

DLI Board Meeting

October 9, 2025 | 11:30 am

215 S. Washington Square Ste. 100, Lansing, MI 48933

Board Members Present: J. Estill, J. Durham, K. Tomac, J. Flores, A. Ruske

Board Members Not Present: J. Pugh, N. Thompson Frazier, J. Hinze,

Board Advisors Present: S. Benson

DLI Staff Present: K. Litwin, C. Edgerly

Minutes

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 12:07 p.m. by J. Estill

2. Citizen's Comments (items not on the agenda): None

3. Correspondence: None

4. Consent Agenda Approvals

- October 9, 2025
- Minutes from September 2025 Meeting – No August meeting due to lack of quorum
- Committee Reports
- Monthly Financials – J. Durham

Motion by A. Rusek to approve consent agenda. Second by J. Flores

5. Old Town Updates: There is a new art installation going in starting this Friday, October 10 and celebrated on Cedar by Friedland Industries. This will highlight the focus of manufacturing and Old Town's history with a 3-D Sculpture.

OTCA is finalizing interviews for their new Executive Director.

6. Lake State Updates: Updates from Lake State included Fall mums being planted, removing hanging baskets this week as well as picnic tables and umbrellas. They'll start Fall clean-up and dead-heading. Discussed event dates including Trick-or-Treat on the Square Friday, October 24
Fall Cut-Back and Clean-Up October 22
Silver Bells trash removal and placed back.

7. Internal Reports:

- **Director's Report:** C. Edgerly shared that our new Marketing & Brand specialist will begin on Monday, October 13. Also, Kris Klein's application for our open board seat has been referred to committee and should go before council for approval yet this month. Also Great Harvest is now open and that is who we have had lunch from. Please stop in and welcome them to the neighborhood.
- **President's Report:** J. Estill discussed the Big Red Ball and the Board's active involvement.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

-2026 Board Meeting Calendar: Motion to adopt the 2026 DLI Board calendar as presented.

-Outdoor Patio & Sign Permits for 2026: Discussed what we want in terms of vibrant streetscapes and who enforces the public space uses. Do we and does the city want to encourage behavior, or penalize behaviors and activities we want. Board discussed the option to have city be the final reviewer and enforcer. We would still like to encourage there not being a fee so we could have more outdoor patios and beautification, etc. Step 1 board recommendation would be to waive the fee. Step 2 If there is a staff time charge, could DLI work with the city to determine a base cost for that review process. Ideally we would like to see the fee be waived. Board discussed the option of permit fee grant being offered too if someone's fee was too high for them to afford.

-Strategic Action Plan Goal #3, Objective 2:

Board reviewed this goal and objective, discussing how current projects fit into this based on CSO, how we as a Board establishes policies that we can control, how to we affect policy and control and with that what can we accomplish.

J. Durham brought up prioritizing policies to go before council but one way we as an organization we can quickly influence what happens along the square by structuring our grant programs to include elements that include elements of what the CMA says we need. Staff can review along with Business Development to ensure that higher scoring is given to those projects that are in alignment with our standards.

Discussed community policies and discussions that may come before Council. How can we share information with business and property owners that may be discussed on a Council level. Further discussed the balance of not lobbying/influencing a certain action but instead sharing information so stakeholders are aware. Possibly for Downtown could we prioritize certain types of development, best practices and having language that supports that.

Board would like to make it our practice to regularly speak at and attend council meetings to share voices of support for best practices and share input on projects for downtown. Some follow-up items include making sure our CMA recommendations are included in adopted updated Master Plan.

- City Parking Study & Downtown Parking: Last month the board discussed revisiting the past City parking study that was done and both OTCA and DLI addressing this with City Admin. Board members discussed what our next steps could be with merchants. One idea shared included a 2-3 questions survey to merchants that we can use to take to City Admin and Council for considered action. While we may not all agree on parking, we do agree that follow-up on the parking study is something that needs to be done.

J. Estill. Second by K. Tomac. Motion approved unanimously. Board recommends and directs staff to initiate conversations with city staff regarding parking recommendations of first 15 minutes free, as well as loading zones in each block.

- CSO Street Design: C. Edgerly and K. Litwin provided a quick re-cap of how we got to here. Board reviewed the design we have to date and design elements SmithGroup has incorporated into current City plans for CSO Street reconstruction. SmithGroup and staff have been meeting monthly with City staff to discuss redesigns and uses of public spaces and downtown blocks. The design of the sidewalk space is going to be overseen by SmithGroup and incorporating Michigan's Downtown design elements.



9. Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by A. Rusek at 12:56 p.m. Second by J. Durham. Motion approved unanimously.

