



**OCANTON TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of the March 16, 2022 Meeting**

This meeting was held via videoconference due to Covid-19.
The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. by Chair Person, Bart Patterson.

- Present:** Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, Bart Patterson, Laura Giove, Mark Waldbauer, Seth Kleinglass, Steve Brock, Wedad Suleiman
- Absent:** Dianne Cojei, Andy Hargreaves, Kurt Olson, Sandeep Narang, Richard Zuniga
- Staff:** Amy Hamilton, Kerri Romanko
- Guests:** N/A

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

MOTION: by Laura Giove, supported by Wedad Suleiman, to accept the agenda as presented.

AYES: All present

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 2022 MINUTES

MOTION: by Wedad Suleiman, supported by Laura Giove, to approve the January 19, 2022 meeting minutes.

AYES: All present

CITIZENS' NON-AGENDA ITEMS

NONE

PAYMENT OF BILLS

MOTION: by Laura Giove, supported by Seth Kleinglass, to accept payment of bills.

AYES: All present

DISCUSSION: BOULEVARD LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Amy Hamilton said there was a joint study session between the DDA and the Township Board. The final concept that the sub-committee came up with was presented at the study session. It included natural plantings, wavy grasses and clear panels in the median that have sparked some controversy. Amy said she sent the board members a link to the study session so they could watch the presentation. She hoped to get feedback on the concept presented and said that MDOT has pushed construction out to 2024-2025 now, leaving time to make changes if we decide to.

Bart Patterson said the focus of the sub-committee has been about the boulevard being something different and not an extension of other communities. He felt that the sub-committee did a great job, considered a lot of different things and came up with a unique look that hasn't been seen anywhere else in Michigan. Bart thinks change will be tough for people, especially when it is cutting-edge design.

Anne Marie Graham-Hudak said the panels are going to be very different than any other community and wanted to know how they will look when things like mud, water and salt splash against them. Anne Marie said OHM is going to come back with statics on the panels but wondered if there are any other options that may need less maintenance.

Mark Waldbauer said the concept is similar to how a colonial home has a door that accents the other colors of the home. He said the panels won't run the length of the boulevard but are intended to be an accent piece. Mark went on to say that he has glass panels around his deck and with normal rainfall they actually stay cleaner than the windows on his house. He feels nature will maintain the glass accents along the boulevard better than we expect.

Amy Hamilton said OHM will come back to answer specific questions about durability and maintenance on the glass panels. She also said that the Observer did an article on the new Ford Road Boulevard and there has been a lot of discussion about it on the Canton Community Discussion Page as well. Amy said she got an email from Jim Kosteva, who is on the Roads Committee and was previously a planner. Jim was not in favor of the panels or the plan to get rid of the knee walls. Amy Hamilton said she explained that 90% of the walls would be removed during construction and due to the widening of the road there won't be enough room for them to be replaced.

Seth Kleinglass said he liked the glass panels because they are modern. However, he was concerned about how anything will grow in the middle of the boulevard with all of the passing traffic. Seth also suggested installing a scaled down version of one of the panels somewhere so people could go see what it actually looks like and we could see how it holds up through the weather. He thought something like this could possibly go at the exit

and entrance ramps to I-275 where we have been putting the holiday hay bales. Seth also suggested doing some of the intended plantings around the sample panels so we could get a visual idea about those as well.

Amy Hamilton thought it would be a good idea and wondered if the board wanted to look into something like this as there will be a cost to do it. Anne Marie Graham-Hudak liked Seth's idea too but said we may have to look into a different location due to the I-275 construction staging area because of MDOTS current construction project. Seth Kleinglass suggested the east side of I-275 as a location.

Amy Hamilton said it was stated during the presentation that if we didn't like the panels they could do "parklettes" where, along the sides, they could do some seedings and put some panels up. Amy added that Target is going to do an expansion and we are going to see if we can get a permanent art easement for the "Meet Chuck" art sculpture, and maybe create a little parklette there too if they are willing to work with us. She said OHM even suggested some benches that had charging stations for phones.

