

# The DDA Reporter

A publication of the Berkley Downtown Development Authority

FALL 2002

## DDA Board Meetings

The DDA Board meets the second Wednesday of each month at 8 a.m. in the Community Center. Non-DDA members are always welcome to attend. Any changes in our meeting schedule will be noted on the DDA website: [www.cityofberkeley.com](http://www.cityofberkeley.com)

## “Here’s a suggestion...”

By Dr. Jeff Allyn

I have been doing this column for a very short time now. Perhaps you think I have been a bit outspoken so far? Not even close! Maybe you think I have been a bit too opinionated so far? Not even close! Hey, do you truly know how I think? You may be getting a glimmer. However, for all you know, I may be just an antagonist. Or perhaps I am just acting like a “sarcastic New York native” who has set up residence and business in Michigan and wants to dish out a hard time to you Midwesterners? Could be...Could be not! One thing is for certain. I can write anything I wish, so long as it is not of a slanderous or libelous nature (my attorney-wife makes sure that I don’t do that).

With all this in mind, let me say how much I typically enjoy seeing “The Mirror” outside my office door each week. I especially look forward to reading the public comments. I love the “Back Talk” section, perhaps partly because it

has the word “back” in it. I am a chiropractic physician, after all, and I deal with the BACK.

It is great to see what the “pulse” of Berkley has to say about issues. However, when comments are printed regarding our downtown, the DDA’s current project, and the city in general, my interest is peaked, to say the least. Oh how I fancy the ranting and ravings of individuals whose voices I do not have to actually hear. Or could it be that all this nonsense comes from one individual, whom I do “have to” hear, but whose identity is secured by a newspaper who will not tell us who is writing the comments?

Ah, whatever the case may be, whoever is writing, “ya’ll” got the same “thaing” in common. **YOU GIVE NEITHER CREATIVE SOLUTIONS, NOR HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS. YOU ONLY COMPLAIN!**

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## Berkley Downtown Development Authority Mission

The mission of the Berkley Downtown Development Authority is to encourage historic preservation, promote economic growth and revitalization, and correct and prevent deterioration of the Berkley Downtown district by working with the City to obtain or develop the necessary legal, monetary or organizational tools to revitalize the area, either through public-initiated projects, or in concert with privately motivated projects; to attract businesses to the Downtown area which meet the needs of the community’s demographic makeup; to promote Downtown Berkley as an economically desirable place to own property and operate a business; to help improve the City residents’ “Quality of Life” by providing a clean, comfortable, safe environment in the Downtown area.

## Berkley DDA Board Members

# Message From the DDA Chair

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*Berkley City Manager*  
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What an exciting time for the Berkley Downtown Development Authority. The same day that I was selected to chair the DDA, we celebrated the start of the first phase of our efforts to revitalize Downtown Berkley. The 12 Mile and Coolidge intersection project is underway and should be completed sometime this fall. As always, the construction will cause traffic slowdowns and inconveniences for us all, but in the end it will all be worthwhile. Hopefully, this project will cause those who pass through our city on the way to their destination to pause and take notice of what we are doing and what we have to offer.

As we all know, Berkley is a community that takes great pride in its neighborhoods, schools and community involvement. My vision is to also add to this list our Downtown. This will not happen overnight. It will not be easy and will take great effort to accomplish, but we can achieve it. This is not something that the DDA board can do alone. We will need the help of all of the business owners and the residents of Berkley. Since it will take a community effort, I welcome any and all input. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Excitement is building as intersection takes shape

Work on the intersection at 12 Mile Road and Coolidge is well underway, and residents and business owners are looking forward to the completion of the family-oriented, pedestrian-friendly re-design and a new look for our downtown. At the July 10, 2002 groundbreaking celebration, Greg Thom, past chair of the Downtown Development Authority, talked about how the project will create even more of a "hometown" feel in Berkley and add value to the entire City.

The intersection, which is scheduled to be completed in November, will provide a dramatic entrance to downtown Berkley. It will feature a paver crosswalk, new sidewalks, trees, planters, benches, signage, mast arm traffic signals and banners.



City and DDA officials break ground for the intersection improvements.

Greg Thom speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony.



# DDA Offers Help to “Build Berkley”

Downtowns are a symbol of a city's historic development and economic health. They are a symbol of a city's quality of life and sense of pride. The ultimate success of Downtown Berkley is dependent upon the level of commitment on the part of the private sector combined with the willingness of city officials to cooperate with the private sector to accomplish their goals. This spirit of cooperation is the foundation upon which Downtown Berkley will grow and prosper by encouraging businesses to locate in our city.

