

**ROMEO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REMOTE ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021– 7:00 PM.**

To Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84730569158?pwd=d2RiSlQxa3g3d0g1d0x1VWRJMmF6QT09>

Meeting ID: 847 3056 9158

Passcode: 954831

The purpose of the Romeo Downtown Development Authority is to correct and prevent deterioration in the Romeo Business District; to encourage historic preservation; to authorize the creation and implementation of development plans in the district and promote economic growth.

MINUTES

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman, Kelley Stephens called the meeting to order at 7: 00pm and led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Executive Director Lisa Hall called the roll

Present: Tarr, Humphreys, Malzahn, Brandt, Rose, Hayes, Poznanski, Parker, Stephens

Absent: None

All members of the Board were present

Public Forum – One member of the public was present. Asked question of board, did not provide name and contact information.

Alexandra asked if the DDA is a volunteer board?

Malzahn stated DDA board members are nominated and appointed to 4 year terms. If interested please provide letter of interest to the Village office - please address to the attention of Christine Malzahn, Village President.

Approval of Agenda

Stephens asked to add Director Position Direction to the agenda under new business.

MOTION by Hayes second by Brandt to approve the January 14,2021 agenda as amended.

FOR THIS MOTION *Yes: Hayes, Brandt, Parker, Poznanski, Malzahn, Humphreys, Tarr, Rose, Stephens*

No: None

Absent: None

MOTION carried.

Approval of the Minutes -

MOTION by Malzahn second by Humphreys to approve the November 9, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes and the December 5, 2020 Informational Meeting Minutes as presented.

FOR THIS MOTION *Yes: Malzahn, Humphreys, Poznanski, Brandt, Hayes, Tarr, Rose, Parker, Stephens*

No: None

Absent: None

MOTION carried.

Treasurer's Report – Humphreys advised the board she was unable to get report done prior to meeting and is sending an email to all board members as meeting is in session. Reported payments were made to McGraw, Morris PC for Audit Letter, AT&T, First National Visa, Sean McManus, Tech City, Village of Romeo – LED upgrade, payroll taxes were paid and two paychecks were issued totaling \$46,807.84. The DDA received payments from the Village of Romeo, Washington Township and the State of Michigan totaling \$11,884.67.

Stephens asked Humphreys if the money for the lights or the crosswalk projects has been moved as previously approved by motion at the November 9, 2020 meeting?

Humphreys advised she made calls to all the Village approved financial institutions and the best interest rate available was ¼%, the funds were to be moved if a higher rate of interest was available through another financial institution than where the DDA currently has accounts. Since the rate was not better the funds were not moved.

Hayes asked Humphreys if she checked with Tri-County Bank and People Driven Credit Union.

Humphreys advised she did check with Tri-County and their rates were not better and People Driven is not an institution that is approved by the village.

Hayes asked since the payment has been made to the village for the LED upgrade if a scope of work has been received?

Malzahn stated DTE advised they will be out by the end of January.

Hayes asked why the DDA made the payment for the upgrade?

Humphreys stated the Village sent an invoice and the revenue sharing agreement dated 11-23-2020 for the \$45,000.00 agreed upon for the LED upgrade.

Stephens asked why it was paid?

Malzahn stated she was unaware the DDA had been invoiced, she has no idea who authorized the invoice this is the first she has heard of it. Will inquire if it was put in some type of an escrow.

Hayes stated he did not think the DDA would make that payment until a scope of work was received.

Stephens stated if the DDA and the Village have not received anything from DTE, the DDA needs to request a return of the funds. Asked Humphreys if she could please request a refund of the funds from the Village treasurer.

Malzahn stated she will also ask treasurer and accounting.

Malzahn advised the auditors has requested the DDA submit a budget to actual accounting on a monthly basis as well as the treasurers report.

Humphreys stated she can provide that monthly along with the treasurers report and has just emailed this months report and budget to actual during this meeting.

Hayes asked if bills can be approved without seeing the report?

Humphreys stated again the treasurers report and budget to actual was emailed when she began talking about the report during this meeting.

Malzahn stated the board can approved based on their level of comfort.

Stephens asked again who is going to ask for a refund to the funds paid to the village for the LED upgrade.

Humphreys advised she would request a return of the funds.

