

City of Charlevoix
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

Monday, September 28, 2009 - 5:30 p.m.

210 State Street, City Hall, Second Floor Conference Room, Charlevoix, Michigan

Minutes

A) CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chairman Mason.

DDA Members present: Dan Barron, Fred DiMartino, Kirby Dipert, Hugh Mason, John Taylor, Jeannine Wallace and John Yaroch

DDA Members absent: Gina Whitney and Mayor Norman Carlson Jr.

Staff: DDA Executive Director Keith Carey

B) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board approved the agenda as presented.

C) INQUIRY INTO POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Member Barron advised the Board that he represents Keweenaw Excursions and wished to be excused from any consideration of the matter.

D) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. August 24, 2009 DDA Meeting Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes. Member Barron asked that the last paragraph on page two be amended to replace the word "vacant" with "vacate." Motion made by Member Wallace and seconded by Member Barron to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2009 minutes as amended. Motion was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.

E) PUBLIC INPUT, NOT RELATED TO OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

Chuck Unbehaun of the Charlevoix Historical Society Board asked the DDA to assist them in finding and purchasing a storage area for their numerous artifacts. The Society is seeking funds to purchase a 1,000 square foot storage building.

Member Barron asked if the Society would consider purchasing and restoring 108 Park Avenue. Mr. Unbehaun stated that the Society has looked at the building and it does not lend itself to be used for storage.

F) OLD BUSINESS

Member Barron stepped down from the dais.

1. Keweenaw Excursions lease of former USCG space in Bridge Park Building

Jason Funkey of Keweenaw Excursions advised the Board that they are seeking to keep their expenses low and wish to retain the old Coast Guard office space for the 2010 season at \$500 a month.

Chairman Mason asked if the space is adequate. Mr. Funkey stated that the office location near the boat is very helpful.

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Executive Director Carey asked the Board to establish the 2010 office lease. He advised the Board that presently, the Keweenaw Star is paying \$500 a month (utilities included) for the office space.

Member Yaroch feels the Board needs to discuss the lease and determine the term of the lease (i.e., six or twelve month lease; number of lease years and a possible inflation factor in the lease rate).

Member Taylor agreed that there are number variables that need to be considered.

Dan Barron, representing Keweenaw Excursions, advised the Board that the City is proposing to lease dock space to Keweenaw Excursions for the 2010 season. The business is seeking both dock and office leases. It is important to look at the total package and how the business can bring people into downtown Charlevoix.

Member Dipert reminded the Board that Keweenaw Excursions wants to come into downtown Charlevoix. The office space has been empty for a number of years.

Mr. Funkey advised the Board that his dock lease will be \$15,000. He is presently working on other essential services (e.g., garbage, sewage) for the boat. It is his intent to sell items such as t-shirts, sweat shirts and photographs in the office space.

The Board discussed the size of the proposed office space. It was generally agreed to tour the office space after the agenda items are discussed.

Member Barron returned to the dais.

2. 108 Park Avenue Property

Executive Director Carey advised the Board that the cost to repair 108 Park Avenue will require a significant investment to bring the building to a marketable condition for sale, rent or lease. The building lacks adequate foundations; the foundation is crumbling or missing in areas and the timbers have settled and are decayed. The soil is sloughing into the building, which is allowing the basement to settle. There is significant water damage and staining in the plaster ceilings and walls and the porch is sagging. The house's plumbing and electric needs to be redone. The estimated cost to renovate the building is in excess of \$50,000.

Dale Boss addressed the Board. He asked them to consider tearing down the building. The home has no historical significance. The house should not be repaired and it is ratty, junky and needs to be removed. This section of the downtown can use additional parking.

Mr. Boss suggested the DDA look at cleaning up the North Channel bank adjacent to Pine River Lane and building a viewing tower. The DDA could also purchase the vacant lot at 115 Pine River Lane for parking for the Weathervane and the viewing platform.

