



**CANTON TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of the August 16, 2023 Meeting**

This meeting was held in the Supervisor's conference room in the Canton Township Administration Building and via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 A.M. by Bart Patterson.

Present: John Camp, Laura Giove, Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, Seth Kleinglass, Darshan Patel, Bart Patterson, Kyle Selter, Mark Waldbauer

Absent: Steven Brock, Kurt Olson, Guruveer Singh, Jacob Uhazie

Staff: Gavin Beckford, Jon LaFever, Cathy Vettese

Guests: Frank Nasal of Frank's Landscaping

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by Darshan Patel, to accept the agenda as presented.

AYES: All present to accept the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY 19, 2023 MINUTES

MOTION: by Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, supported by Seth Kleinglass, to approve the July 19, 2023, meeting minutes.

Darshan's name was misspelled, and a correction will be made to the July 19, 2023 minutes.

AYES: All present.

CITIZENS' NON-AGENDA ITEMS

N/A

PAYMENT OF BILLS

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, to allow discussion of payment of the bills.

AYES: All present accept payment of the bills.

DISCUSSION: LANDSCAPING OPTIONS

Frank Nasal attended the meeting to discuss the landscape options along Ford Road. Frank shared that wildflowers visually look better when grown in larger areas. Typically, wildflowers look weedy the first year when seeded. Frank discussed different varieties of wildflowers.

Frank offered an option to plant 60% annuals and 40% perennials. Annuals would eventually die off perennials would continue to thrive. Another option would be to plant all perennials instead of seed or a combination of seed mixture and planted perennials. He did not suggest annuals at this time of year.

The native plants that are already out there will be transplanted to an area along Ford Road. Jon and Frank agree that it is hard to tame the native wildflowers and they will grow beyond their area. Frank pointed out that the Ford and Lilley landscape area thrived this year.

Frank confirmed that wildflowers are drought resistant, but soil can be an issue due to road salt, so soil testing is necessary for plants to thrive.

Frank pointed out that the seeding quote was for four reseedings throughout the year.

Gavin asked the board to consider their priority. Noting that if we choose appearance and uniformity, we may have to do the planting which will cost more. Gavin suggested signage to educate the residents about the wildflowers. Anne Marie pointed out that the priority of the committee was to use drought resistant native plants.

Bart asked about the resiliency of the current plantings. Frank pointed out that currently the native plants are drought resistant but could offer other varieties. If you go with a wildflower seed mixture you will get a variety of 20 different types but if you decide to go with plantings, you're limited to what the growers have in stock.

Anne Marie suggested getting the sub-committee involved. Frank offered to bring in potted plants for a presentation. Frank felt the corner walls should have a more uniformed look and plantings would achieve that. Wildflowers would have a weedier appearance.

Kyle asked if it would be easier to maintain the weeds with plantings or wildflowers and who is responsible for the maintenance. Frank confirmed that the actual plantings are easier to maintain, and Frank's Landscaping is responsible for the maintenance. Wildflowers make it harder to weed the area.

Darshan asked about the timing of the plantings. Frank recommended end of September or early October. Spring would also be ideal.

Frank will check on availability of the current plants. Frank supplied a list of wildflower mixes to choose from. Please see appendix A. Cathy will email copies to everyone on the board.

Bart asked about the depth of soil needed for the new boulevard flower beds. Frank said typically new flower beds require 6 to 8 inches of soil and pointed out that he currently tests the soil once a year and recommended that process should be maintained with new soil.

The board decided to go with 1-gallon container plantings and Bart will present this information to the sub-committee for their discussion and input.

Frank exited the meeting at 8:40 am.

APPROVAL OF THE \$101,504.00 P.O. TO GREAT LAKES POWER AND LIGHTING FOR RETROFITTING OF DDA STREETLIGHTS TO LED BULBS

MOTION: by Darshan Patel, supported by Seth Kleinglass, to discuss the approval of the \$101,504.00 purchase order to Great Lakes Power and lighting.

AYES: All present to accept the P.O. to Great Lakes Power and Lighting for retrofitting of DDA Streetlights to LED bulbs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DDA MANAGER'S REPORT – August 16, 2023

- A decision was taken to end the Color Block Game promotion. This decision was based on low consumer activity, as measured by App download and coupon usage. The promotion was ended on July 31st, which was the expiration date for the coupons offered for businesses in the Green Block.
- We have inquired with MDOT about the Loon redesign feedback and the plan for the traffic light wire spans. We are awaiting feedback from them on these issues. We will also be forwarding a recent question about the integration of a 10-foot-wide shared path along Ford. As we receive feedback, we will make it available to the Board.
- The Board is being reminded about the SEMCOG EV Fleet Expo Ride and Drive, scheduled for August 17 at The Summit, for those who have not already registered.
- In response to the request made for information on the success of the Master Plan Update Community Outreach, Senior Planner Erin Schlutow prepared a summary for the Board, which can be found on the following pages.

