

**MEETING MINUTES  
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 8:15 AM  
Berkley Public Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Conference Room**



- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:15 AM with Chair Matteo Passalacqua presiding.

**A. Roll Call Taken and Quorum Determined**

*Present:* Donna Dirkse  
Desiree Dutcher  
Katie Forte  
Scott Francis  
Lucas Gonzalez  
Katie Goodwin  
Anna Grace  
Shawn Heath-Lee  
Uli Laczkovich  
Matteo Passalacqua  
Todd Schaefer  
Crystal VanVleck  
Brian Zifkin

*Absent:* Chris Gross – *excused*  
Ashley Poirier – *excused*

*Also present:* Steve Baker, City Council Liaison  
Jennifer Finney, Interim DDA Executive Director  
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director  
Lisa Kempner, Planning Commission Liaison  
Dan McMinn, Parks & Recreation Superintendent  
Adam Wozniak, Berkley DPW Liaison

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Passalacqua asked to remove Action Item A. from the agenda (regarding moving back the date for June's Board meeting) because it was no longer necessary. Grace so moved, and Dirkse seconded. Zifkin then moved to approve the amended Agenda, Grace seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2025**

Francis moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 9, 2025, Laczkovich seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**IV. TREASURER REPORT**

Financial Reports for April 2025

In Gross's absence, Finney reported revenues of @\$475,000, expenses of @\$428,000, resulting in available revenues for use of @\$47,000. Left to spend in fiscal year 2024/25 is @\$96,000, part of which she believes is budgeted for the Robina Project.

Dutcher moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report for April 2025, Schaefer seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**V. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Board Member Re-appointment (Desiree Dutcher)**

Finney reported that Dutcher's term would expire at the end of the DDA's fiscal year, June 30, and she has signaled that she would like to continue on the Board. Her reappointment has the support of the rest of the Board, and members offered that she has done an excellent job as a trustee and always steps up when needed.

Grace moved to approve the Board Member Reappointment of Vice-Chair Desiree Dutcher for a four-year term, Forte seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**B. Board Member Reappointment (Katie Forte)**

Finney reported that Forte's term would expire at the end of the DDA's fiscal year, June 30, and she has signaled that she would like to continue on the Board. She has been finishing the term of a previously appointed Board member who left prior to finishing the term. Her reappointment has the support of the rest of the Board, and members offered that she has done an excellent job as a trustee and made significant contributions to the Board's priorities, including the new Web site and mural review for the Art & Design Committee.

Dutcher moved to approve the Board Member Reappointment of Katie Forte for a four-year term, Laczkovich seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**C. Mural – Revised State Farm**

Finney reported that State Farm's building owner would have to reduce the size of the mural the Board had approved for \$3000.00 at the prior meeting because it would cost them \$5,000.00 at the size originally submitted with their application, and funds are currently tight for them.

Finney then took that information back to the Art & Design Committee, which really likes the mural and felt it would be an asset to the downtown. In the 2025/26 budget, mural funds will be reduced. The committee thought that with the word "Berkley" added to the side of the truck the mural was even more of a marketing piece for the DDA and could take the place of Tutti & Tallulah's "Welcome to Berkley" mural that was taken off their wall when the building was sold. The committee is recommending upping the DDA contribution to \$5,000.00, the maximum amount. Passalacqua noted that the DDA would then be covering the mural's entire cost.

The Board discussed reducing the mural size and how that would reduce visibility to vehicles going down 12 Mile. There was also extensive discussion about the DDA needing buy-in from building owners to get DDA mural funding, some kind of "match" as originally required before the application was recently revised. There was consensus that starting the new fiscal year, July 1, some buy-in from building owners should be required and stated clearly in the mural guidelines.

Zifkin moved to deny the request to increase the award to \$5,000.00, Heath-Lee seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

The building owners may re-submit their application for the larger size mural when funds become available.

**D. Farmer's Market – Market Coordinator Contract**

Finney reported that although she intended to bring the proposed Market Coordinator contract to the Board for approval, she had some issues working out a well-crafted plan to run the market, so she needed to do more research and recommended postponing the market start-up until at least July. She would like a signed contract in place for a Market Coordinator prior to start-up.

She is reaching out to other communities that run farmer's markets for help planning Berkley's market and crafting the coordinator's contract. The Board also discussed reducing the number of times the Market will be open and perhaps tying it to coincide with another downtown event.

