

where the funds that the DDA gave the Christmas Home tour goes as well as sponsorship money from the merchants and St. Laurent replied they are used for printing and advertising. She also re-stated that there is no profit to the Historical Society.

Betty Cassidy approached the podium to announce that Public Forum is the community's time to speak without interruption in reference to St. Laurent's interruptions during Smith's comments.

Amy McDonald presented concerns after watching the DDA's last regular meeting on 10-6-25 in regards to residents ability to serve on the board who do not have a vested stake in downtown via a business or owning property. She also revered Osebold for doing a great job organizing the Witches & Warlock event, she saw people from all over the state attending. Her business definitely saw a great benefit from this event.

Justin Parker presented Free Thanksgiving Meals from the Masonic Temple again this year from 12-3PM. Delivery is also available by contacting James at 586-515-9613.

Mac Kelly, the DJ that donated his services at the Witches & Warlock event mentioned that this type of event is what supports the Mom and Pop shops and restaurants and is the backbone of our community. This event brought so many people that came and visited our restaurants and retailers, everyone benefited.

5. Funding Request:
 - a. Old World Nouveau - Ladies Night Out

Discussion: St. Laurent asked further questions of how many businesses are participating and Pochert replied that information was not submitted. Lee asked what the funds would be used on and again Pochert stated that information was not available. Pochert mentioned that this is an annual event that has been very successful in the past. Many businesses participate and hundreds of ladies attend. Hutnick and Osebold both advised their businesses will be participating. St. Laurent advised the board that there isn't enough information to proceed and by the next meeting the event will have passed and due to the DDA not being properly listed as sponsor would likely result in a failed motion to approve. Organizations need to submit their request early enough to allow for follow up questions and/or attend the meeting to be available for questions.

Motion: none.

b. 4 Corners Diner - United Methodist Church Dinner

Discussion: Lee began the discussion by clarifying that the United Methodist church is on Main Street, however technically not within the DDA boundaries. St. Laurent asked how we can spend tax payer dollars on an event not located in the DDA? Hutnick mentioned with all due respect the Christmas Home Tour is not within the DDA boundaries. St. Laurent proposed that the Home Tour which is run by the Historical Society and the Historical Society owns Starkweather which is in the DDA. Hutnick mentioned this is the same thing! I own a business in the DDA and am asking for funding for an event not happening inside the DDA boundaries.

More comments from video

Motion: none.

c. MJC Marketplace - Witches & Warlocks, Return to Romeo!

Discussion: Osebold, due to a possible conflict of interest, decided not to accept the DDA's funds for the Witches & Warlock event.

Motion: To rescind the \$2,000 sponsorship funds awarded to MJC Marketplace for the Witches & Warlock event and return the funds to the DDA's general fund.

Motion by: Hutnick

Second by: Murdock

All ayes

Nayes: none

No further discussion.

Motion passes 6-0

1. New Business

a. Ladies Night Out - DDA participation

Discussion: Hosting a Cozy Cafe during Art & Wine walk resulted in 150 visitors to the DDA's office where they were able to hear about our projects, meet members of board and visit our merch shop. Lee and Osebold both stated it was a great night and worthwhile. St. Laurent mentioned this is a great way to honor our Strategic Plan.

Motion: To approve the DDA participating in the Ladies Night Out event with another Cozy Cafe not to exceed the cost of \$150.00.

Motion by: St. Laurent

Second by: Lee

All ayes

Nayes: none

No further discussion.

Motion passes 6-0

b. Holiday Magazine Advertising

Discussion: Pochert received an advertising opportunity through The Record, but wasn't sure if it's something the DDA has done in the past. St. Laurent asked what we would put in the ad. Pochert asked for suggestions but mentioned we could have our brand logo and story with links to our social pages. Lee mentioned we could have all of our holiday events happening. Pochert suggested a half page ad if we want to add that much content. Murdock agreed we should do more traditional advertising.

Motion: To approve the DDA advertising in the Holiday Traditions magazine at a cost not to exceed \$ 349.00.

Motion by: Murdock

Second by: Stephens

All ayes

Nayes: none

No further discussion.

Motion passes 6-0

c. Goodfellows Advertising

Discussion: Hutnick presented this opportunity to be featured in the No Child Without Christmas Goodfellows paper. 3,000 copies are distributed. Stephens agreed this is a great organization and opportunity.

Motion: To approve the DDA advertising in the Goodfellows paper at a cost not to exceed \$100.00.

Motion by: St. Laurent

Second by: Stephens

All ayes

Nayes: none
No further discussion.
Motion passes 6-0

d. Social Media Contract

Discussion: Pochert advised that we have 60 days left on our six month commitment with Ignite Media and suggested that we move from the 1,250 per month package down to the 400.00 package. She stated that we don't really need them creating and posting on social media as she already does and having to hand hold them to create separate posts is a waste of time and resources. She did review the latest SEO report that shows outstanding turnaround and performance, but again mentioned it's the events and the videos/reels having the most impact.

Motion: To approve the DDA reducing its SEO contract with Ignite Media from \$1,250 package to \$400.00 package beginning in January 2026.

