

MEETING MINUTES
Berkley Downtown Development Authority
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Berkley Public Safety Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, February 21, 2007

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM with Chair Keith Logsdon presiding.

II. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:

Present: Dr. Jeff Allyn
Jane Bais-DiSessa
John Barbuscak
Allen Dyer
James Esshaki
Diane Farrington
Lawrence Gallagher
Keith Logsdon
John McGovern
Alan Semonian

Absent: Tony Duce – *Excused*
Matthew Gross
Michael Pesendorfer – *Excused*

Also Present: Dale GoodCourage, City Council
Michael Matthews-Pennanen, City Council Liaison
Christina Sheppard-Decius, DDA Director, Ferndale
Patrick Swayze, Resident

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved unanimously upon a motion by Dyer and a second by Barbuscak.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of January 10, 2007: On motion by Gallagher and a second by Dyer, the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Communications: Keith Logsdon – None received. Logsdon introduced Patrick Swayze, a Berkley resident and Wayne State University student, and Christina Sheppard-Decius, Ferndale's Downtown Development Authority Director,

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Downtown Manager – Candidate Interviews: Logsdon reported that the Board had received 19 applications for the position of Downtown Manager, had narrowed that list to seven candidates who were then preliminarily interviewed by the committee, and then the committee further narrowed their lists to the three finalists who had been invited to the meeting for a final interview. He described the interview process: Each candidate would be given approximately ten minutes to make a presentation, which would be followed by a ten minute question and answer session, and then each candidate would be given fifteen minutes to complete an "in-basket" writing exercise using one of the City's computers on the main floor. Their printed response to the exercise would then be copied and distributed to the Board for review after all the candidates had completed their presentations and exercises. General discussion of the candidates and the Board members' impressions would conclude the meeting.

Isaac David Kremer was the first candidate presented. Kremer received his M.A. in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell, is a Master of Urban Planning candidate at Wayne State University, and a Michigan native. He has strong economic development, marketing, and promotion

skills. Currently, he runs his own consulting firm specializing in historic preservation and community building. His previous experience included working with FEMA technical consultants on the Gulf Coast, with a National Main Street consultant, and for the Michigan communities of Highland Park, Flat Rock, Saginaw, and Wyandotte. He noted he had walked the Berkley business district the day before, and his presentation handouts described the business mix in Berkley, major institutions (churches and civic organizations), and large landmark quality and Art Deco buildings. He noted that if chosen to be Downtown Manager, he would embrace the Main Street approach of organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. He would help the DDA by establishing organization, conducting outreach and communications, and providing training and administrative support. He presented a detailed timeline of activities through the two years that Berkley will be participating in the Main Street Mentor Program as well as a one-year budget for the Downtown Manager. During the question and answer session, Logsdon asked him about potential conflicts with his other activities, namely his consulting business, and Kremer responded that whenever the Berkley DDA was supporting his activities, such as at conferences, he would be fully committed to representing Berkley. Other clients would have to take a subservient position. In terms of his time commitments to his other clients, someone else would be able to take the lead on any projects that wouldn't be ending before the Manager position begins. Farrington asked him about evaluation of his success, and he noted that he had worked with a master evaluator at Albion College, and that increasing the TIFA would be a concrete way to measure success. Eshshaki asked him about what time commitment he anticipated the job would require, and he said possibly 80-100 hours to begin and 30-40 per week afterwards. Historic preservation and organization are his highest areas of expertise, in answer to another question from Eshshaki.