The Board discussed the various options for the property located at 108 Park Avenue.

Chairman Mason stated that he would rather not have a parking lot at that site.

Member Yaroch reminded the Board that there is a need for parking in this area. The parking spaces around the old Library are no longer available to the public. The removal of the building would enhance the area. The parking study shows that additional spaces are needed for downtown employees. If we provide a parking area for the employees, street parking would be available for the businesses. The parking lot can be built to be aesthetically pleasing.

Member DiMartino agreed. There are three restaurants in the vicinity, whose clientele depend upon public parking. The removal of the building would provide more parking spaces.

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Member Barron concurred an upscale landscape scheme could soften the parking lots visual affects on the area.

Director Carey advised the Board that Performance Engineering, the engineer for the Park Avenue infrastructure project, has looked at parking lot configurations for the lot. The paving of the existing parking lot will have 23 spaces. If the house was removed, the parking lot could have over 50 spaces.

Chairman Mason asked that the Board look at the parking lot design at the next meeting. The Board discussed whether the parking lot would be metered or not.

Greg Stevens addressed the Board. The existing house is in poor condition and he hopes the Board will demolish the eyesore.

Executive Director Carey asked the Board if they wished to remove the structure.

Chairman Mason asked that the Director obtain a cost estimate to remove the house.

Member Wallace also asked that the Historic District Study Committee be asked their opinion on the removal of the structure at 108 Park Avenue.

Member Yaroch asked staff to locate Vic Nelheibel's the parking lot designs to be reviewed by the Board as it considers the design of the parking lot.

G) NEW BUSINESS

1. Charlevoix Concert Series

Executive Director Carey asked the Board to consider the possibility of moving the Sunday evening concerts back to Thursdays. The Board had agreed to review the Sunday night concerts after two years and review the impact on downtown lodging. The Charlevoix Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) has advised him that moving the concerts to Sunday has not had a noticeable impact on occupancy. He also asked the Board to reconsider the two performer format.

The Board discussed whether the concerts had an impact on downtown businesses and hotel occupancy.

Member Barron stated that if the concerts were moved back to Thursday night, the CVB has expressed an interest in helping to pay for the concerts.

Member Wallace does not want the DDA to continue to fully fund the concerts. The DDA needs a partner to share the costs.

It was generally agreed to move the concerts back to Thursday evenings and to have only one act. The Board was also asked to consider concerts on Saturday nights in the off-season.

H) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Movies in the Park

The movies in the park were successful. The DDA will plan several more showing next summer.

- Michigan Downtown Association (MDA) Conference

The MDA is planning to have a conference in Charlevoix in July 2010 and they are working with the CVB and Charlevoix's lodging establishments.

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- Business Recruitment

The Executive Director advised the Board of the various efforts taking place to recruit businesses.

The Board generally agreed to remove and refurbish the multiple bay newspaper box in Van Pelt Place.

The Board meeting recessed at 7:08 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at Keweenaw Excursions office located at 109 Bridge Park Drive at 7:20 p.m. by Chairman Mason.

DDA Members present: Dan Barron, Fred DiMartino, Kirby Dipert, Hugh Mason, John Taylor, Jeannine Wallace and John Yaroch

DDA Members absent: Gina Whitney and Mayor Norman Carlson Jr.

Staff: DDA Executive Director Keith Carey

Member Barron reminded the Board that he represents Keweenaw Excursions and wished to be excused from any consideration of the matter.

The Board toured the 36' x 26' office space area. The 1,000 square foot office has a small kitchen area. Board members DiMartino and Wallace agreed that the proposed \$500 a month rent was reasonable. Board member Yaroch wishes to preserve access to the adjoining large storage room for future use.

I) MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

J) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Keweenaw Excursions
Update on 108 Park Avenue

K) ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Member Dipert and supported by Member Taylor to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Hugh Mason, Chairman

Linda Jo Weller, Recording Secretary

Carol A. Ochs, City Clerk