

**CITY OF HUDSONVILLE  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
AND  
HUDSONVILLE CITY COMMISSION**

**Minutes of Joint Meeting**

November 12, 2012

Present: Mayor Van Doeselaar, Commissioners Brandsen, Leerar, O'Brien, Ten Harmsel, Unema, Zuiderveen; DDA Board Members Jim Roskam, Joel Keegstra, Gary Huizen, Larry Gemmen, Brad Dykstra, Doug Butterworth and Phil Koning, City Manager Waterman, City Attorney Wendt, City Finance Director Sal, City Clerk Wiersum, Marketing Coordinator Michelle Fare and Planning Director Dan Strikwerda. Also present were Ross Luurtsema and Jim Fredricks.

Absent: Richard Brummel and Dale Sall

I. Call to Order.

Chairman Roskam called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and gave an invocation. Mayor Van Doeselaar called the special meeting of the Hudsonville City Commission to order. He welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. Financial Reports.

City Finance Director Sal gave a financial report of the DDA & TIF. The TIF has an estimated year end fund balance of \$1,387,572. She also gave a financial report on the General Operating fund which has an estimated year end fund balance of \$962,278. These reports were received as information.

III. Overview of City Planning Documents.

Dan Strikwerda stated that a combined meeting will help the City Commission and DDA to work in the same direction. He gave a recent history of the City's planning-related documents, which started with a grant the city was awarded by Ottawa County for the Urban Smart Growth Demonstration Project. It has the goals of enhancing the vibrancy, livability, and aesthetics of an urban community. This Project started with the Small Town Design Initiative in 2006. Public comments included the need for an identity, walkability, a charming/unique downtown where people congregate, and the need for landscape beautification. This public input was used towards the Downtown Master Plan, which was adopted in 2007. A brief overview was given of the other plans that have been adopted, which are the 2009 Recreation Plan, the 2011 Strategic Plan, the 2012 DDA Plan, and the 2012 Downtown Zoning Ordinance. These documents are based on public input and are consistent with the four priorities being addressed at this meeting.

Hudsonville has been very thorough in getting the planning documents where they are today and now the goal is to bring these prioritized projects from the planning stage to the implementation stage. We want to be proactive and make these plans happen. These projects are very visible changes that will have a positive impact on the community for our residents, businesses and visitors.

Dan stated that the City has been advised by consultants and business people that we are going in the right direction with the City's planning documents.

#### IV. Downtown Redevelopment Effort

City Manager Waterman stated that previously the City Commission and the DDA have worked independently and he feels that this meeting will be very helpful to demonstrate that both of these bodies are now on the same page. We now have a common vision.

We are now at a critical point because we have an opportunity to act on one of these four objectives. We have a grant that could potentially give us 70 cents on every dollar we spend to acquire property for the Village Green. The purpose of this meeting is to prioritize improvement projects, come to a consensus on committing to those projects, along with the timing and the fund allocation of those projects.

Mr. Waterman identified the 4 possible projects that would be discussed tonight:

- (1) The Village Green
- (2) Downtown Street Modifications
- (3) The Children's Learning Center
- (4) Chicago Drive Landscaping Improvements.

Village Green Project – We have an opportunity for additional funding from the State. This project would create a sense of place for our downtown. We currently don't have a true downtown, and we are working to have a traditional development pattern which includes creating a center or core for our community. This had been identified as the Village Green which is roughly an acre size green space. This would be a gathering place, a place for concerts, tree lighting ceremonies etc.

The development of the Village Green would occur into two steps:

- (1) Property acquisitions. – The City has submitted a grant application to the MDNR trust fund for 70% of the appraised purchase price of the three parcels needed for the Village Green. The grant would cover the cost of property at a fair market appraised value, relocation costs of businesses and realtors fees. The appraised value of the three properties totals \$272,000. The City would be responsible for 30% of that amount, or \$81,600 plus relocation and demolition costs. The City should know by early December if the grant is awarded to the City. Michelle Fare reported that they have received a communication from the State that placed the City's application in the top 10 applications submitted to the State. If the grant is received, the City has 90

days to have the buildings on that property razed and the property turned into green space.

- (2) Development phase. – Development would include construction of new streets, sidewalks, lighting, fountains, etc. We don't have to go to the development stage until we are ready. At that time we can go for a development grant. Other applicable grant funding sources could also be sought at that time.

Mr. Waterman stated that the City cannot negotiate with the property owners until they know if the grant is awarded, and it must be a consensual agreement between the business owners and the City. The decision to expend dollars to acquire the property will need to take place within the next few months if the grant is received.

Downtown Street Modifications – The redevelopment of the downtown will require the modification of three existing streets:

- (1) Harvey Street – identified as a key pedestrian corridor.
- (2) Kelly Street – proposed to be extended straight west into Cherry.
- (3) Cherry Avenue – straightening the street to create a pocket park or green space.