Master Plan Community Outreach Survey Summary

Prepared by Erin Schutlow, Senior Planner, Canton Township, 8/11/23

As you may know, Canton Township is updating the Master Plan. This is an exciting project that will serve as the guiding policy document for the next 10 – 20 years.

The most important component of the Master Plan project is garnering feedback from community stakeholders, including residents, property owners, business owners, community leaders, and others. The Planning Services Division has put great emphasis on reaching as many Canton community members as possible, which has led to a public engagement strategy that has not occurred before in Canton Township. We engaged in a variety of methods to meet and talk with the public, including attending community events, large comment boards at Township facilities, a community survey, updates in the FOCUS, and more than 12 stakeholder discussions with residents, property owners, and business owners.

The Community Survey, which was distributed November 2022 – January 2023, did not ask specific questions related to the DDA, but there were responses that focused on Ford Rd. Some of the top concerns related to DDA and businesses in Canton, include:

- More walkable and nicer central business district and downtown
- Lower Ford Rd speed limit
- Sidewalks on Ford Rd.
- Pedestrian and bike trails throughout the Township especially safe ways of crossing Ford Rd.

Their noted concerns include:

- Cross access between businesses
- Conversion of lights to LED
- Landscaping, lighting poles after Blvd. project
- Shuttles between DDA and Cherry Hill Village
- Education on color blocks
- Entertainment, festivals opportunities
- Keeping the DDA clean

We also worked through a SWOT exercise in which we discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the DDA and commercial corridor. Below are a few of their responses:

Strengths

- Easy visibility
- One-stop shop community
- Draws to area
- Low vacancy
- Clean along Ford Rd.

Weaknesses

- Wayfinding signage
- Encourage businesses to switch to multi-tenant signs
- Pocket parks in out lots on Ford Rd
- Time lights on Ford Rd for crosswalks

Opportunities

- Skate Park
- Widen sidewalks
- EV's
- Shuttles
- Regional draw events
- Marketing campaign to highlight businesses in the DDA

Threats

- MDOT
- Funding
- Design of the DDA
- Vacancy rate leading to blight, neglect
- Construction
- Online shopping

ADDITIONAL CITIZENS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Gavin suggested that the color block concept be reviewed in the future. Seth would also like to review whether the ShopCanton app is also producing good results. Gavin will verify with New Moon to see if the app has also been removed. Seth suggested re-evaluating the marketing cost benefits.

Gavin will be attending a MDOT meeting to discuss the boards concerns on Monday, 8/21/23.

Gavin highly encourages everyone attend the EV Expo. Cathy will email the registration link to the DDA board. Jon mentioned that no registration is necessary if you do not plan on joining them for lunch.

Erin will be available to attend a future meeting if the board feels it is necessary.

Bart mentioned he was recently on the Canton Community Facebook page and recommended all board members review the page periodically as representatives of the DDA. If comments are made about the DDA District, he would appreciate the board responding to the comments as DDA board members. Bart recently responded to a Facebook comment about the Christmas light display. Bart pointed out the importance of knowing what the residents are saying about the district. Anne Marie noted that when topics are posted on the Canton Community page, and they feel they are important they will share that information on the Canton Government page.

Anne Marie mentioned that MDOT is not being very cooperative with the crosswalk issues at Ford Road and Sheldon. She pointed out that we are still waiting for the crosswalk road markings to be repainted. Seth asked about the township's ability to reprogram the traffic lights. Anne Marie confirmed that MDOT is the only one that controls those lights.

Anne Marie pointed out that the Mast Arm poles along Ford Road need to be painted due to paint chipping at the base but the whole light pole will need to be repainted. They are Wayne County lights, but it would be quicker for Canton to repaint them. Mark suggested staying with the green color. Seth reminded everyone that they were painted in the past but could not remember the contractor. Kyle mentioned that the City of Ann Arbor had used Seaway to paint their lights.

Anne Marie suggested board members may want to attend a stakeholder's master plan meeting that Erin organizes. Jon mentioned a recap Master Plan meeting that Erin also offers.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.