

City of Frankfort/Downtown Development Authority
Minutes for the 7mar16 meeting

Chairman Rick Schmitt called the meeting to order at 1:36 pm.

Attending: Tim Bannister, Cory Bissell, Brent Bradley, Mike Elwell, Clark Most, and City Superintendent Josh Mills. Absent: Steve Campbell, Bob Johnson and Karen Leinaar.

The public was invited to speak at the first of two opportunities. No comment.

The minutes from the 11jan16 meeting were reviewed with no edits or comments. Bannister moved to approve; seconded by Mike Elwell. Approved unanimously. The agenda was approved as presented. Cory Bissell moved that Campbell, Johnson and Leinaar be formally excused. Bradley seconded. Passed unanimously.

Committee reports

Corridor enhancement. No updates per Mills on behalf of Karen Leinaar.

Marketing. Steve Campbell absent; no updates.

Parking. Per Mike Elwell, the DDA Sub-Committee met 8feb. Three parking issues were identified, and the committee is starting to address solutions.

The first issue is considering a pay station at the end of the turnaround. At the last meeting Planning Commission Member Sam Barresi reported on his interview with a representative from Empire Township to explore their pay station at Empire Beach. The system cost \$15,000.00 with several useful features, and in the first full year of operation, Empire generated \$31,000.00. Based on the return, Barresi felt the system was worth exploring for Frankfort.

The second issue addresses RV parking. The joint group is putting a plan in place to designate parking areas for RVs to get them away from the beach anywhere west of 9th St and south on 10th St. toward the bay. It's still unclear how to move those who want to park downtown. Josh Mills: The City is already moving to put regulations to block parking east of 9th St. Council is drafting ordinance language to introduce the regulations at one meeting and adopt same at the next. It's important to move this along to develop them in a timely manner.

Vending Committee. Tim Bannister presented the recommendations of the Sub-Committee (see attached). One correction was noted: Jim Barnes is not a member of the DDA Board.

Superintendent's report. Mills now has updates on the taxable value of downtown businesses, with a nice, healthy increase of \$434,286.00 off the base value of \$25,200,438. To determine what portion of the increase goes to the DDA, you take

\$434,000 x 1,000 x 25.4637 mills, for a net of \$11,000.00, which exceeds our estimate for the first year. And that increase in value includes 40 downtown properties that are tax-exempt.

The windfall allows to start doing some things, i.e., providing marketing support. Josh Mills is talking to Rotaries Charity to incorporate a collaborative support. The website will be the primary activity and incorporate everything. The \$11K can go toward signage, as well as marketing. The number will go up as values increase. Bannister suggested we identify clear value for having a DDA with bullet points identifying solutions such as expanding parking for our guests, improving the right-of-way, et al, that we can speak to when representing the DDA.

The 7th St. beach. Mills noted that there is \$200,000.00 on hand to use in working with an architect and landscaper to address improvements at the Crystal Lake outlet. Those involved are considering upgrades to Bellows Ave., including parking. After finalizing a plan, the team will tackle rain garden/water drainage. The project will feature a longer dock with pre-cast services, but no drainage. We will preserve what we have. We can't gain anything at the 7th St. beach, but the put-in area works for most boats on the lake. There will be a nice park with a pavilion, and it will serve as a model in addressing rainwater/surface water issues.

The City has submitted a grant for a basketball court at ___ as part of a four-phase project starting with the skateboard park development. If the grant is approved, we will address backboards, posts, and a court surface originally put in place in 1992. The project will be tied in with brick pavers and lighting.

Marina updates. The lighting will go to LED. The bigger boat slips will get 30-amp and 50-amp service first, then the other slips will be upgraded over time.

Old business

Considering the Vending and Farmers' Market recommendations. Chairman Schmitt made a point of clarification. The DDA was tasked by City Council to come up with recommendations to the existing regulations. The Sub-Committee under Tim Bannister has had several meetings, and two public meetings were also held addressing food and non-food vending. Bannister noted the next task will be to look at recommendations for the Farmers' Market.

Discussion took place re: the sub-committee's recommendation to allow a grower to cook and serve food. Audience member and Market Master Mary Roeters supports the idea, but pointed out that vendor produce that would be sold and cooked won't be their own products early-on in the year.

Audience member Maury Stahl suggested the recommendation is opening up a can of worms, to which Bannister responded the sub-committee is recommending "intent," and the idea may not happen if it doesn't work.

Chairman Schmitt, speaking on behalf of the absent Karen Leinaar, stated her comment that the current regulations are appropriate at this time. As regards input from the absent Steve Campbell, Schmitt noted that he had attended the second public forum on March 1 and had two thoughts. There was overwhelming opposition in general to opening up public areas to food vending, and opposition in particular to opening up the beach. He said that we don't need to make that change now. He does, however, support non-food vending of items such as beach chairs offered as a service by the city's bricks-and-mortar businesses.