Some of these projects may be rolled into future development costs.

Dr. Dykstra stated that Kelly Street used to run straight and was changed to how it is now. He is questioning why we are now putting it back as a thru street. He is not opposed to change but would like know why and what we expect to gain.

Mr. Waterman stated that having a road with curbs and sidewalks would provide separation of people and cars. It is a safety issue. Kelly Street would not be straightened until we know what will happen with the Plaza.

Larry Gemmen stated he would not be opposed to the road going back to being straight through because there is greater vision of the future redevelopment that could take place.

Children's Learning Center: Mr. Waterman stated that the Children's Learning Center has the potential to be a large attractor to our Community. This project is spearheaded by a separate committee called the Dr. Seuss Committee. This group has been working with a professional fund raiser. This fund raiser has indicated that everyone she has talked to feels this is a very worthwhile project and doesn't feel there will be an issue raising money for the project. She feels that within 6 months we should know if we will have the funding to move forward.

Given this information from the fundraiser, the Committee is formally requesting a preliminary funding source from the City Commission and/or the DDA to enter into a 6 month agreement with this professional fundraiser. She will know within 6 months if this project would be a go.

Mayor Van Doeselaar stated that this new consultant is very excited about this project. She has connections at the State level and in west Michigan. The Committee has felt since day one that this project could create a sense of place for the City of Hudsonville as well as enhancing the quality of life for the residents of the City. She needs our support to resolve this issue. By the end of 6 or 8 months we will then know whether or not to move forward with the project.

Commissioner Zuiderveen is skeptical that this is any different than in the past. He would be willing to pay the consultant just to determine if this project would move forward or not.

City Manager stated that the scope of the project has changed with the educational component that has been added. The consultant is confident that there would be on-going funding available for this type of project.

Commission Ten Harmsel feels a time line should be placed on this project as well.

DDA member Gary Huizen questioned whether there would be funding available for infrastructure.

Larry Gemmen stated that the learning stimulus component has brought new life to the Dr. Seuss project. That is why there is new value in this project. This project deserves more credibility now.

Chicago Drive Landscaping Improvements. –The landscaping improvements along Chicago Drive will have a very visible impact on the downtown aesthetics. M.C. Smith and Associates have designed this plan. This project is contingent upon when and if other projects are implemented.

Ross Luurtsema addressed the meeting to encourage everyone to understand the history of how we got to where we are today. He gave the history of how the Cherry Avenue Project was created and his business was relocated by the expressway. He is a fan of creating business for business. Let's all work together to create a vision. If you create an opportunity, new opportunities will occur.

V. Project Funding.

Attorney Dick Wendt reviewed the debt capacity for the DDA and for the City. He indicated that Cities can borrow money at a lower rate and interest rates are at an

historical low right now. Attorney Wendt reviewed some potential borrowing scenarios for the DDA and the City. He does not recommend going beyond a 20 year length of time because interest rates would go up substantially.

City Manager Waterman is now asking that the City Commission and the DDA adopt a Resolution of understanding acknowledging what we are doing and agree that this is the right direction. He stated that when financing becomes an issue, the City Commission and the DDA will need to come back together for discussions. This resolution will solidify support for furthering the vision for each of these four projects and the rolls of the City and the DDA for each of these projects.

Motion by Brad Dykstra, seconded by Phil Koning to approve the Resolution regarding certain capital improvement projects related to the revitalization of the City of Hudsonville Downtown.

Yea 8, Nay 0, motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Unema, seconded by Commissioner Brandsen, to approve the Resolution regarding certain capital improvement projects related to the revitalization of the City of Hudsonville Downtown.

Yea 5, Nay 2 (Ten Harmsel, Leerar),  
motion carried.

Commissioner Phil Leerar requested a listing of the bonds that will be retired in the future. This information should be shared with the DDA.

Jim Roskam reminded everyone that the minutes of the DDA do go to the City Commission. If any questions come up regarding those minutes he would be available to answer any questions the Commission would have. He is also available to attend the City Commission meetings to clarify any matters.

Mayor Van Doeselaar thanked everyone for coming to talk about the future plans for the City. He stated that if we don't plan for our future we can only guarantee that we will fail. There is risk to move forward and it doesn't always happen as we first planned. Adjustments may need to be made. This is the first time that the business community and the City government has come together to work together and feels it will have a positive impact on this community.

Commissioner Brandsen stated that those that have served for a number of years have seen the benefits of the projects that have happened in the past. He feels that sometimes we do need to dream a bit and take some risks to move forward.

City Manager Waterman stated that the intention is to get this group back together again after we find out about the grant.

VI. Motion was made, supported and unanimously approved to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

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Jan Wiersum  
Hudsonville City Clerk

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Mayor Van Doeselaar