

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Berkley Downtown Development Authority**  
**Meeting of the Board of Trustees**  
**Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room**  
**Wednesday, January 12, 2005**

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:37 AM with Chair Keith Logsdon presiding.

II. **DETERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:**

*Present:* Dr. Jeff Allyn  
John Barbuscak  
Daniel Cherrin  
Jane Bais-DiSessa  
Matthew Gross  
Keith Logsdon  
Timothy Murad

*Absent:* Lawrence Gallagher – *Excused*  
Eva Koenig – *Excused*  
Stephen McCrumb – *Excused*  
John McGovern – *Excused*  
Ron Smith – *Excused*  
George Stark – *Excused*

*Also Present:* Fred Collins, City Council Liaison  
James Eshhaki, DDA Board Candidate  
Ron Meyer  
Joe Morgan  
Joe Novitsky, Planning Commission Liaison

III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** The agenda was approved unanimously upon a motion by DiSessa and a second by Allyn.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Regular Meeting of December 8, 2004:** On motion by Murad and a second by DiSessa, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**A. Communications: Keith Logsdon** – None received.

**B. Introduction of First Time Visitors:** James Eshhaki, DDA Board Candidate, was introduced.

VI. **CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE:**

**A. Downtown Master Plan:** Logsdon, Murad, Allyn, and Barbuscak all attended the Planning Commission meeting on January 11. See discussion and report by Novitsky under X.B., Planning Commission Liaison, for details of the meeting. Logsdon said the DDA will be very involved in the Master Planning process as it relates to the downtown master plan.

**B. DDA Board Candidate: James Eshhaki** – DiSessa introduced James (Jim) Eshhaki, with whom she worked on the Coolidge convent building donation previously. Eshhaki owns property in Berkley at 11 Mile and Coolidge and 12 Mile and Coolidge, both small shopping center developments. DiSessa noted the importance of bringing property owners with vested interest in the downtown onto the DDA Board. Eshhaki said that his Birmingham-based company owns 600,000 sq. ft. of property in Oakland County, primarily mixed use, office and retail. He has a great deal of experience working with communities, city, and county officials. He said he's seen successful multi-use projects (retail on lower level with residential above) in Birmingham, Royal Oak, and downriver. He believes the City is moving in a forward direction and said progress is always easier to achieve when people work together. DiSessa said his appointment would not be officially made until February. She is looking for additional Board members to replace those that have left the Board

recently. Logsdon said Eshshaki's involvement on the Board was in a step in the right direction of connecting with property owners. Barbuscak said it was the right time to have someone with Eshshaki's experience and talent on the Board. Logsdon said the DDA hopes to be very involved in the process of developing a detailed downtown master plan and implementation phase.

**C. Joint Council/DDA Executive Session:** A closed joint meeting of City Council and the DDA Board was scheduled for Council chambers January 17, 2005 at 6:00 PM, before the regular Council meeting, to discuss the intersection project. Because of the attorney-client privilege involved, all discussion at the session would be confidential.

**D. Business Liaisons:** Logsdon noted past communication problems of the DDA making personal contact with business owners and suggested that the district be broken down into 2 to 4 block sections with one Board member assigned to each section as a business liaison. He said Barbuscak had proven through his business banner contacts the importance of being able to put a "face" on the DDA. He would give more details on delineating the sections of downtown at the next Board meeting.

## VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**A. Treasury/Budget: John McGovern** – The Cash Reports for September, October, November, and December 2004 were unavailable for the meeting. In McGovern's absence, Logsdon reported that McGovern had spoken to Kurilik about a new format for the reports.

**B. Finance: Larry Gallagher** – Nothing to report.

**C. Citizens Committee: Larry Gallagher** – Absent. DiSessa reported that the previous meeting dealt with expenditures and had been an excellent session. The next meeting on February 7 will focus on the Planning and Building Departments. DiSessa announced that Kurilik has taken a new position in Cambridge, Massachusetts and would be leaving soon. Logsdon complimented her, and said she had been great to work with in the short time she was here.