With no further discussion, Brent Bradley moved to accept the Sub-Committee report. Seconded by Most. During discussion, Cory Bissell moved to amend the motion to send it to the Planning Commission, as well as to Council. Bannister re-read the recommendation related to Farmers' Market grower/vendors cooking their own produce, and there was no reference to bringing a food truck on site to provide that service. Discussion was closed; the motion carried unanimously.

Streets and parking. No updates.

Main Street business. The Olsen building was recently sold, and future use appears conducive to DDA values. Mills reported that he continues to get requests for office space and smaller spaces. Schmitt asked if there was any activity on the sale of the former Northern Lights building. No.

Chairman Schmitt suggested forming a sub-committee to communicate sales activities. Mills said the information will go onto the planned website. We need to explore what kind of businesses will be successful and integrate in Frankfort.

New business

While attending the March 1 public forum, Josh Mills learned what peoples' positions were on food trucks, but there was no opportunity to learn from the audience what we might do to provide a positive experience for our guests. Until we have these discussions, we are stuck. The DDA can be responsible for driving them. Bradley brought up his review of the *Traverse City Tickler* and finds similarity of communities along the coast addressing common issues related to parking, housing and t-shirt shops.

Other. Bannister announced an ongoing series hosted by Advocates of Benzie on solving issues to build a better Benzie. The first forum was held Feb. 20, and 40 attendees addressed barriers to providing housing for those who work, or want to work, in Benzie County. Next up is a meeting to address housing solutions on Tues., March 24, at 6:30 pm at 9930 Honor Hwy. (U.S. 31), just east of the Cherry Bowl Drive-In Theater.

Excused absences. Campbell, Johnson and Leinaar were formally excused.

Public input

Mary Roeters brought up the matter of parallel parking in front of the Farmers' Market area. She proposes going to angle parking to increase the number of sites and remove the boat trailers. Josh Mills responded that a plan had earlier been developed with angle parking along the open space park with a sidewalk setback to allow for the new parking. Revisiting the plan will require adjusting the curb cut and removing ash trees along the park, which is already in the works. Mike Elwell responded that the parking sub-committee is working on removing boats and trailers in that area, using the nearby Luedtke property for overflow.

Maury Stahl addressed the potential funds generated from the future pay station. The funds should be set aside for an attendant/ambassador and for clean-up of the beach. He also confirmed city regulations that mandate the Vending being forwarded to the Planning Commission before going to Council.

Shuttle service to reduce traffic. Shuttle service was tried last year with limited results, using the Benzie bus. We need to take additional actions to insure the concept's viability. Elwell has since met with several business owners to share some of Executive Director Bill Kennis' ideas. The shuttle concept is designed for everybody, but needs committed ridership to alleviate downtown parking. To enhance success, we need to get business owners to work in their employees via the shuttle.

Mike Elwell was shocked at how expansive the problem is. Some owners said it's huge problem for their businesses--especially during shift change around 4 pm. He also found that a lot of employees are parking on Forest Ave. and cutting through to work on private property, causing irritation among homeowners. But the solution is relatively simple. Benzie Bus has two slow times: mid-morning and mid-afternoon. All these restaurants and lodgers have major shift in employees circa 9:30 and 10:00 am and 3:30 and 4:00 pm. For Benzie Bus to try again, they would need 30-40 riders committed in advance to satisfy revenue needs.

After pooling business owners, Elwell got a soft commitment from them. Plus, the City is considering a subsidy from mid-June to Labor Day, including weekends--all intended to reduce congestion. He will continue to work toward resolution.

Kennis spoke on changes with Benzie Bus. They are a six-day operation, now flirting with seven days. He is agreeable to go where the business is and is exploring working with the area's largest employers. There are also tax credits for setting this up. Benzie Bus ran until 8:00 pm in a test case last year as part of the Dial-A-Ride segment. They did all right during festivals, but not during weekdays.

Aubrey Ann Parker summarized the March 1 public forum. She was sorry to see the concept of a lack of vision was not brought up. But why was there such a good turnout? Because it was a controversial topic. How do we generate attendance to explore visioning? We need to use solid promotion, i.e., Facebook, and get people to come out and have fun, as well. Consider setting up rotating discussions like speed dating where small groups really interact. We need to think outside the box to promote the visioning meetings.

General discussion. We need signage to encourage alternate roads to reach Frankfort, while M-115 Hwy. is upgraded this summer.

Generating long-term rentals is a step toward opening up housing to the standing community. How do we encourage same?

How is the DDA funded? Josh Mills explained that whenever a property increases in value, the DDA captures that difference.

Re: energy efficiency, it's possible that adding solar may increase a property's taxes. Parker re: *Frankfort Shines*. They are working on a process to simplify installing solar on homes and incorporating available tax incentives.

It was moved to adjourn. Next meeting is April 4, 2016, 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Bannister, Substitute Secretary