6. Advent House Update: Susan and Edward attended the meeting to provide a quarterly update on services provided and needs. A hard copy of description of services circulated and explained by S. Cancro with contact information provided. Edward introduced himself as the Downtown dedicated street outreach lead. Updates included status of county and federal funding, as well as a new employment program developed to fill the need of those needing very basic things to even show up for a job interview. To date 6 people have been able to find jobs through this outreach.

Rusek asked what the greatest need they see day-to-day and insights on pods through the city. S. Cancro indicated they work with PATH in Charlotte (grant has been cut) and some of the things that they see that they see would be handwarmers and footwarmers, as well as winter wear, socks, hats, blankets as people are sleeping outside or in vehicles. Funds are also needed for security deposits for those moving into housing.

J. Estill asked for numbers of how many are being helped and perhaps who is being left out, including in what zip codes. Advent House is currently serving approximately 400 individuals who are homeless. The number of individuals over 60 years of age is growing. Per other organizations, 50% of unhoused individuals they interact with are now over 60 years of age. Additional discussion was held regarding City Pods and the status of the City's RFP process.

Rusek asked for information to circulate something that is asking for numbers on needs met. They will send out. Rusek offered to help with resume writing as well.

Pugh asked for numbers of individuals serviced and number connected with stable housing and jobs. Asked for just numbers.

C. Ederly indicated they have seen people using bike storage for personal storage and wondering if they can. Few businesses have noticed increase in homelessness on Kalamazoo. There is an Advent staff member at the library and one at CATA. Suggested businesses direct people to them.

7. Lake State Report: As weather starts to turn to Fall, the Downtown maintenance team is maintaining summer plants, transitioning to Fall plants, October fall clean-up will start and will continue through the month.

8. Reports

- Director's Report: Reminder that September 30th workshop on Grosse Pointe – it's focused on board strategy (Alex, Mario and Cathleen attending).
 - Tuesday the Historical Society celebrates first physical location.
 - Interviewing for marketing and branding position ongoing. Shakayla and Cathleen accepting award from CMPRSA for last year's Big Red Ball's marketing campaign
 - City Council assessment role and public hearing – Assessor had submitted everything in May; it did not go as planned in terms of getting assessment role and renewal before Council. September 22nd public hearing. No changes as to assessments.
- President's Report: Estill mentioned that parking was brought up by mayor to city. Brings up the question of equity between neighborhood – pricing for parking is different between each zone which isn't beneficial to DLI efforts. The recommendations of this Board and Downtown regarding loading zones and no movement or updated timeline before council at this time.



Retailers have asked for 15 minutes of free parking on each meter. Parking garage v meter parking has not changed either. Looking for action, consistency and movement and is it our board's job to demand some of these things from the city? Discussion took place and S. Benson mentioned that she has met with Rawley.

Possible next steps – C. Edgerly suggested Old Town and Downtown collaborate and ask for joint meeting before next budget season. Executive Committee will discuss and make a united front to present to city.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

– **Karl Dorshimer's Resignation from DLI Board:** After 12+ years of service, K. Dorshimer retired. With that he has resigned from the DLI Board. Motion by N. Thompson Frazier to accept his resignation. 2nd by Rusek. Motion approved unanimously.

– **PSD District B Memo of Understanding:** C. Edgerly will circulate the Memo to Board and include existing notes/edits. Estill explained basic thought on what is being re-worked for zone boundaries. Working with OTCA on memo for both boards to finalize. Estill asked for review of document and email any questions or requested information to C. Edgerly by next week.

– **Big Red Ball & Fund Development Update:** Staff met with Capitol Fundraising Associates and what the contract will look like. Big Red Ball is a priority as it's our major fundraiser and the date is approaching fast. Goal is to have 15 host committee members, as well as sponsors. Board discussion took place regarding who else should be represented as Michigan's Downtown? Fundraising retreat upcoming. December 6th is Big Red Ball – need to secure \$15k presenting sponsor. Event will be held at the historic Knapp's Centre this year.

– **Strategic Action Plan, Goal #3, Objective 1:** J. Estill introduced this. With CSO Street reconstruction, staff and City are holding standing meetings and feedback from stakeholders with Smith Group. How can staff and Board support to ensure redesign is not putting it back as it currently is, but enhanced and addresses our goal of an accessible and welcoming Downtown experience. Placemaking and streetscape are once in a lifetime/50 year asks.

C. Edgerly briefly touched on what is happening in other areas of Downtown with partners

9. Closed Session – Pending Litigation: Board met to understand where we are with pending litigation from past Downtown business owners of Neva Lee's.

10. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by N. Thompson Frazier at 12:57 p.m. J. Pugh Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