Seth Kleinglass asked if all the decorative knee walls would be going away or if we would still have them at the corners. Amy Hamilton said we will keep them at the intersections along with plantings. Seth then asked if any of the new aesthetics will be implemented beyond the actual construction area. Mark Waldbauer said that was part of their discussion on the landscape committee. He said it has been his desire since the beginning that whatever we do along the new boulevard area we extend to the east and west ends as well. Mark said it won't be an option in the center of the older areas, but there needs to be some way to tie the new look together.

Amy Hamilton pointed out that OHM wants to carry the new design concept throughout the DDA district. Seth Kleinglass said maybe that would be a good idea for a test area too, to preview the concept in an area where it is already planned to be extended and we won't have to take it out later. Several other board members agreed that it was a good idea.

Amy Hamilton announced that MDOT is hosting their first public meeting about the boulevard project on April 26th from 5pm-7pm at the Summit on the Park. It is open to anyone who is interested in coming. MDOT launched a website for updates on the project which will be an informative resource for residents and businesses. The website address is <https://fordroadblvd.com/>

Anne Marie Graham-Hudak said MDOT gave permission for us to promote the meeting times, website and any information that they've released. She said we had some flyers created so we can go door-to-door and drop them off. Anne Marie said the businesses have been very appreciative of that so if anyone wants to help pass out flyers it would be great.

DISCUSSION: BOULEVARD CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE AND EXISTING CONTRACTS

Amy Hamilton said the DDA didn't plan to spend as much on maintenance with the anticipation of the boulevard construction starting so soon. Construction dates have been pushed back at least two years so we need to decide if we should order more street light inventory or hold off on that. Amy also pointed out that many of the decorative walls are deteriorating in addition to contracts with our current contractors expiring soon.

Amy said that the DDA's snow plowing contract has expired, the landscaping contract will end this summer, in addition to the electrical contract being up too. She asked for direction on whether we want to rebid all of the contracts and go through the training process with a new company just to rebid again when the boulevard starts.

Light Poles: Mark Waldbauer said he is hesitant on buying more light poles when they are so expensive. He asked, if we didn't replace broken poles and it became an eyesore could we replace them with a pole from a less obvious location as someone mentioned at a previous meeting? Other members agreed that it would be a more practical option than purchasing additional poles.

Landscaping: Amy Hamilton said that the DDA will still have to maintain landscaping. She added that Frank's Landscaping's contract expires at the end of 2022 and he's already submitted a letter saying he will keep the same rates if we extend his contract. Amy asked the board if they wanted to extend Frank's landscaping contract or rebid. The board collectively agreed to extend the contract with Frank's Landscaping.

Snow Plowing: Amy Hamilton stated that the snow plowing contract with Frank's Landscaping is expiring too. She suggested rebidding that contract because we currently pay \$15,000/month whether it snows or not. Amy expressed the idea of looking at a contract where we pay "per push" only when it actually snows. The board collectively agreed to rebid the snow plowing contract.

Electrical: Amy Hamilton said that the DDA's electrical contract with Great Lakes Power & Lighting is also expiring. She asked if the DDA would like to rebid the contract or extend them until the boulevard project starts. Mark Waldbauer said he has recently driven the district after sunset and there are many areas that currently have lights out. Morrison to Morton Taylor on the south side, Morton Taylor to Oakview, Oakview to Sheldon on the north side, from Tropical Smoothie Café all the way down to west of Canton Center on both sides of the street are all out. He said all these lights have been out for at least of a couple of weeks. Mark said he would send the list to Amy so she could contact Great Lakes Power. She also said that Great Lakes sent a letter requesting to extend their contract and would honor our current rates.

