

**Village of Baldwin  
Downtown Development Authority  
February 15, 2024, Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
(approved)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call:** Jane Allison called the Meeting to order at 3:00 PM with board members:

**Present:** Jane Allison, Darci Maldonado, Debbie Smith-Olson, Josh Johnson, Jim Truxton, Andy Gremel

**Absent:** Seth Wenger, Tony Gagliardo, Lamont Hill

**Staff:** Robert Toland, DDA Director

**Acknowledgment of Visitors:** James Kilborn, Jodi Nichols, Joanne Haslock, Rick Haslock, Gary Truxton, Dana Randall, Paul Griffith, Meredith Gremel

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

- A. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made by Jim Truxton to approve the agenda, supported by Josh Johnson. Motion carried.
- B. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the **January 18, 2024, regular** meeting minutes with corrections, was made by Andy Gremel and supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried.
- C. **Treasurers' Report:** Debbie Smith-Olson presented the Treasurer's report through February 15, 2024, indicating a general fund balance of \$331,935.55, with disbursements totaling \$3,278.76, and total income of \$3,514.07 which included interest income of \$14.07. The bond fund balance is \$1,015.91 which includes interest income of \$ \$0.09.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	\$ 482.61 (streetlights)
Robert Toland Consulting	\$ 1,200.00 (retainer & meeting fee)
Progressive AE	\$ 1,888.04 (vision study)
Progressive AE	\$ 7,025.00 (vision study)
Village of Baldwin	\$ 636.47 (water bills)
<u>Total bills</u>	<u>\$ 11,232.12</u>

There was a grant from the Lake County Community Foundation for seasonal light pole decorations, and a gift from the Gremel Group for improvements to the vacant lot at 902 Michigan.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's report, was made by Darci Maldonado, and supported by Jane Allison. Motion carried.

A motion to pay the bills, was made by Josh Johnson, and supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried by roll call vote. All ayes.

D. **Committee reports:** None

E. **Acknowledge Communications:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

A. **Pere Marquette Trail** - Paul Griffiths gave a presentation regarding paving of the Pere Marquette Trail. Mr. Griffiths explained that a considerable percentage of the 400-mile White Pine Trail from Richmond Indiana to Mackinaw City has been paved and that Michigan has 2,600 miles of rail trails. He commended the Village for having an approved Recreation Plan while many surrounding entities do not. However, he suggested that the Village Recreation Plan be amended to elevate the importance of paving the Pere Marquette Trail within the Village. Mr. Griffiths explained the MDNR Trust Fund grant process and mentioned the "Passport" grant program and the "TAP" program of MDOT. He suggested getting in touch with the appointed head of the Rural Development agency as well as Consumers Energy. Paul also suggested that supporters of the paving concept form a 501c3 or an affiliation with someone who has a 501c3 status. He estimated that paving on average costs about \$375,000 per mile and that the cost for paving the 22 miles between Baldwin and Reed City could be around \$6-7 million.

B. **Lake County Chamber of Commerce** - Dana Randall of the Lake County Chamber of Commerce inquired about the future use of 902 Michigan Avenue. She said that the Chamber of Commerce would like to use the lot for vendors during Blessing of the Bikes on May 20. There is concern that because the soil is not compacted that it could be very muddy. A motion was made by Jane Allison to allow the Chamber use of the site, supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried.

C. **Maker's Market** – Meredith Gremel and Jodi Nichols provided information about the possibility of using the parking lot behind Jone's Ice Cream Shop adjacent to the Wenger Pavilion as a location for the proposed Maker's Market using pop-up tents. A grant request has been submitted to Consumers Energy to help with the associated costs. Some farmers and local nonprofits have expressed interest. It proposed that the Market be open on Wednesdays between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM prior to the concerts at the Wenger Pavilion. Others expressing interest in participating are health organizations, service clubs, and members of the community. There will be a meeting to discuss the concept on February 28 at Pompeii's Restaurant. A new page on the Village website could be dedicated to the Market with regular and timely updates. A motion was made by Andy Gremel to join the Michigan Farmer's Market Association at a cost of \$100, supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried.

**BOARD COMMENTS:** None

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. **902 Michigan Project:** Demolition is complete, and it is expected that the green space will exist for a while.

B. **Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System:** No discussion.

- C. **8<sup>th</sup> Street Upgrade:** Project is moving forward.
- D. **8<sup>th</sup> Street Fish Farm and Dam:** Design plans are progressing in cooperation with the Conservation Resource Alliance. Jim said that the foundation of the railroad bridge, which is now the Pere Marquette Trail bridge, has damage and is going to need some structural work.
- E. **Downtown Vision Project:** James Kilborn from Progressive presented the final draft of the "Downtown Baldwin Vision Plan". A few minor revisions were suggested. James will make those corrections and provide final versions. A press release will be prepared and submitted to the newspaper and the Plan will be placed on the Baldwin website. A motion was made by Darci Maldonado to accept the final draft with revisions to pages 14 and 29, supported by Josh Johnson. Motion carried.
- F. **Public Participation Plan:** The DDA members have reviewed the Plan and determine that it is acceptable.
- G. **2024-2025 Budget:** The proposed budget was distributed for discussion. A motion was made by Jane Allison to approve the proposed budget and forward to the Village Council, supported by Andy Gremel. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was offered by Jim Truxton and supported by Andy Gremel. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:07 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held March 21, 2024, at the Village office at 3:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Toland, Administrator  
for  
Deborah Smith-Olson, Secretary/Treasurer