Hayes asked Malzahn if the return of the funds to the DDA has to be approved by the Village Board of Trustees?

Malzahn stated she will ask the treasurer to look in BS&A and find out where that money is.

MOTION by Hayes second by Parker to table treasurers report until February 1, 2021 meeting allowing chance to review.

FOR THIS MOTION Yes: *Hayes, Parker, Malzahn, Brandt, Rose, Poznanski, Tarr, Humphreys, Stephens*

No: *None*

Absent: *None*

MOTION carried.

DDA Executive Director's Report – Lisa Hall

Hall provided her report.

Parker stated he had sent question to Hall about buildings in the village.

Hall asked Parker for the date he sent, has nothing from him regarding buildings in the village.

Parker than asked if anyone has information on the Bailey Street Car Wash, all the equipment has been removed and building is taped off, does anyone have any information?

Stephens asked why would the owner report the removal of the equipment or need to obtain a permit to remove the equipment?

Hayes asked how do the DDA board members stay updated on what is going on in the village if there is no flow of information? Is it our responsibility as business/building owners to inquire?

Stephens stated the Masonic Temple has leased the space next to their building, did the business owner have to go to the village for approval?

Malzahn stated yes the new occupant at the masonic temple had to come to the village for zoning compliance, permits and inspections.

Stephens stated that is why the board liaison is on the agenda.

Parker stated that is part of the directors job.

Tarr asked Malzahn if she could share information?

Malzahn stated she has consistently reported monthly on what is happening in the village to the DDA board.

House of Tudor sold and is being renovated into offices.

Carolyn Seidel has been issued a demo permit for the Bailey Street Car wash, it has not been sold.

An Art Gallery is moving into the rental space owned by the Masonic Temple and may also be occupying some space in the corner building at East Lafayette and South Main Street.

The Romeo Observer building has been purchased, not sure what the plan is at this time.

Vincker received a change of use approval for the Bailey Street Market building.

Parker stated Vinckier has not purchased the building yet.

Malzahn stated she is hesitant to share, based on comments like the building has not been purchased yet. Malzahn stated she can only provide so much information on purchases and uses of spaces in the village based on what they need to do for occupancy and the legality of the processes.

Parker stated the ZBA approved Vinckiers request and he does intend to purchase.

Hayes asked if the board is going to be more proactive, or are we going to be the passive board that waits for them to come to us?

Parker stated in other DDA districts people contact the DDA.

Parker asked who made the determination about the police and fire banners?

Malzahn stated these items are all on the agenda, need to follow the agenda.

Parker asked who makes the determination to violate the banner schedule? Who put them up, where are the kids Christmas banners? Whats going on, what is up is not what is on the schedule?

Stephens stated the kids banners were not going up this past year the kids are not in school.

Hayes stated the DDA had kids Christmas banners on hand.

Stephens the agenda is not being followed, we are moving onto the next item.

Funding Requests—None

Committee Reports— Christmas Lighting 2021 Subcommittees

Stephens stated she would like to refer to the Chambers practices for subcommittees. The Chamber asks board members who would like to be on the committees. The DDA Christmas Light Subcommittee members are currently, John Rose, Carl Brandt and Meagan Poznanski, do you want to remain on that committee?

All stated yes.

Stephens commented Harvest Days takes a village to do and knows Meagan and Carol have helped Lisa in the past.

Hayes stated we should look at forming the committees at the Goals and Objectives meeting.

No motion necessary.

Unfinished Business—None

New Business – None

Schedule Goals and Objectives Meeting

Hayes stated he believes the Goals and Objectives meeting has to be posted. Informational meeting, questions and answers, set sights on goals.

Stephens stated that is what is done by the Chamber.

Stephens asked if this can be an in person meeting?

Malzahn stated at this time all non residential gatherings such as public meetings are to be remote meetings until January 31, 2021

Stephens stated the Goals and Objectives meeting could be scheduled at the February Meeting, asked the board if this should be a separate meeting from the regular board meeting?

Poznanski stated it should be a separate meeting.

Hayes agreed it should be separate, don't want to be rushed.

Poznanski said she would like it to be an open meeting so residents could attend.

MOTION by Hayes second by Brandt to table scheduling of Goals and Objectives meeting to DDA next regular meeting of Monday February 1, 2021.

