



**CANTON TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of the January 17, 2024 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:** Steven Brock, John Camp, Laura Giove, Seth Kleinglass, Bart Patterson, Guruveer Singh, Jacob Uhazie, Mark Waldbauer
- Absent:** Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, Kurt Olson, Darshan Patel, Kyle Selter,
- Staff:** Gavin Beckford, Jon LaFever, Cathy Vettese
- Guests:** Sarish Kasat and Patricia Wahren with RidewithVia.com
Jordan Parlegreco with Placer.ai
Kimberly Mabie with Canton's Historical Society

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

MOTION: by Steve Brock, supported by John Camp, to accept the agenda as presented.

AYES: All present to accept the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 15, 2023 MINUTES

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by John Camp, to approve the November 15, 2023, meeting minutes.

AYES: All present to approve the November 15, 2023 minutes.

CITIZENS' NON-AGENDA ITEMS

N/A

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DDA MANAGER'S REPORT – JANUARY 17, 2023**DDA Winter Lighting**

Decorative lighting and tree were well received. Only one call-in complaint was received. Some locations had the lighting hung too low; however, this was quickly rectified.

Marketing Task Force Meeting

The Marketing Task Force was held on December 19, 2023. Special thank you to Mark and Darshan for their contributions. It has become clear that the DDA Board must determine a clear marketing strategy and well-defined briefs must be provided to New Moon. We need to re-examine our annual initiatives and gage effectiveness. The possible revision of the Shop Canton Guide (content, design, utility, and content) was discussed. A synopsis of the meeting was provided to New Moon, to assist them in revising their Marketing Proposal for presentation to the Board.

Light Pole knocked down

A light pole was knocked down on Ford Road, in the vicinity of the Office Max. The area was secured to prevent any risk of electrocution. An estimate for the replacement has been obtained.

PRESENTATION BY RIDEWITHVIA.COM

Gavin introduced Sarish Kasat and Patricia Wahren of RidewithVia.com. RidewithVia.com provides on-demand public transportation solutions. It is a micro transit transportation service. It is similar to Uber or Lift; a traditional ride sharing service. Bookings to travel are made through smart phone, web application, or phone calls. It will only be available in a geo fenced area created by Canton Township. The vehicles will be routed to pick up as many people as possible to get them to their destination. There is a fleet of dedicated vehicles and fixed fares. Via currently has 20 partnerships in Michigan. The vehicles will be provided, and advertising opportunities for businesses to advertise on the vehicles will be available. Via will be utilizing local community through employment opportunities, local business advertising opportunities on vehicles, vehicle maintenance performed locally, and gives access to local entertainment, dining, and local jobs. It offers an opportunity to partner with DDA, other businesses and other community organizations. The largest partnership is with SMART in the Detroit area. It is quick to launch. Once the contract is signed, can launch in 10 weeks. Via will market the service. Can provide in-person rider education. Options to pay with cash or credit. It will be wheelchair accessible.

Funding can come from a variety of sources. Typically, federal FTA funds are used, local and state grants, public, and private partnerships. Sarish shared rough budget examples. Via will work with the DDA to get funding. Via has an entire team dedicated to promoting and advocating for more public transit funding and a whole team dedicated to grant writing. Via supplies a no cost grant writing service.

Project cost is divided into two parts. There's an upfront cost which allows Via to hire and train drivers, supply vehicles, and localize the technology. Fees are based on the hourly usage of the vehicles.

This service is subsidized public transportation to keep fees reasonable and will give access to those who can't afford Uber or Lift. Fare revenue would return to the DDA but will not be significant enough to cover the entire cost of the service. Fares will be similar to bus fares. Via is not designed to be a defined route service like a shuttle. Fixed routes may be more expensive as there may not be as many riders.

Generally, Via offers a broad service for commuting to work, shopping, dining, medical appointments and after school activities. Offer better mobility to residents. Via can partner with SMART to create a new zone if there is interest. SMART is currently using Federal Transportation Funds to partner with Via in some local zones. Canton currently opts out of SMART.