Now that the first phase of our downtown revitalization is underway, the city is poised to take the next logical step on the road to creating a thriving downtown. The DDA is in the process of forming “Build Berkley,” a program that will offer financial and design assistance to building owners and merchants in the downtown district who wish to improve

the exterior of their buildings. Through a coordinated effort with local banks and design professionals, those who choose to take advantage of this program will have access to a variety of resources. A series of grants, low-interest loans, tax incentives, and other programs will make building improvements affordable.

The availability of subsidized, low-cost or no-cost design assistance will make good design accessible. The assistance of a project liaison will help guide each applicant through a streamlined approval process with city departments. Our goal is to empower Berkley's downtown. With your help, we can make it happen.

For more information, please contact DDA Board members:

**Daniel Cherrin** at 313.596.0460, [dcherrin@detroitchamber.com](mailto:dcherrin@detroitchamber.com) or **Keith Logsdon** at 248.540.7603, [klogsdon@mwa-architects.com](mailto:klogsdon@mwa-architects.com)



*According to a July 7, 2002 Detroit News article:*

“Data on the change in medium household income from 1989 to 1999 showed the biggest increases occurring mostly in suburbs farthest from Detroit. But a sprinkling of suburbs close to downtown—including Ferndale, **Berkley**, Pleasant Ridge and Beverly Hills—had similar income gains. The increase wasn't expected since it doesn't fit the pattern of suburban sprawl. What did those neighborhoods have in common? A reputation for a hipper-than-average ambience. ‘It's not that if you're an older community, you inevitably go downhill,’ said Jim Rogers, data center manager for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.”

## Businesses Celebrate 20 Years in Berkley

This spring, the Mug and Jug and the Quilting Shop both celebrated 20 years of doing business in Berkley. Since it was purchased in March 1982, the Mug and Jug has been renovated three times, said Ron Jamil of the family-owned business. Products and services have been added and retail space expanded to meet an increasing volume of business.

Over the years, the Mug and Jug has become a meeting place where employees and customers greet each other like family. “We've become part of the Berkley community,” said Ron, “and we really like that. Kids we gave pretzels to when we first bought the store now come in for beer. We've

catered first communion parties, graduation parties and wedding receptions for the same person.”

Added Jamil, “We want to thank and extend our appreciation to the entire city for helping to make our business the success it is.”

The Quilting Shop opened in April 1982 in the Berkley Plaza and then moved into a building at Kipling and 12 Mile that owner Jo Merecki purchased. The shop is one of only six quilting supply stores in Metro Detroit. Customers come from all over Michigan as well as other states and foreign countries.

“Quilting has become increasingly

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**Attention DDA Members:**

Please check your address on the newsletter's mailing label. If it is incorrect, contact the DDA office at **248-988-1301** and leave a message with the correct address. Thank you.

**What's New With Your Business?**

Is your business offering a new product or service?  
Are you celebrating a business milestone or other accomplishment?  
Let us help spread the word.

Fax or mail us your business news and we'll include it in the next DDA "Reporter."

Contact:  
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*"Here's a suggestion..." continued from page 1*

Well complainers, here ya go... I have a creative solution for all of you. How about knocking down all the businesses so that the building owners can replace them with condos. Yeah, we'll put three-story condos in place of the businesses and make the entire area residential! The city will collect lots of dough from property taxes, there will be a condo association to take care of the buildings, and we won't have to worry about slowing traffic or any nonsense like that.

Hey, I own a fair chunk of property. I could make a good "buck" from it! Then I can move my practice somewhere else, like Tahiti, so that I never have to hear whining from individuals who cannot possibly fathom what needs to be done here after years of neglect. What the heck, let's GO FOR IT! Who really NEEDS a downtown here anyway? We have Birmingham, Ferndale and Royal Oak. That's good enough, right?

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popular," said Nancy Merecki who works with her mother. "The market for quilting supplies has been doubling *each year*. New books, patterns and fabrics come out monthly."

In addition to supplies, the Quilting

Shop helps customers turn a quilt top into a finished quilt by using an industrial quilting machine to do the final needlework. Because of the success of the business, Merecki wants to expand and is looking for a larger store in Berkley to purchase.