FOR THIS MOTION **Yes: Hayes, Brandt, Rose, Poznanski, Parker, Tarr, Humphreys, Malzahn, Stephens**
No: None
Absent: None

MOTION carried.

CBD Building – New Business/New Use – DDA Board Liaison

Parker questioned if this is supposed to be handled as separate items?

Hall stated it is one item addressing all new business and new uses in the CBD/DDA district.

Parker stated he believes it is the responsibility of the director to ask if there is anything the DDA can do to help, it is one of our mandates.

Stephens addressed Parker, Bill you believe the director position should be the liaison, but you would be the perfect one for this, you know everything that is going on in town and you are here daily.

Parker address Stephens, perhaps you should be Kelley!

Hayes asked Stephens if the Chamber has people coming to you about opening a business in the Village?

Stephens stated NO, the Chambers solicits new members.

Malzahn stated this is not answering Parkers question. The New business/new use is not a DDA function or a DDA level issue. New Business/new use applications begin at the village level and are required to follow the processes and procedures according to the zoning ordinance. Most of the space in town is landlord owned and they are just searching for tenants. New business/new use requires a zoning certificate and all permits to who is responsible. Reporting on some of these until they are complete is inappropriate.

Parker stated that Malzahn feels it is inappropriate for the DDA to comment on a special land use.

Tarr stated he does not understand the process.

Stephens stated the DDA board members could contact President Malzahn at the office and ask questions, she has stated she will share as much information as she can.

Hayes stated he would like to see something that helps new interested business owners navigate the process. The DDA website is not an asset, it does not have a map, and is not functional to help new business. There is no DDA board branded packet with info that can be given to new business owners when they go into the village. We need something that creates a little more value for the DDA..

Tarr stated there needs to be a packet.

Malzahn stated she found a packet from 2017 it had a lot of outdated information. If this is project the DDA wants to take on and provide the information to the clerk, the village would be happy to supply them to someone looking to open or is opening a business in the village.

Tarr asked if the DDA could spend the money to have a packet professionally created by a marketing or ad agency to hand out?

Stephens stated that she has spoken with Romeo Computer Company and they are willing to work with the DDA but cannot begin until March.

Malzahn stated anyone looking to open a business in town is encouraged to speak with the Planning Consultant to discuss the process.

Rose stated he thinks all the board members understands what needs to be done and a liaison is not really what is needed. As members of the business community we need to ask questions at he village level, we don't need all the information just what can be shared without compromising the process. Less formal, on the street information, it is everyones objective to promote their own business and the area. Malzahn did share and answer some questions about the buildings there were questions about.

Stephens stated Malzahn rattled off information on each building that was questioned.

Malzahn stated again, she has provided this information at each meeting. Address Parker and invited him to contact her with any questions. Would appreciate questions regarding these matters from any of the DDA board members.

Rose stated his plan is to contact the village with any questions or go directly to the new occupant or building owner.

Stephens stated she agrees with Rose.

Rose stated he is unable to volunteer to ask questions of all new business, however if the DDA board members have info they could share it with the other board members.

Hayes stated members need to be cautious, we do not want to spread information in public meetings.

Stephens stated than there is no need to create a liaison, we can all work individually and share information.

Parker stated the Director should provide the information.

MOTION by Parker to require DDA Director to provide information.

Rose stated he would prefer to add this to the goals and objectives meeting, can this be tabled and added to that meeting.

Stephens stated there is a MOTION on the floor.

Parker stated he would like to withdraw his motion.

MOTION by Rose to table need for board liaison and add to discussion at Goals and Objectives meeting when scheduled.

Hayes stated this is more of a discussion point only, do not need motion for discussion.

NO MOTION REQUIRED.

Banner Schedule

Stephens stated she was under the impression that the DDA has always scheduled the banners.

Malayan advised Stephens that Amy Aul has worked on the Christmas Banners for the past few years, she had a discussion with Amy and was advised that no Christmas banners were being done in 2020.

Parker stated that was not a DDA decision as is on the schedule.

Stephens stated the Hero banners are nice but would have preferred they were hung after the Christmas Decorations were removed.

Hayes stated since no St. Baldricks banners will be hung they could have been installed at that time. Where are the Christmas Banners made by the students that represented the businesses? They could have been hung.

