. Business Development Committee

No report.

C. Events Committee – Pride Recap

Poirier reported that attendance was down from last year, probably because the weather was unbearably hot, but there was still a good vibe and patrons enjoyed the opportunity to cool down under the misting hose sprays. Kempner lauded her work on the event.

For the Dorothea pocket park closing event, there will be a couple of high school performances of "Encore," karaoke, and maybe a DJ. Light snacks will be offered.

D. Marketing Committee

The committee did not meet.

E. Organization Committee

Passalacqua reported the committee expects to make a recommendation about moving forward on the Farmers Market at the August meeting.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

A. Berkley Theatre Marquee

Finney reported she had no news to report. VanVleck reported they have received DTE bills to compare use when the marquee was lit to when it's been mostly off. There is a purchase offer under consideration. Passalacqua stressed that the marquee be turned on for Cruise Fest, and VanVleck noted the lights need to be tested before that.

B. 12 Mile and Coolidge Brick Work

Finney reported she is getting more quotes on the brick repair. The location is covered under the City's liability insurance, but there is a \$10,000.00 deductible prior to insurance payout.

C. Robina Placemaking Project

Finney reported she is waiting for a quote from the muralist to do some maintenance on the theatre west wall mural. RAP grant details are being reviewed along with updated costs for the renovations to the area.

D. Pilot Pocket Park – Dorothea

Finney reported one of the last events will be an inclusive Euchre tournament on July 19. Poirier and Baker both reported that the space is active and draws people even when no special event is going on. This space is supported by a collaboration between several City departments and organizations and the DDA.

E. MoGo

Finney reported MoGo has been in touch about a grant they're pursuing to lower costs for the service.

F. Holiday Lights

Finney reported that the Art & Design committee favors white snowflakes and white with green trees on the poles.

G. MML and SEMCOG W. 12 Mile Tour

Finney and Kapelanski reported that a group from SEMCOG and the Michigan Municipal League toured the "art district" of West Twelve Mile offering their services to improve the area. The Oakland County Road Commission has overall authority over the roadway in terms of lane reduction and other changes. The group will issue a report detailing their impressions and recommendations.

VanVleck noted the importance of having a wish list of ideas for the area when/if RCOC is open to 12 Mile changes. Passalacqua asked if zoning allowed for residential on 12 Mile, which it does. He suggested connecting with Main Street OC for their ideas about the area. Schaefer noted his takeaway from the tour was the recommendation to have each "district" be its own draw.

H. Farmers Market Coordinator Reimbursement

Passalacqua reported the goal is to have a resolution to the Farmers Market issue at the August Board meeting.

I. DDA Audit & Priorities

Finney reported that after review, her recommendation is that the DDA needs to generate revenue, review the cost of events, and closely examine priorities. The DDA gets @\$480,000 in revenue per year. Finney in consultation with the Organization Committee is recommending that the DDA suspend Façade Improvement and Mural award programs for 90 days during which time the Board should reflect on the programs' value.

Zifkin countered that the Façade grants should be considered part of a DDA's core mission: Development. Forte noted that the Art & Design Committee needs to decide whether to prioritize new development or new business as opposed to existing businesses whose facades actually *need* to be updated.

Passalacqua moved to suspend the Façade Improvement and Mural awards programs for 90 days, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

XI. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Zifkin reported that ALCO Glass at 12 Mile and Greenfield is for sale.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The opportunity for public comment was offered, and no requests to comment were made at the meeting. Anyone with comments or questions is asked to e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 AM on motion by Poirier and second by Gross