Nathan Geinzer was the second candidate interviewed. He holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Eastern Michigan University and started his career in Brighton as an intern doing research and implementation of the principal shopping district. He is currently Planning/Community Development Tech for the City of Brighton. He assisted in creation of a marketing plan and secured investment, as well as being instrumental in the passage of an SAD. He also worked on their Web site and business recruitment program. His approach to the downtown manager position would be to first recognize the challenges involved and identify what sets Berkley apart from the big players around it (Birmingham and Royal Oak) and build on Berkley's assets. He would gather information by visiting neighboring downtowns and talking to Berkley business owners, visitors, and Board members, as well as holding focus groups. He noted an "invisible divide" on 12 Mile Road, with the retail presence thinning and weakening farther west towards Greenfield. He also suggested building and identifying customers through market studies and using the Web site as a marketing tool. In terms of business recruitment, he suggested identifying gaps and actively recruiting businesses to fill them. He also stressed having a variety of activities to draw people downtown. Civic events, festivals, and an arts/cultural center would also be on his agenda. He would use loans and grants as incentives to promote redevelopment and suggested acquisition of suitable properties to market to developers. During the question and answer session Farrington asked him how he would attract businesses/shoppers to Berkley, and he responded by identifying what makes Berkley different and doing better than surrounding cities. Logsdon asked him about his specific Web development experience, and Geinzer said he had played around with it, but Brighton hired an outside consultant to do their site. Eshshaki asked him to name his strongest assets and expertise, and Geinzer responded resourcefulness. Eshshaki asked him to describe his number one challenge if he's the Downtown Manager. Geinzer said he felt it was the 12 Mile environment, on the west end, and helping those business owners and property owners take a proactive role to brighten up the area and find businesses to fill the vacancies. He also said his current work in Brighton takes about 20 hours a week, and he would not have problem working 50 hours a week if the manager position required it. Farrington asked him about handling conflict, and he pointed to his experience getting the Brighton SAD approved, despite extremely vocal opposition from some parties.

Max Chiddister was the third and last candidate to make a presentation. Chiddister is a former City Councilman and Mayor of Goshen, Indiana, retail business owner, and retired Vice President of J.P. Morgan Chase Bank. He is also Executive Director of the Detroit Police Foundation and runs his own consulting firm. In his presentation, Chiddister outlined his vision of improvements for the City of

Berkley. He suggested a consumer catalyst to improve the appeal of 12 Mile, such as a Starbucks and a bookstore, using a renovated Berkley Theater location. He's already made contact with Starbucks locally and in Seattle. He'd also like to see a greeting card store, clothing store, and another grocery store. In terms of the appearance of 12 Mile storefronts, he feels it needs some work, with the mix of sizes, styles, and setbacks. He suggesting setting design standards, as historical societies do, if the DDA makes any matching grants for business remodeling. Berkley also needs to establish a strong identity, such as "A Fun Place to Live and a Fun Place to Be." He suggested modeling a winter carnival, "Berkley's Blast of Winter," on downtown Detroit's Winter Fest, with dog sled races, ice skating, ice sculptures, igloos, music, food and drinks. Several downtown locations would be ideal locations for activities, like Clark's Ice Cream. He noted that additional parking is necessary downtown, and TIF money could be put to use there. It is essential to establish a friendly business environment. He has written successful grant applications as Goshen's mayor. He also assisted in writing grant guidelines at Chase Bank and is chair of the grant committee of the Detroit Police Foundation. As downtown manager, he sees his priorities as consolidating existing DDA plans by meeting closely with Board members. To begin, he would meet with City leaders, retailers, and Chamber of Commerce, and attend all significant City meetings. He would also begin implementation of the strategic plan. He sees his strengths as strong municipal experience, working relationships with government officials, budget management, grant writing, experience with professional consultants, as well as living in close proximity to Berkley, at 12 Mile and Evergreen in Southfield. During the question and answer session, Logsdon asked what interested him about the downtown manager position. Chiddister said he had been attending City Council meetings, locally and around the state, and became excited again about working with municipalities. Allyn noted the two new banks in Berkley and asked Chiddister, with his banking background, what those banks might do to help Berkley as a community and how could they get involved. Chiddister noted that banks have to comply with community reinvestment laws and get money into the community to meet Federal criteria. Sheppard-Decius asked him about his experience in event coordination and how he would deal with the shoestring budget. He answered that he had experience, through his contacts, of getting sports celebrities to volunteer their time as publicity draws. Locations should be free. Farrington asked him about the biggest challenge as manager, and he said getting the word out to people, and the mentoring program should help Berkley focus their marketing efforts. Logsdon asked him about the time commitment he could make, and he said the manager position would be Job 1. All his other activities take a minimal amount of time.

After each candidate's presentation, they were given an in-basket exercise on a specific topic to complete on one of the City's computers on the first floor. Printouts of their responses were distributed to the Board. When all the presentations and exercises were completed, the Board and guests discussed their impressions of the candidates and what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses of each. Everyone congratulated the selection committee and noted that any of the candidates would bring something special to the position. In a roundtable discussion, Board members unofficially ranked the candidates, but Logsdon asked them to review their notes and the responses to the in-basket exercise, and then with more perspective get back to him with a final recommendation. He noted the Board would vote at the March meeting on its choice for the manager position.

VII. NEW BUSINESS: Nothing to report.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM on motion by Dyer and second by Barbuscak.