Project may involve more of the Township's participation and sponsorships.

Bart thanked Sarish and Patricia for their time and presentation. Sarish and Patricia left the meeting at approximately 8:55 am

PRESENTATION BY PLACER.AI

Jordan Parlegreco had to leave the meeting at 8:40 am but messaged he will forward his presentation to the group. Jon reminded everyone that the previous presentation explored Placer.ai's business analytics and marketing services.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Seth pointed out that New Moon billed the DDA for their presentation and their time spent on the 2024 strategic plan. He feels we're being billed for hours and the DDA is not seeing results. Gavin communicated with New Moon and shared the marketing task force goals with them. Seth requested marketing task force minutes be resent.

MOTION: by Laura Giove, supported by Seth Kleinglass, to allow discussion of payment of the bills.

AYES: All present to accept payment of the bills.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BLANKET P.O. TO FRANK'S LANDSCAPING & SUPPLIES FOR 2024 LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Jon shared that there will be no Ford Road boulevard construction work in 2024. The website dates will be removed so it won't cause confusion. Boulevard work would begin on the north and south portions of Haggerty Road but it's not likely to begin in 2024.

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by Laura Giove to approve the 2024 Landscape Maintenance blanket purchase order to Frank's Landscaping & supplies.

AYES: All present to approve Frank's Landscaping & Supplies 2024 blanket purchase order.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BLANKET P.O. TO GREAT LAKES POWER & LIGHTING FOR 2024 STREETLIGHT MAINTENANCE

Mark noted we should have a lower cost on bulb replacement this year due to the LED light conversion. Seth noted that the contract will need to be updated with a change in the type and cost.

MOTION: by Laura Giove, supported by Mark Waldbauer, to approve the 2024 streetlight maintenance blanket purchase order to Great Lakes Power & Lighting.

AYES: All present to approve Great Lakes Power & Lighting 2024 blanket purchase order.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BLANKET P.O. TO ALBAUGH MASONRY STONE & TILE FOR 2024 DECORATIVE WALL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

The contract will need to be renewed in April 2024.

MOTION: by Mark Waldbauer, supported by Seth Kleinglass, to approve the 2024 decorative wall maintenance and repair blanket purchase order to Albaugh Masonry Stone & Tile.

AYES: All present to approve the Albaugh Masonry Stone & Tile 2024 blanket purchase order.

ADDITIONAL CITIZENS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Seth would like to see us revisit the Christmas Display in 2024. Gavin gave an example of Plymouth's display that included several religious traditions. It was an inclusive display. DDA received one complaint that it did not look like Christmas.

Bart suggested keeping a watch on social media and responding to social media comments when necessary.

Seth asked if there is a way for the DDA to subsidize Uber or Lift patrons by reimbursing them a portion of their fare. Jacob confirmed to Seth that there is an opportunity to subsidize Uber and Lift fares. Seth suggested taking another look at the SMART bus service for Canton. Jon pointed out that Canton currently uses Nankin with reallocated SMART Funds because in the past Canton was not as developed as it is today. Canton pays a small fee to opt out.

Seniors and people with disabilities use the Nankin service daily. Jacob shared that SMART has had management changes and may be more willing to reevaluate its relationship with partners that had opted out in the past. John Camp explained that it involves a regional tax and Canton chooses to opt out of the service. The cost to opt out is significantly lower than the service. SMART may become more flexible.

Seth requested a presentation on a bike sharing service. Jon will follow up with Gavin.

Jon briefly updated the board on the Top Golf development. The first reading of the rezoning consideration happened last Tuesday night at the township board meeting. The request for the planning commission is to rezone the property from a C-4 to a C-3. It is the beginning phases of any development. They have a lot of permits to get through with MDOT and Eagle. It will be located from Ford to Warren and east of I-275. There are challenges with this site. Next Tuesday there will be an opportunity for public input at the township board meeting. It is estimated to be a 3–5-year project.

Jon thanked Kimberly Mabie with Canton's Historical Society for attending the meeting.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 a.m.