



**CANTON TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of the November 15, 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 8:00 A.M. by Bart Patterson.

Present: John Camp, Laura Giove, Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, Seth Kleinglass, Darshan Patel, Bart Patterson, Guruveer Singh, Jacob Uhazie, Mark Waldbauer

Absent: Steven Brock, Kurt Olson, Kyle Selter

Staff: Gavin Beckford, Jon LaFever, Cathy Vettese

Guests: Jordan Parlegreco with Placer.ai, Kim Riveria and Sharman Lamka with New Moon Visions

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

MOTION: by Laura Giove, supported by Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, to accept the agenda as presented.

AYES: All present to accept the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 18, 2023 MINUTES

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by Laura Giove, to approve the October 18, 2023, meeting minutes.

AYES: All present to approve the October 18, 2023 minutes.

PRESENTATION BY PLACER.AI

Gavin introduced Jordan Parlegreco, Senior Account Executive with Placer.ai. Jordan provided a

visual presentation. Placer.ai is a location analytics company. They gather mobile location data from mobile devices. They partner with mobile application companies and put a piece of code inside of them called SDK (Software Development Kit). An application is downloaded on your phone, you opt in for your location to be on, and Placer.ai can anonymously analyze that information in the background at any time. The data can be used in many ways. The company has been in business for 4 years with 3,000 customers right now. 800 of those are civic related.

Jordan shared some property report examples with geo fences. The user will create a box around a location and the company analyzes the visitors going inside of them. Jordan gave a brief demonstration of how the information is usable and can be accessed.

The information is gathered via cell phone data. Placer.ai partners with several applications. The application's core functionality involves their location being on, for example a weather application. Another analysis is tracking those residents' leaving town to shop, eat or seek entertainment. If they patronize a certain business, it may be wise to attract that business to your town. It can also analyze the areas your visitors are coming from and identify recurring visitors and their frequency. You will be able to see yearly changes. There is a built-in feature that is called dwell time. The default option is 7 minutes that must be spent inside the business to be registered as a visitor. This feature can be adjusted as you see fit.

Placer.ai performs at a 94-98 % accuracy. They offer correlational testing. Jordan mentioned there is access to a free version on their website to explore. He is willing to come to another meeting and do a more detailed demonstration.

Jordan left the meeting at 8:23 am. Canton Township currently uses a company named Cobalt. A comparison was suggested by Bart Patterson. Jon explained that Cobalt is a non-profit company that we currently use. You give them the parameters and Cobalt runs the report requested. They charge per report. They have the same access to the same data as Placer.ai but Placer.ai is live data whereas it takes a few days to receive the report from Cobalt. There would be cost sharing with the Township and their departments as well as the DDA.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 2024 DDA NEW MOON VISIONS MARKETING PLAN

Bart introduced Kim and Sharman from New Moon Visions. Kim shared a visual presentation of their proposed marketing plans.

Plan A proposes that Shop Canton introduce gift cards to be used in the DDA district. New Moon will handle the merchant outreach to explain how the cards would work. A page will be designed on ShopCanton Page. New Moon will handle all the PR for this and advertising. Create postcard type advertising to be handed out by merchants and at special events. The DDA Manager's responsibility would be to set up and manage an account with Yiftee, the gift card account with New Moon being set up as a user so graphics can be created.

DDA management would create an official letter introducing the program to the merchants and New Moon will reach out to the merchants. The letter will reassure the merchants that this is an official payment from the DDA. Canton could create special offers through this site. For example, buy a gift card at a specific denomination and receive matching dollars, or discounted amount on another card, etc. Kim shared a promotional video concerning Yiftee cards. Proposal A would be all the basic marketing package plus an additional \$25,000.00 for the Cash Gift Cards. \$10,000 would be used to fund the cards and \$15,000 would be used by New Moon to promote and market the card. Yiftee handles all the funds for the cards online. Yiftee's fees are a \$1.00 per card plus 5% payable by the purchaser. Kim has heard good things about it. The card is only good at the DDA participating store locations. The merchants would process this similar to a credit card payment. It is not a physical card. It would be on their phone or printed on paper to be used. Yiftee handles the transactional side of the card as well as the software. New Moon would do the promotion to educate the public.

Plan B proposes to revisit a Canton Restaurant Week. In the past Canton Restaurant Week was not very successful. Staffing at restaurants may still be an issue. This proposal would be the basic marketing package plus an additional \$20,000 to organize and promote a restaurant week.

Plan C proposes to prepare a Ford Road Construction Tool Kit. New Moon is trying to be proactive with the construction looming. The kit would consist of Township emergency contact information, the construction contact information, the MDOT project manager, and utility contacts. The booklet would have promotional ideas, schematics of the construction and cross-connection routes. New Moon would design signage. Kim suggested a regular DDA merchant meeting to help with construction information. DDA manager would be required to send an official letter to be sent with the kits. The kit would be a 24-page stapled booklet. This proposal would be the basic marketing package plus an additional \$9,000 to create and promote a Ford Road Construction Tool Kit.

Ann Marie pointed out the communications assessment gave the Shop Canton application low marks. Kim feels the application provides another touch point and is not a huge investment. The cost to run the application is about \$1,700 in software costs.