**D. Development: Jane Bais-DiSessa** – DiSessa said that not much new was going on right now. Developers of the sports bar planned for 12 Mile submitted plans which Vansen was reviewing. The bar will be approximately 4,000 square feet in size. Logsdon said the developers used to run the Troy Spectadium. DiSessa reported that Westborn Market, which is expanding, wants to make the Berkley store their prime location. Eshshaki knows the owner. Logsdon reported on an article in the Free Press by Bill Laitner describing development in Berkley as a "boomlet."

**E. Intersection: Jane Bais-DiSessa** – Nothing further to report.

**F. Build Berkley/B.B.A.T.: Keith Logsdon** – Logsdon reported that a press release on the program was going out January 21 and would be sent to all business owners. "City Clips" will also have a feature on the program, with times and dates in the newsletter. Logsdon briefly summarized the program for Eshshaki. The Berkley Business Assistance Team is a group of volunteer professionals in various areas of expertise that will visit 5-8 business owners in the city for a free, one-hour consultation on February 16. They hope to identify businesses needing exterior renovations that could receive Cool Cities grants in 2005. Applications for B.B.A.T. will also be put on the DDA Web site. He envisions the business tour taking place twice a year, and he hoped that DiSessa and Vansen would be able to join them on the first tour.

**G. Business Recruitment: Jeff Allyn, Matthew Gross** – Allyn reported that he had tried to contact U-M four times about their free development studies, but had been unsuccessful. He will keep trying.

**H. Cool Cities Committee: Dan Cherrin** – No report (left).

**I. Public Relations: Dan Cherrin** – No report (left).

**J. Banners/Appearance: John Barbuscak** – Barbuscak reported that Christmas decorations had come down and Winter banners put up, with regular banners in the intersection. On the business banner promotion, he reported losing three advertisers and gaining three. He had also gotten two or three promises to renew/purchase. The personal contact he had with the business owners in the process gave him an opportunity to hear what's on their minds and to correct misinformation. He asked for the contact information for the new sports bar owner so he can approach them about purchasing an advertising banner. Gross, who was absent from the December Board meeting, brought up for discussion the issue of using banner proceeds to fund other projects (tree lighting in

the intersection, approved at the December meeting). He noted that when he was approaching businesses the previous year to sign them up for the program, he promised that the funds were going to be used *only* to fund banners. Barbuscak asked him what they would do with the profit, and Gross said it was apparent to him that collecting the money was becoming an issue. He felt that sales would decline each year and that fund money should be used solely to pay the cost of putting up and taking down the banners. Logsdon said the Board had also discussed using the money to improve the image of the downtown. Gross said a day might come when the surplus money in the fund was needed. Logsdon said the first order of business was to pay for the banners and once that was done, the Board could do some of the other things that had been discussed. Allyn said he could only foresee a problem if someone's banner was damaged, there was no surplus to replace it, and they would have to approach the advertiser to pay again. Murad asked what the previous year's profit was, and Barbuscak, without his records, recalled it was over \$2,000, and he thought expenses for 2005 would be approximately \$1,500. Murad said even if advertising sales drop, only 17-18 sales are needed to fund the banner maintenance program as it stands. Barbuscak suggested that the Board consider replacing some of the older banners as well as the flags. He said they had considered having banner funds cover Christmas decorations as well. Gross said he wasn't confident that the surplus would continue and asked that it be put on the record that he is afraid the program will run into problems in the future, as the renewal rate is currently only 50% for advertising banners. He was opposed to spending money on anything but the original purpose of paying for banners in the City. Barbuscak suggested the Board could "tweak" the program to counter Gross's concerns. DiSessa said this was a good time to think about having another source of income (rather than a donation) to cover the cost of putting up Christmas decorations and also upgrading the existing decorations, because they attract people to the downtown. Logsdon said he agreed with Gross that they need to be fiscally responsible, but he added that the purpose of the fund was banners *and* appearance. Murad remembered that the Board had also discussed additional uses for the money such as snow removal and clean up. Barbuscak asked to delay further discussion until he has an ending cost report. The 2004 report he got from Kurilik had intersection banners incorrectly charged to the banner program rather than the intersection fund and needs to be corrected. On a separate issue, Logsdon brought up the idea of forming a "Friends of Berkley" group to take over functions like the Christmas parade and tree lighting. The Men's Club is disbanding and liquidating its assets. Meyer suggested that former Men's Club members, including himself, would offer assistance if some other non-political group wants to continue having the Christmas parade.

