

MELROSE TOWNSHIP DDA MINUTES
Regular Meeting of July 9, 2018
At Melrose Township Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Broc Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Members present: Broc Johnson, Vern Goodwin, Jonathon Borisch, Mike Strobel, Bob Vratanina, and Dave Rentschler.

Members absent: Steve Whittaker, Calvin Penfold, and Judy Goldsmith.

Also present: Recording Secretary Tom Mackie

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Dave Rentschler motioned, Mike Strobel seconded, to approve the minutes of April 24, 2018 as presented. All ayes, motion carried.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Tom reviewed the financial statements.

IV. GUESTS:

- a. US131 Corridor representatives:** Robin Berry introduced committee representatives present at tonight's meeting and presented their ideas for promotional events and activities along the corridor from Cadillac To Petoskey. They are seeking a \$2,000 contribution from communities along this route to fund a web presence, noting Kalkaska has already committed.

Dave asked how they would measure the project's success. Networks Northwest would make this analysis at some point in the future. Bob pursued this concern, suggesting the project seems to still be in the development phase with no plan for an in-depth analysis in the next one year, although web site hits and similar measurements can be easily accomplished.

Broc questioned costs in years 2 through 5, but these estimates have not yet been developed. Presently the committee is asking for a one-year commitment, but a multi-year commitment will be considered in the future to provide for continuity once the program is in place. Website content would be created and maintained by individual communities.

Broc noted a couple of interested members are not in attendance at this meeting, so the proposal will be tabled for future discussion.

- b. Chris Struble – Michigan Hemingway Association:** Chris spoke on Hemingway's history in the area, and how northern Michigan inspired his stories long after he moved away. He also noted being struck by the lack of commercialization in our area. For many years he has conducted Hemingway tours, drawing people from all over the

world. He identified Walloon Lake as “Ground zero” for Hemingway and American literature. He also noted the volume of exposure, both in print and on social media, would be extensive.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. **DDA Sponsorship of Car / Boat Show:** Broc reported the number of cars and boats planning to participate is up from last year. Van Dam Custom Boats will be bringing some specialty boats for display. Jonathon noted a DJ will provide music this year, rather than a band, to see how they compare.
- b. **Map / Brochure Distribution:** We still have brochures available for distribution and will not print more until additional content is available.
- c. **Hemingway Monument Update:** Vern reported no MEDC funding is available for a Hemingway statue as we do not have a traditional downtown. He suggested a couple other funding sources to pursue. Chris will provide a list of funders for previous Hemingway projects.
- d. **US131 / M-75 Landscaping:** Bob reported the property owner will continue to consider our proposal but has made no further commitment at present.
- e. **Cross-Walk Signs:** Broc reported all the proposed signs were purchased and installed. MDOT protested our inclusion of the word “Stop” so we had them changed to “Yield.” Now MDOT says the signs must be removed until the Township adopts, by resolution, the Motor Vehicle Code for the State of Michigan. Following this, we would need to apply for approval to reinstall them. The issue has been referred to our Township Attorney. Broc suggested asking MDOT to wait until the busy season is over.

VI. NEW BUSINESS – Future Project Discussion:

- a. **Future Project Discussion – Feedback from Businesses:** Broc suggested the shops in the village can’t economically market themselves individually, but the DDA may be able to help if they are interested in organizing as a group. Jonathon stated they are interested in pursuing this but have not yet organized. Vern suggested they get involved with the US131 Corridor Group.
- b. **Future Project Discussion – History of Walloon:** Jonathon indicated nationally known urban planner Bob Gibbs worked with him in building the village. Public art was an element in all his designs and several spots were identified for art work. Some ideas were used, but not all. Broc presented several themes outlining the history of Walloon Lake Village, including signs with historical perspectives. Some examples are included in the information packet for tonight’s meeting. While we can’t build or operate a museum, there are still things we can do with signs and story boards. He suggested the cost is not significant, estimating \$800 to \$1,500 per sign. Hemingway would still be the centerpiece, with other historical information as a compliment. Chris indicated that the Northern Michigan Hemmingway Society would be willing to help on this project. He also indicated that printed material is readily available through sources such as the JFK Library, etc.

Dave suggested a better goal may be to promote an increase of businesses in the area rather than limiting ourselves to what is there now. He indicated that the best

Approved

use of the property would be another bar; restaurant or marina, evidenced by the fact that people have clearly indicated this would be successful, based on the success of what's there now. Broc indicated the DDA is not in the business of analyzing private businesses and economic development opportunities are not limited to commercial facilities. Bob expressed agreement with the people's desire to maintain open space in the village. Jonathon noted many visitors claim the village is nice, but there isn't anything to do here. He stated we need these amenities to make Walloon Lake the destination rather than just something close to other areas. He also noted a problem getting retailers in the village due to the short time to make a profit. We have the space, and customers want more shops, but retailers can't commit for such a short season.

Jonathon expressed support for signage in the park. The consensus is to pursue a historical-based sign project by next looking at potential cost.

- c. **Walloon Holding Proposal:** In reference to a proposal for the Township to acquire Circle Park, Vern expressed concern with the cost of maintenance.
- d. **Mountain Bike Trail:** Vern noted the DDA District is more than just the village, and the Township has recently acquired, through tax sale, a 25-acre parcel on US131 North of the intersection with M-75. Ben Borisch has proposed we establish a mountain bike trail and Vern suggested this may be a good site for the trail, as well as a dog park. Bob expressed concern for potential liability. Vern indicated we can review this with the Township's insurance agent.

VII. **DDA MEMBER COMMENTS:** None

VIII. **CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

- a. Bunny Marquardt read a letter from Sue Gilmette noting her opposition to a Hemingway statue and suggesting other alternatives for the use of DDA funds.
- b. Ashley from the Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce offered her organization's help in supporting our projects.

IX. **NEXT MEETING:** September 10, 2018.

X. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Tom Mackie, Recording Secretary

Judy Goldsmith, Secretary