Walls: Bart Patterson asked if we had a decision on the repairs needed for the decorative knee walls. He wanted to verify that we recuperate most of the cost of repairs when the walls are damaged. Amy Hamilton said yes, if they are hit by a car and damaged the insurance will reimburse everything less our \$1000 deductible. She said normal wear and tear is not covered so the DDA must pay to maintain the walls. Bart suggested repairing areas by block sections since we most likely pay them a fee to come out. For instance, if a

car hits a wall, we group other walls in that area that also need maintenance. Amy Hamilton said we can ask Albaugh to go through the district and take an inventory of all areas that need to be fixed. She said its possible that they just do some light maintenance to walls so they look good enough to get through the next two to three years until the boulevard project starts. Seth Kleinglass proposed the idea of simply removing walls that are destroyed, since they will eventually be removed anyway. Amy explained that when walls are hit it usually only takes out a section of the wall and it may actually be more expensive to have one entirely removed. Bart Patterson brought up the point that MDOT will replace items they remove. So, if the DDA was to remove things, they wouldn't be there for MDOT to "replace." Amy Hamilton said all decorative features are the DDA's responsibility to replace anyway. MDOT will remove it as part of their construction project but it will be our responsibility to replace anything decorative. The board agreed to continue with normal maintenance and repair to the decorative knee walls.

DDA COORDINATOR'S REPORT – MARCH 16, 2022

- **Public Art Jury** – The 2021-2022 selections have been made! I've attached a flyer of the new pieces along with their locations to this report. Thank you all for participating!
- **Canton Center Road Construction** – As part of Canton's Millage Program, both northbound and southbound lanes of Canton Center Road, between Ford and Warren, will be full reconstructed. This is a large-scale project that is anticipated to start early spring and last until mid-fall. Canton is working closely with the businesses in the area, as well as our contractor, to make sure driveways stay open during construction and one lane of traffic is maintained in each direction throughout the project.

Anne Marie Graham-Hudak said the reconstruction of Canton Center Road is a township project. The flyers being handed out include a date for an informational Zoom meeting on April 5th so anyone can attend regardless of where they are. Anne Marie went on to say that flyers will be mailed as well as hand delivered. Businesses along Canton Center Road will also get complimentary yard signs that say "YES, WE'RE OPEN."

- **"Meet Chuck"** – We are working with Target on a permanent art easement for Chuck. They are looking to add an extension to their building for storage so we are going to negotiate a permanent art easement as one of the conditions. This may also be a good opportunity to create with OHM called a "parklette." We would be able to add a space for the art as well as some benches and landscaping.
- **MAUI** – I was contacted by Rick Bunch who works with the Michigan Municipal Utility Issue Association. They are working to control rate hikes by DTE. This year, DTE is planning an 11% increase to municipal street lights. MAUI is working on fighting this and would like the DDA to become a member in that fight. To join, the DDA would need to pay the MAUI \$1400-\$2000 to

help them cover legal fees as they fight this out in court. I've asked Rick to send me more information so I can pass it along to the board for review.

Amy Hamilton asked if MAUI is something the board would be interested in becoming a member of. Seth Kleinglass said he isn't interested in putting money into something when there's a good chance of it being a losing battle anyway. Amy said MAUI will be sending more information that she will pass on to the DDA board for review.

- **MDOT Public Meeting** – MDOT will be holding the first public meeting on the Ford Boulevard project on Tuesday, April 26 from 5-7pm at the Summit on the Park. This will be the first opportunity the public has to ask questions about the project.

- **New Business Update** – A Certificate of Compliance has been issued for the following businesses:
 - **Go Health Urgent Care** - 43821 Ford Road
 - **Canton Pita by My Shawarma** – 45450 Ford Road
 - **Buff City Soap** – 43507 Ford Road

ADDITIONAL CITIZENS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Anne Marie Graham-Hudak reiterated that if anyone wanted to help spread flyers and educate people about the upcoming construction it would be appreciated. She said Canton Center Road will be targeted before the April 5th meeting, then Ford Road before the April 26th meeting.

Amy Hamilton said New Moon is in the process of contacting all the DDA businesses about the new spring ads for the digital flipbook. Amy said she also sent Kim Rivera (New Moon) the information on the MDOT meeting as well as the Canton Center Road construction flyers so they can help spread the word.

Bart Patterson said when we announced IKEA we did block meetings where we got people together for morning groups and he felt that personal touch went a long way. He thought maybe we could do early morning Zoom meetings as well to get construction information out to people.

ADJOURN

MEETING CALLED TO ADJOURN at 8:55 A.M.