Laczovich moved to postpone the Farmer's Market start until at least July (negating the need for the Coordinator Contract approval), Grace seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

## **VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Mogo**

Finney reported that MOGO is undergoing a transition and has new leadership. She met with representatives of the other communities in the area who have engaged with MOGO, most of which indicated that they will step away for now. Costs to continue or leave the program aren't available at this time, and Berkley's MOGO contract is currently expired. By the next meeting the Board should have accurate information about what the DDA owns and what MOGO owns (bikes, stations).

### **B. Committee Revitalization & Workplans**

Finney reported that as part of Main Street, Berkley's DDA is required to align committee structure with the Main Street model, with four set committees: Marketing, Art and Design, Organization, and Business Development. Starting July 1, 2025, committees will need to meet monthly and form their workplans (projects and initiatives for the coming year). Each Board member needs to join at least one committee.

She asked for a round-the-table indication from each Board member on which committee(s) they want to continue on or join.

Passalacqua: Organization

Schaefer: Marketing/Art & Design, West 12 Mile

Francis: Organization

Laczovich: Organization

Forte: Art & Design, Marketing

VanVleck: Organization, Business Development

Heath-Lee: Business Development

Dutcher: Art & Design, Events

Zifkin: West 12 Mile

Grace: Marketing

Finney will work with the Student Board members to identify areas they can contribute.

## **VII. LIAISON REPORTS**

### **A. City Council – Steve Baker**

Baker reported that City Council met May 5 and proclaimed the following week as National Police Week and the week of May 19 National Public Works Week. Much of their work was procedural, but they also discussed implementation of the "Workforce Housing" concept, which targets average median income residential populations when developing affordable housing for that population.

### **B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski**

Kapelanski reported special land use approval was needed for Mug & Jug's owners to take over the block from Ellwood to Greenfield, with plans for a restaurant and gas station. Dan McMinn from Parks and Recreation outlined plans to close down the Dorothea pocket park area from June 14 through July 19. They (P&R) will partner with the City on that and volunteer days for set up will be scheduled before/during the closure (students will be painting the street). Other activities will engage the public during the closing, including a variety of games and other things to do. They're

entertaining ideas from the DDA, nearby businesses, and the public. Wozniak reported barricades indicating/blocking Dorothea will be upgraded.

**C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner**

Kempner reported the Commission approved demolishing the first house south of 12 Mile on Ellwood, to create additional parking for Green Lantern Pizza on 12 Mile.

**D. Public Works – Adam Wozniak**

Wozniak reported meeting with Frank's Landscaping about downtown flowers and the tree bed mulch. Flags will be put up soon along Berkley's main streets. Baker noted that the Oakland County Master Gardener program requires a certain number of volunteer hours yearly to retain certification, and some of those gardeners might be recruited to work on Berkley's landscaping needs.

**E. Chamber of Commerce – Tim Murad**

Absent – no report.

**VIII. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

New Student Board Member Lucas Gonzalez reported NHS members need to complete volunteer hours, and they might work on weeding downtown. Goodwin reported the theater group's production of the play "The Prom" was a success. Progress on renovations at the high school is underway.

**IX. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**A. Art & Design Committee**

Zifkin reported meeting with another business owner in the West 12 Mile area who was dissatisfied with beautification progress improving the area.

**B. Business Development Committee**

VanVleck reported that a group from the Michigan Municipal League with development expertise will tour the West 12 Mile area on June 6 or 13, and she invited DDA Board members to join them.

**C. Downtown Events Committee**

Kempner reported on planning for Berkley Pride. Their next meeting is May 21. Grace reported that Leia's Day Out was successful with the trolley running and making regular stops downtown.

**D. Marketing Strategies Committee**

No report.

**E. Organization Committee**

No report.

**X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

**A. Robina Placemaking Project**

Finney reported getting quotations for the work on the project. She plans to present those at the June Board meeting. Funds have to be expended by September 2026.

Main Street Oakland County will hold their main event, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, June 12, and Finney nominated some DDA Board members for awards to be presented at that ceremony. Berkley's DDA has three free tickets to the event.

**XI. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS**

For Berkley High School NHS students, NHS rules for volunteering need clarification. Heath-Lee noted new businesses might have specific needs where NHS volunteers could help promoting their businesses, especially in technical areas.

**XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The opportunity for public comment was offered, and no requests to comment were made at the meeting. Anyone with comments or questions is asked to e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM on motion by Forte and second by Schaefer.