**K. Newsletter: John Barbuscak** – Barbuscak reported that a draft of the next newsletter is ready, but there are some holes to fill. Logsdon would like to have it ready to send out by January 21.

Logsdon will e-mail the draft to Board members, and final copy should be submitted by January 17.

**L. Web Site: Tim Murad** – Murad asked for Polly Koenigsknecht's e-mail address so that he can get past newsletters to post on the Web site. He asked if the minutes should also be posted, and Logsdon said to post the minutes for the last year. He will also send Murad the B.B.A.T. information. Barbuscak asked Murad to follow through on posting the business banner advertiser information.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** DiSessa asked that discussion to solidify the purpose of the banner fund be put on the next agenda. Barbuscak asked her to have Kurilik remove intersection banner costs from the regular banner fund.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS:** Murad asked that the Board consider changing the day and/or time of Board meetings because of time constraints and meetings running long. Barbuscak suggested moving the start time back to 7:30, as he felt evening meetings would not work for most Board members and liaisons.

**X. LIAISON REPORTS:**

**A. City Council Liaison:** Collins reported that the City audit is complete and the City is solvent.

**B. Planning Commission Liaison:** The Planning Commission had met in work session the previous evening with several DDA Board members in attendance. In review, Novitsky noted that the current Master Plan is 25 years old. The Commission received the same packet of maps and handouts that Novitsky distributed previously to the Board. He was very pleased with the results of

the work session. Questions being addressed are: How does Berkley fit into the Detroit metro area, what does it mean to live in Berkley, what are the good parts of the City, and what needs to be attended to? He noted one of the important issues being discussed is that Greenfield and 11 Mile Road are virtually abandoned in terms of development. There is some general feeling that perimeter edges can and should be taller than what's contained and protected within. Every part of the community needs its own park. He noted that one of the commissioners, Dave Sabbagh, is very involved with CCS and the metro art community, and he has suggested turning the 11 Mile corridor into an artist community. At the work session, they didn't debate the idea of what the downtown overlay should look like. Novitsky said that's where the input of the DDA Board would be helpful. Common thoughts and ideas are what need to be shown now. Commercial and residential should be continuously reinforced, maybe multi-family, along Greenfield and 11 Mile. There was discussion of eliminating residential property on Ellwood and turning that area into an expansion of the commercial Greenfield edge so as to allow business to go as deep as need be as well as eliminating the ugly view of Greenfield from residential property on Ellwood. Novitsky noted that 12 Mile is much more pedestrian friendly with the addition of on-street parking. He described the idea of looping community involvement along the pedestrian corridors with node to node connections where people naturally gravitate and congregate (a small pausing point, such as Robina and 12 Mile, is an example of a "mini-park" that needs to be repeated throughout the district). Mass transportation nodes also have to be incorporated. The next step in the process is to put conglomerate maps of the concepts together to find common issues. Maps resulting from the work sessions will be distributed. Novitsky said it's key to keep from being mired in reality at this point and to go forward with the concept of how to take the best of what we have and reinforce it. DiSessa said she was proud of the progress made. She also reported that the recently completed road study results have to be considered in the Master Plan process. Before adoption, the Master Plan will be shared with adjacent communities. DiSessa said that Oak Park is ready to go forward with 11 Mile Road reconstruction, but Berkley is still short of the total funding needed. Novitsky noted that the section of 11 Mile from Woodward to Coolidge is strongly residential, and multi-family units could be considered for that stretch of road.

**C. Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison:** Absent – no report.

**D. Chamber of Commerce Liaison:** Absent – no report.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting ended at 9:42 AM. There was no Motion to adjourn because the quorum was lost when Board members had to leave early.