Motion by: St. Laurent Second by: Lee

All ayes
Nayes: none
No further discussion.
Motion passes 6-0

1. Unfinished Business

a. Holiday Lighting Installation

Discussion: Pochert advised that everything is scheduled with Hayward Holiday Light Installers and Jusko's.

b. DPW Storage Cleanout

Discussion: Pochert updated the DPW storage unit is not well organized and cleaned out. We now have room for storage.

c. OneSource Publication

Discussion: Design and content has been completed and submitted.

d. Wayfinding and Attraction Strategy

Discussion: Pochert advised that she is working on grant applications. Lee asked which ones and Pochert answered MDOT and SEMCOG.

St. Laurent asked if these were all inclusive grants or would there need to be multiple. Pochert responded that she is starting with these specific ones because they only require a percentage of capital from the DDA and would cover the full scope of the remaining funds if approved. She also mentioned if we do not receive these grants, she is prepared to gather multiple grants to help the project to funding. St. Laurent asked if the marketing intern would be working on grant writing and Pochert advised that she would be working on marketing projects and not grant writing.

e. Multi-modal Streetscape conceptual planning services

Discussion: St. Laurent asked what the timeline is for this project and Pochert advised she is starting with the Wayfinding grant application first as we have the means to meet the requirements. Streetscape designs have been delivered and a town hall will be scheduled after the 1st of the year. Lee inquired if that meeting has been scheduled and Pochert responded not yet, but will reach out to giffels-webster for an update.

f. Committee update - Bylaws, Policies and Procedures

Discussion: Osebold confirmed that herself, Stephens, Lee, and Hutnick all willing to serve on the committee. Osebold will send out 2-3 options for their first meeting.

10. Public Forum*

Sharon Smith

Responded to the funding request for the United Methodist Church Dinner and feeding the hungry not proceeding with “shame on you, especially with SNAP benefits going away”.

11. Executive Director report

Kay Pochert went over her current activities from October and provided an itemized report and project management list.

12. Board Member comments

Stephens - mentioned that wayfinding signage, especially with events, works great. He has experience and is willing to help advise the board. MJR Cinemas has advertising that also reaches far and wide and thinks it's a great option.

Murdock - Inquired on who won Monsters on Main and Pochert advised MJC won 1st place, Old World Nouveau won second and Stan Sanisak Insurance came in third place. She also mentioned while working registration at the Witches & Warlock event, many people mentioned they hadn't known about the event until that day. She suggests we incorporate more traditional forms of marketing.

Lee - Mentioned that the DDA spent money putting together a Strategy Plan, that this was something everyone voted on and was a part of. Lee referenced the TIF plan and mentioned that the DDA should be using its resources on roads, wayfinding, facade improvements and zoning ordinances. "We don't get to decide what we get to use the funds on, these are tax payer dollars". Pochert mentioned that visitor attraction is in that strategic plan as was the approved budget by the board to allocate 10K to event sponsorship. Lee proposed visitor attraction should be by way of roads and infrastructure improvements according to the TIF plan. "To say that we don't care about events downtown is not appropriate".

St. Laurent - St. Laurent apologized to Sharon Smith for interrupting her during public comment and thanked Trustees Rosso and Parker for supporting the DDA. She expressed confidence in voting for the Christmas Home Tour, stating it fully aligns with DDA policies and provides no personal benefit to her, her family, or the Historical Society. She noted the Historical Society owns property within the DDA and should be eligible to request funding, and clarified she serves only as a volunteer. St. Laurent referenced the Strategic Plan—based on the TIF plan—and voiced concern that it has recently been overlooked in favor of quick wins, reminding the board that DDA funds must be used within designated purposes.

Marty - Clarified that her business is located in the DDA and the food for the charity event was going to residents of the DDA. She also mentioned that the Witches & Warlock event was mentioned on WJR radio along with many other media outlets for awareness.

Poznanski - thanked the board for their work.

Osebold - The newly elected Chairperson addressed concerns regarding the direction of the Romeo Downtown Development Authority (DDA) since assuming the role in August. The Chair emphasized a commitment to improving communication, collaboration, and transparency, assuring that all actions have been made in the best interest of the DDA and the Romeo community.

Due to lack of quorum in August and September regular meetings, a special meeting was called (per bylaws) to conduct essential business. During this time, the Visionary Committee was established to connect downtown business and property owners for event collaboration and idea sharing. Its

formal relationship to the DDA is still being clarified, though its goals align with the DDA mission and the Director's authorized duties.

The Chair addressed questions about event funding, noting all expenditures were within the DDA Director's approved spending authority.

- *Cruisin' on Main*: Allocated funds were returned after weather-related cancellation.
- *Witches & Warlocks event*: Although board-approved funding was requested (including the Chair's vote), the Chair ultimately declined DDA funds and personally covered all costs.

The Chair also requested the formation of a Bylaws and Policy Committee to review and update existing bylaws, establish clear policies, and define spending authority in alignment with Public Act 57 of 2018 (Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act).

The Chair reaffirmed that all meetings and activities have been open and transparent, with the intent to build consistency, trust, and understanding across the board and community. The statement concluded with a commitment to ongoing collaboration among board members, Village Trustees, and the downtown business community to support a strong and vibrant downtown Romeo.