Parker stated we can all agree that people look at he banners.

Poznanski stated there has been discussion in the past about creating a banner permit which would reserve the time for banners to be hung.

Malzahn stated she has not seen the banner schedule before tonight. Spoke with Amy Aul and confirmed there would be no student Christmas banners in 2020. Someone else approached her with a banner project and she OKed it. Agrees with Stephens that the timing was off, should have been after Christmas.

Parker stated, "My answer was correct, the decision was not made by the DDA, it was made by the Village President" the DDA has worked with Amy Aul for the past two years for the student banners.

Parker stated there was a discussion about the poles and we have not seen anything about them.

Malzahn stated yes there was discussion about the over the street poles and hanging Christmas Lights from them and the weight of the decorations.

Stephens asked why the poles are part of this discussion and who owns the poles?

Hayes stated the poles are out of the DDA district, banners are hung from them and it has always been a village thing, but the light pole banners have always been the DDA but not for the ones that are currently on display. Amy Aul has spearheaded the student banners, the DDA contributed as well as others. The Lions do the Peach Festival but they are on the DDA schedule. Students are normally up November to February, the schedule was created due to limit the number of banners hung, it needed to be trimmed down. It is either a DDA responsibility or not.

Stephens stated she always thought it was the DDA.

Humphreys stated until about three years ago the DDA had multiple banners hung throughout the year.

Parker asked Malzahn if she wants the DDA to continue to do the banner projects?

Malzahn stated before tonight she has not seen this schedule. It is not in the village office and she has not been advised by the DPW that there is a schedule. She has worked with Amy on the timing and delivery of the student banners and the DPW on the install of the banners in the past. The DDA did help to coordinate.

Hayes asked how Malzahn worked with Amy?

Malzahn stated Amy would call her to advise when banners would be delivered, village would call to have DPW schedule install.

Hayes stated so the schedule never changed it stayed the same.

Malzahn advised that DPW has advised that new ST. Baldricks and Peach Festival Banners are needed.

Hayes stated the Christmas Banners representing the businesses were supposed to be multi year banners.

Malzahn stated the Christmas Business banners were repurposed for a second year and the Christmas Wish Lists were returned to the students.

Hayes asked where the Christmas Business banners are? Were they given back to the students or the Foundation?

Malzahn stated when she spoke with Amy Aul she was advised those Christmas Banners were not to be displayed in 2020.

Stephens asked who owns those Christmas banners?

Malzahn stated the DDA and many others contributed to the creation of those banners, they are not owned by the DDA.

Hayes stated its not about ownership, its the schedule, so the DPW has it on their radar.

Malzahn replied to Hayes, you asked where they ere and if they were given back.

Poznanski stated the DDA does own red and green Christmas Banners.

Stephens asked if for the coming year are we sticking to the schedule?

Parker stated in 2020 hundreds of Seniors had their pictures on banners, did they each receive their banner, who paid for them?

Stephens stated all the seniors pictures were on the banners. There were up to 4 different students per banner.

Poznanski stated there were a few that had names listed for students who did not have pictures.

Stephens stated the banners were sponsored by businesses and individual sponsors.

Ruth Heidebriecht requested to make a comment. She stated the MittTV was one of the sponsors of the student banners and all the seniors were on the banners. Not sure if this is breaking protocol. She stated she did sponsor the Hero banners, was working on another project with Blue Velvet Photography to do formal photos of our Police Officers and Fire Department Personal to honor them for all they do and thought hero banners would be a nice way to honor them for what they do. Spoke with Amy Aul to see if there would be student Christmas banners this year, she advised there would not be student banners in 2020. Was not aware that DDA approval was necessary, did ask Lisa when the greens were being installed, so did contact the DDA but not as a whole.

Poznanski asked if the sponsor payed for the installation and if they will be paying for the removal of the banners?

Malzahn stated in the past the DDA used to pay for install. Former leadership had a problem with the DPW doing the installation.

Hayes asked that the DDA be made aware of any decisions in the future.

Malzahn commented that when Amy Aul requested sponsor money it likely put it on the DDA's radar.

Hayes stated Amy's project was what started the schedule, it cut down on the banners because it was so much.

