

# Downtown Muskegon Business Improvement District

Meeting Minutes

Aug. 1, 2016

Special meeting

380 W. Western Ave., Suite 202 Muskegon, MI at 4 PM

1) Call to Order: 4:05 PM

2) Attendance:

Doug Pollock (Chair), Justin Clark (VC), Bob Tarrant (via conference call), Gary Post, John Riegler and Mike Hennessy and Frank Peterson, Connie Taylor and Bruce Lindstrom

Excused Absent(s): none

Guests: Dave Alexander, Downtown Muskegon Now director; Ed Garner, Muskegon Area First; Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, city of Muskegon and Dennis Lohman, Northwestern Industrial sales.

3) Public Comment (on an agenda item) – None. The board chose to leave the floor open for the whole meeting allowing attendees to participate as they like.

4) Unfinished Business

- a) This is a single-item agenda on a recommendation from the BID board to the Muskegon City Commission for renewal of the special assessment district beyond Dec. 31, 2016. The BID board spent much of its meeting of July 25 discussing an aggressive five-year expansion of the district and increase of its assessments proposed by city officials. Discussions from the July 25 meeting indicated that there was not board support for such a lengthy and aggressive expansion. The board decided to think through the issues for a week and have this special meeting.

Board member Bob Tarrant summed up his objections and argument for a one-year, status quo renewal in an email to BID members. Staffer Dave Alexander produced a memo suggesting how a one-year, status quo BID renewal would look. Tarrant suggested the BID Board, Downtown Muskegon Now and the city use 2017 to come up with potentially a new assessing methodology, review the boundaries of the BID and suggest a longer term of the special assessment district that would be presented to the Muskegon City Commission later in 2017.

In discussing the issue at the meeting, Tarrant argued that the BID has been operating just about six months and needs to have more time to show how it works and what it will do for downtown Muskegon. He said he is not opposed to the BID just expanding and extending for five-years at this time. Gary Post agreed but still wanted the DMDC Site Condo No. 1 expenses addressed in the BID in 2017.

Doug Pollock said the BID was set for three things: Snow removal, landscaping and marketing-promotion-events within the district. It was designed to get city commission approval for the initial year. Gary Post said the BID was to provide a stable, reliable basis of funding for downtown.

John Riegler said that an issue remains as to direct and indirect benefits derived by district property owners and the need to find fairness in the assessments going forward. However, for a strong downtown, the BID is necessary, Riegler said.

Justin Clark said he supports the one-year suggestion, giving all time to revise longer proposals in 2017. Connie Taylor also agreed that more time is needed to get the BID district and assessments right. The same was voiced by Mike Hennessy.

City Manager Frank Peterson said the proposed expansion of the bid in boundaries and assessments was due for needed resources for an improving downtown. There are obstacles to raising funds in other ways. The downtown improvements and added services should have been made several years ago. The downtown is a step behind and needs to catch up to development that is occurring. That said, Frank Peterson said he understands the BID board position on a one-year extension to get it right for 2018 and beyond.

Gary Post again raised the condo expenses and the direction of the board was to add \$1,500 into the proposed 2017 work plan/budget to cover the costs of electricity, insurance and similar costs.

Bruce Lindstrom made a motion to recommend to the Muskegon City Commission extending the current BID for one year through Dec. 31, 2017, pretty much status quo. It was supported by Justin Clark. The district boundaries would not change, the assessments would not change and the budget would be similar to 2016 except 2016 fund balance would carry forward, an administrative fee of \$25,000 would be paid DMN, and \$1,500 out of "streetscape" would pay for the DMDC condo costs. The assessments would be added to property owners' winter 2017 property tax bills.

A roll call vote was requested:

**Justin Clark: Yes**

**Frank Peterson: Yes**

**Bruce Lindstrom: Yes**

**Connie Taylor: Yes**

**Mike Hennessy: Yes**

**John Rielger: Yes**

**Doug Pollock: Yes**

**Gary Post: Yes**

**Bob Tarrant (via conference call): Yes**

5) Adjournment  
5:10 PM

No Objection

Minutes produced and submitted by Dave Alexander, executive director of Downtown Muskegon Now.

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