

DLI Board Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2024 | 11:30 am

112 S. Washington Square, Lansing, MI 48933

Board Members Present: J. Estill, J. Flores, N. Thompson-Frazier, K. Dorshimer, K. Tomac

J. Pugh arrive at 12:05 p.m.

Board Advisors Present: Councilmember Jeffrey Brown

Staff Present: C. Edgerly

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 11:40 a.m. by J. Estill

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

3. Correspondence: None

4. Consent Agenda Approvals:

- Agenda May 9, 2024
- Minutes from April 11, 2024
- Committee Reports
- Monthly Financials

Motion by J. Estill. Second by J. Flores. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Old Town Updates:

None this month as S. Benson is attending the Main Street America Conference in Birmingham.

6. Reports

- Director Report:
C. Edgerly provided updates regarding the Downtown Maintenance RFP which was issued April 23. Proposals are due May 22. To date we only received two questions.

C. Edgerly presented the FY 2025 budget to City Council on Monday, May 6. There was only one question and overall, Cathleen thought it went well.

Staff has also been conducting interviews for the Events & Outreach position. Second interviews have been held this week and we intend to have a new staff member join us in June. Cathleen would like Julie and Shakayla to provide feedback on the top candidate when they return from the Main Street America conference.

- President's Report:
J. Estill provided updates to the board regarding the Strategic Action planning process. We have identified 5 goals building on our past strategic plan and the Comprehensive Market Analysis (CMA) and are working on measurable objectives and strategies. The team is meeting each Monday at 1:30 p.m. through June to have a plan for the Board to review by mid-June.

Also, it's time to begin the Executive Director annual review process. J. Estill will be sending out materials to get all board members feedback in time for the annual review. She also reviewed how the annual review process typically goes with the entire board.

7. Action/Discussion Items

- **New Board Member:** The board officially welcomed Keri Tomac. K. Tomac shared information about her experience and why she was interested in being a member of the DLI Board, including her past volunteerism and committee work with DLI, interest in what's happening here, having worked downtown for 15+ years, etc.
- **Placer.ai:** C. Edgerly shared the proposal from Placer.AI. Staff has been looking at this tool for over 3 years, but the costs were too high for our budget. This year, Placer.ai has teamed up with Main Street America to offer once service, and then have offered reduced annual pricing which better fits within DLI's budget. The board asked questions regarding the number of users allowed functions that Cathleen thought would bring more data than what we could already guess at. Capabilities include the ability to the public's shopping patterns, event data, traffic in and out of the downtown, etc. overall staff could use it not just as they work with businesses to show when highest shopping and sales volumes are, but also use it as a recruitment tool for new business and investments, for sponsorship with events, we could partner with sharing information with the LEDC and Old Town, share data with other partners who hold events downtown, and with committees to better inform projects and programs. Board members also recommended tying this tool and date into our annual marketing plan. This product has capability for unlimited geofencing.

Additional discussion took place regarding the potential for sharing costs, future partnerships and uses. N. Thompson-Frazier motion to approve. J. Flores second. Board approved moving forward with a contract based on budget and having the option to extend the contract for an additional two years.

- **Market Shops:** C. Edgerly provided a history of the market shops and their intended use in Reutter Park. She also shared updates on building code requirements from the city and the internal discussions amongst DLI staff regarding the continued use and investment in these market shops. There has been positive activity in the park and interest, as well as valuable lessons and partnerships formed. But attendance and activity did not bring as much use as we would have liked with the energy that goes into planning the neighborhood market series and Kringle Holiday Market. Plus, with the new building code requirements for drywall and electric in each shop, staff wants board input on whether spending more budget on these structures is feasible, or if we should look at other partners managing, stepping away from the market shops.

Board discussion took place and Councilmember Brown expressed concern that this is the first time he is hearing about these challenges, and he knows what our intention was with the market shops because he's always been a supporter and customer of all that DLI and vendors do, as we're trying to help small businesses come in. He would have liked to know about these issues earlier because as a councilmember he and others could have waived all these requirements.

Board members also asked questions about if the ice-skating rink will continue to be there, which DLI staff believes it will be. Important discussions have taken place with other city



departments regarding how we work together on projects like this, code compliance for structures that aren't housing or commercial buildings, etc. Board feedback was to work with community organizations, Parks & Rec, Lansing Shuffle, etc. to find other uses for these shop structures and reinvest our time, money and energy into projects that have proven more effective. K. Tomac, J. Pugh, N. Thompson-Frazier and J. Estill also brought up with Cathleen the need to discuss strategy, messaging for why we're discontinuing the market series, and what future park activations or activities look like from the city. A commitment to action needs to be addressed with growing needs of our community.

Councilmember Brown and K. Dorshimer also expressed thoughts regarding safety and perceptions of the park, with more police officers needed to patrol the area first and get people comfortable with the park before any new activities possibly happen there.

- **Mini Makeovers Update:**

C. Edgerly shared an update on the status of the mini makeovers taking place at 4 downtown businesses, thanks to the support of Match on Main grant funding awarded to DLI. Summit Comics, Sweet Encounter, Nubian and Sylvia's Sudsery have been working with the consultant team to prepare for and undergo the mini makeovers weekly. Once final recommendations were made by the consultants and orders placed, not all materials will arrive in time for the planned May 23 unveil and community event to view the makeovers. So, this week, staff is discussing with Michigan Main Street, and will communicate with the business owners, the need to push back the unveiling event until June. Makeovers will still take place though as planned May 20-23. N. Thompson-Frazier shared that as one of the businesses going through the mini-makeovers, she is fine with pushing the date back. More updates to follow.

8. Adjourn DLI Board Meeting: K. Dorshimer motioned to adjourn meeting at 12:48 p.m. Motion seconded by J. Flores. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Members:

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| • Jen Estill, <i>President</i> | • Keri Tomac, <i>Member</i> |
| • J.V. Anderton, <i>Vice President</i> | • Joshua Pugh, <i>Member</i> |
| • Julie Durham, <i>Treasurer</i> | • Karl Dorshimer, <i>Member</i> |
| • Jennifer Hinze, <i>Secretary</i> | • Jesse Flores, <i>Member</i> |
| • Nikki Thompson-Frazier, <i>Member</i> | |
| • Board Advisors: Jeffrey Brown | |

