VILLAGE OF ALMONT
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
April 25, 2012

Members Present: M. Knapke, T. Antonelli, F. Smith, T. Pepper, T. Roach, S. Schneider, M. Breen, C. Kinkade, S. Lanctot

Members Absent: D. Sadler

Others Present: N. Boxey, O. Turner

Guests: 1

Meeting was held at the Almont Municipal Building.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson M. Knapke

Additions/Deletions to Agenda:
None

Public Comment:
None

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by S. Schneider, supported by C. Kinkade to accept the minutes of March 28, 2012. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Bills Payable:

Motion by C. Kinkade, supported by T. Pepper, to approve the bills payable.

1. Nancy Boxey $30
2. Landscape Direct $1,330.00
3. American Tree $1,296.50
4. Nancy Boxey $31.05
5. Michigan Downtown Assn. $35.00
6. Verizon Wireless $115.03
7. Village of Almont $25.00
8. Village of Almont $21.80
9. Village of Almont $337.50
10. Village of Almont $39.80
11. Village of Almont $177.32
12. MI Hist. Preserv. Network $175.00
13. Nancy Boxey $175.38
14. Lapeer Economic Club $15.00

Total to be approved: $3,804.38

Motion carried unanimously.
Treasurer’s Report:

Board members reviewed the cash flow statement for March 2012. Treasurer Antonelli reported that the DDA account balance is: $193,902.10. She further indicated that she had looked into options for increasing the amount of interest earned by this deposit, but given current market conditions there are no other options unless we put money in a longer term CD. Motion by S. Schneider, supported by F. Smith to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Motion carried unanimously.

Director’s Report

N. Boxey provided updates on various DDA projects and activities for the months of April. The Almont Historical Museum project won the Michigan Historic Preservation Building Award for 2012. An awards reception is scheduled for Friday, May 11th. Various updates on new businesses in Almont and possible expansions were provided. A ribbon cutting ceremony for Family Farm & Home is scheduled for Saturday, May 5th.

Almont Master Planning Process

O. Turner discussed with the Board the joint effort of the Village and Township in updating their respective master plans. DDA Board members discussed some long term strategic goals including the need for some design guidelines to help create and preserve an Almont identity and local character. Other topics discussed included expansion of the commercial business district, allowing for mixed-use development and zoning, expansion of utilities into the township to promote growth, complete streets policies and development of downtown properties including the vacant lot. The necessity of updating policies, zoning and ordinances to coincide with a new master plan will be imperative for enforcement. Master planning goals/strategies will also be incorporated into a new DDA work plan in 2014.

Board members were asked to direct any further input to O. Turner for consideration of the committee. A presentation of the draft plan will be given to the DDA Board prior to final adoption.

Fountain Pump/Light Maintenance

T. Roach provided an update on service and parts for the fountain pump and lighting issue. The pump is currently at Gear Master and Landscape Direct has been helpful in providing information regarding recommended maintenance. Original parts and supplier information has been located as well as installation diagrams for the fountain. T. Roach ordered a basic seal kit and anticipates being able to maintenance the pump in-house. If further assistance is required he will contact Almont Waste Water Treatment personnel. Landscape Direct will re-install the pump when complete. The lighting supplier has also been located and part information obtained. The cost for a new fixture is $438/fixture. T. Roach to inspect the uncovered fountain and work with DPW to ascertain how many fixtures are currently disconnected and how many lamps need to be replaced. Lamps can be obtained locally through the DPW. T. Roach to secure pricing for installation of the fixtures from area electrical contractors and to coordinate this project with N. Boxey.

Motion by C. Kinkade, supported by T. Pepper to approve $2,000 to complete pump and lighting repairs and to make the fountain fully functioning with further funds to be spent at the discretion of N. Boxey. Motion approved unanimously.

DDA Employment Budget Revision

Board members commended N. Boxey on her performance and acknowledged her key contributions and leadership to the success of the DDA’s efforts.

Motion by S. Schneider, supported by C. Kinkade to amend the 2011/2012 DDA Budget to transfer $4,000 from “Snow Removal” to “Director’s Salary” to compensate for additional working hours needed due to increased business activity, grant and infrastructure projects and other programming. Motion passed unanimously.
Façade Grant Application – Kommunity Kracker Barrel

N. Boxey indicated that a grant application was not submitted as was initially expected but updated Board members on general program requirements and funding priorities. Several property owners have expressed a desire to secure Façade Grant Assistance, but are unable or willing to adhere to the either grant documentation requirements of timing. Board members were reminded that a significant review and update of this program was conducted and approved in 2009 to install safeguards against program abuse as well as to better prioritize funding considerations. It is the recommendation that these guidelines are adhered to as written and that any deviance from the written program guidelines could install bias, unfair advantages or not conform to the intent of the program.

Board members discussed that the current guidelines are fair, clear, that the process if followed correctly is simple. Furthermore, members felt that consistency in how each applicant is reviewed is imperative to the integrity of the program. Board members are to review the current program and discuss any changes that they may want to institute.

Each of the current prospective program applicants have had the written guidelines provided to them on multiple occasions as well as to have had clear discussions with the DDA Director regarding the requirements for consideration.

Almont Spring Fling

Planning is going well. Currently we have 8 registered vendors. M. Knapke indicated that he has commitments from four additional vendors. T. Roach agreed to assist M. Knapke in coordination of vendors that day. Howard Gross Kopf has agreed to allow the Almont Schools art staff to utilize his vacant building to host the student art show.

Rental Rehab Program

The architectural plans are complete for all units and the bid packages are being developed.

Michigan Main Street Program

N. Boxey, T. Antonelli, O. Turner and G. Peltier attended the first training session in Clare, MI. T. Antonelli discussed with the Board the positive impact that Main Street has had in Clare and the diversity of downtown merchants in Clare. Overall program success in Clare is dependent largely on a large and dedicated community volunteer program. A reasonable goal for Almont would be to have a stakeholder team identified by the end of the first year. T. Roach asked if the DDA was successful in volunteer recruitment. N. Boxey indicated that we have not been strong in this area and that discussions are on-going to try and coordinate improved volunteer efforts through the school district. Board members were encouraged to attend the next training in June or to recruit other local business owners to attend.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm

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Steve Schneider, Secretary

Nancy Boxey - DDA Director
April 25, 2012