Poznanski stated it was almost every month.

Malzahn stated Tim Metz, DPW, does not mind. If the DDA wants to create a permit for banners the same as over the street it could reserve times and include with funding request so the DDA knows when.

Stephens stated the timing of the Hero banners could have been a miscommunication. Is the DDA going to reconvene taking care of the schedule?

Hayes asked Malzahn if the DDA does the banner schedule will the board adopt the schedule?

Stephens asked if someone comes with a banner project, who should they go to?

Malzahn stated she knows Amy went to the DDA and it became an annual project. Revise it for 2021 and revise it annually after than submit to the village.

Stephens stated this can be added to goals and objectives.

NO MOTION REQUIRED

Stephens asked Parker if he would like to continue the discussion about the poles?

Parker stated if they are not in the DDA district it is a moot point.

Director Position Direction

Stephens stated she was contacted by a board member about the directors position and possibly expanding that role.

Hayes stated that a couple points have been brought up, such as the director is currently in the office on Fridays when the village office is closed and the Village office staff is not there. Cannot obtain info from office staff regarding any updates on activity in the village. Do we need someone in the office more often?

Malzahn stated there are many times when the elected officials and some of the office staff are in the office on Fridays. Hall can confirm that. The elected officials and staff can also be reached by email, emails are forwarded when they are not in the office.

Hayes asked Hall her thoughts on someone in the office more often?

Hall stated the DDA needs someone three days a week.

Hayes asked Hall about availability?

Hall stated she is available on Fridays all day. Has a full time job Monday-Thursday. Is not available on Tuesday evenings and not available on any nights that Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals meetings are scheduled in the village.

Stephens asked if the DDA is looking at a three day a week part time position? Cannot afford to pay someone three days a week part time.

Malzahn stated when you brought Lisa on there was no money in the budget. If you want to take on projects and hire someone for three days part time, your budget has to support hiring someone.

Tarr asked if the board can create a full time position? Clearly we need to after many items, such as a website, keeping binders updated, a liaison for the board, seems there is lots of work that can be done..

Malzahn stated if the grant is approved for the crosswalk there will be a need to have a person that can assist with that project.

Tarr asked what is the next big project, we spent a lot of time discussing banners. Need someone that can sit down with owners and ask what they want and how DDA can help.

Stephens stated what she hears is another item for goals and objectives.

Hayes sound like we may need sleeping bags, definitely a separate meeting.

Malzahn stated the meeting should be a workshop, people can offer input and also to volunteer.

Board Member Comments:

Parker stated he heard lots of comments about the Christmas Lights, complimented Carl Brandt and the other volunteers and thanked them for a job well done.

Hayes agreed with Parker and thanked Carl Brandt and all the volunteers.

Brandt stated he would like to thank the following who donated time and money:

Ryan Herfert from Village Floors
Andrew Detloff from The Dance Studio
Frank Czajka from Thee Office Pub
Denny Repal
and Justin Parker from Parker Electric
and the following builders that let us use their buildings:
Fams
Romeo Coney Island
Paramont
Bill Parker
Kelley Stephens at the Chamber
and the Romeo Masons

Stephens also thanked Carl Brandt, also wanted to compliment Matt and Lisa Jaroch for the beautiful greenery installed this year.

Malzahn stated she would like to thank Parks and Recreation for the tree lighting event, it was very well done and Ruth and Rick for lighting the tree and finding the star in the tree and having it restored and placed back on the top of the tree.

Rose stated he would also like mention that one Saturday morning he noted Carl out tying large bouquets of Blue and White balloons on the light poles, Thank you Carl.

Stephens asked Rose if he knew what the balloons were for? Noted they were for Shop Small Saturday this is an event that happens every year. Kudos to Carl.

Hayes commented that Shop Small Saturday was one of the busiest he has seen, whatever was done to promote the event worked.

Adjournment

MOTION by Hayes second by Parker to adjourn the meeting at 8: 45PM.

FOR THIS MOTION Yes: Hayes, Parker, Tarr, Humphreys, Malzahn, Brandt, Rose, Poznanski, Stephens

No:

MOTION carried.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Hall, Executive Director
Minutes approved by DDA Board motion on 2-1-2021
_____ As Presented
LH__ With Amendments