Bart feels the Placer.ai application would be helpful in determining the direction of DDA's Marketing. New Moon received Google analytics from Acunet who handles all Google advertising for New Moon. Seth asked Kim about the statistics for unique users and unique sessions. Kim offered to email everyone additional information. Seth asked about modifying the basic marketing package.

Sharman left the meeting at 8:55 am. Kim left the meeting at 9:07 am.

Jacob Uhazie recommended creating a subcommittee to review the marketing plans. Bart suggested naming the subcommittee a "task force" and have a Zoom meeting to discuss the marketing plans. John Camp suggested approving a basic package and launching special programs as needed. Jon said it was a good time to reevaluate our marketing strategy but there is no set timeline. DDA controls the direction of the marketing. Seth noted that it is not New Moon's

responsibility to advertise for the merchants. Jacob agreed that a reevaluation was needed. Gavin explained that the marketing company should be creating activities to draw in customers to the location. Gavin would like to see special events to draw customers to the area. Create a space and then create programming. Jacob pointed out that New Moon creates the opportunity for merchants to advertise.

MOTION: by John Camp, supported by Mark Waldbauer to approve the 2024 DDA New Moon Visions Marketing Plan.

AYES: Majority present voted to reject the proposed 2024 New Moon Visions Marketing Plan.

CITIZENS' NON-AGENDA ITEMS

N/A

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Seth was happy to see Gavin attended a conference that would support the direction of the DDA. Jon mentioned that Gavin has joined the MDA (Michigan Downtown Association), and the Detroit Regional Chamber. It has been very beneficial.

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by Seth Kleinglass, to allow discussion of payment of the bills.

AYES: All present to accept payment of the bills.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

MOTION: by Seth Kleinglass, supported by Mark Waldbauer, to adopt the 2024 Meeting Schedule.

AYES: All present to adopt the 2024 Meeting Schedule.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PURCHASE ORDER TO FRANK'S LANDSCAPING FOR THE 2023-2024 WINTER DISPLAY

The 2023-2024 Winter Display will not be holiday inflatables like last year. The Display will have a 35 ft. LED tree as well as six natural trees.

MOTION: by Laura Giove, supported by John Camp, to create a purchase order to Frank's Landscaping and Supply to install the 2023-2024 Winter Display.

AYES: All present to create a purchase order for Frank's Landscaping and Supply to install the 2023-2024 Winter Display.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DDA MANAGER'S REPORT – November 15, 2023

- **Michigan Downtown Association Annual Conference**
 - I attended the conference in Birmingham, which featured a trolley tour of Oak Park, Ferndale, Berkley, and Royal Oak. These municipalities actively partnered with Main Street Oakland County, a development program specifically focused on vitality of downtown areas, including heritage preservation and economic growth. This resulted in joint applications for grant funding and implementation.
 - A walking tour of Birmingham was also hosted.
 - Multiple contacts were made and offers to share knowledge were obtained.
- **Schoolcraft College Luncheon**
 - Board member facilitated a luncheon meeting with Schoolcraft College and Economic Development Managers from Westland and Van Buren.
 - Opportunities exist for entrepreneurial guidance and employee training with Schoolcraft, as well as partnering with neighboring municipalities to solve localized and shared challenges.
- **Microtransit Discussions**
 - A presentation was made by Via to illustrate how Microtransit could solve some of the public transportation challenges faced by Canton.
 - Presents an opportunity to spur economic growth along the DDA corridor, specifically regarding employee mobility, growing the potential employee pool, and boosting evening/nighttime commercial activity for restaurants, bars, and other entertainment.
 - A presentation is being prepared for the board, which is planned for our next meeting.

ADDITIONAL CITIZENS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Gavin became aware of DDA Informational Meetings which are supposed to be held twice a year. If this is not followed, the Michigan Treasury can restrict your use of funds. Gavin will pull some DDA information from the MDA website to make sure the DDA is up to date. This meeting is to keep those DDA merchant members informed.

Via, a Microtransit company works like a ride share company. An application on your phone is used to book a ride to a destination, you will share a transit van with others and the application

will optimally map the route as to who gets dropped off first. The cost would be approximately \$1-\$2 for the rider. This will help patronage the businesses and help residents with transportation issues. Via is putting together a proposal for the DDA Corridor, Cherry Hill Village, Michigan Avenue, and surrounding neighborhoods. Via will supply their own fleet of vehicles and drivers. There will need to be a financial commitment by Canton Township. Via would complement the current Smart service that Canton uses through Nankin. Nankin provides Smart services for the disabled and seniors. Bike racks on vehicles may be an option. Routes can also be established. Via offers electric vehicles as well as possibly autonomous vehicles. Via is interested in doing a future presentation. There is a possibility of shared cost with the Township and their departments. Jacob shared via chat the following link, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJT8mENTBYy> which gives an overview of how Via is used. The cost for Canton Township total usage is estimated at \$1.2 million but we are looking into a scaled down version.

MDOT is interested in meeting with the Ford Road businesses concerning the truck loons and are still working on the mast arms.

Jon and Gavin are working on an Economic Development Strategy Plan for the community and will share with the DDA once it is finalized.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.