

Downtown Development Authority- Special Meeting January 27, 2023

A meeting of the Eaton Rapids Downtown Development Authority was held at City Hall, 200 S. Main Street, on January 27, 2023 at 7:00 a.m.

Chair DeFrance called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m.

Present were Chair DeFrance and members McNabb, Johnson, McGee, Booher, Carducci, Colestock, Willey(7:04), and Sheneman (7:05)

Administrative Staff Present were City Manager Ridge, City Clerk Boomer, and Parks, Recreation & Events Director Cagle.

Colestock moved, McGee seconded, PASSED, to approve the agenda.

Public Comments:

Eaton Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Director Courtney Mead and the Board shared introductions.

Director Report: City Manager Ridge reported that Black Dog Coffee and Odd Mama's Plants have been selected by the MEDC to participate in the Optimize Main Street program that includes up to a \$2,500 technology grant. She reported that the Match on Main grant program information has been sent out to the Chamber of Commerce and shared on social media.

Old Business: None

New Business: Main Street- Next Steps

Chair DeFrance opened a discussion on the Main Street program. He discussed the required director position and the time commitment for DDA board members.

Ridge advised the DDA could hire a part-time director and not participate in Main Street.

McGee commented that he would like to see more direction from a director. They have not had a director that did that. He commented that he would hate to see all the work that went into Main Street go to waste. He would like to a chance to regroup and continue with the program.

Willey commented that she like the idea of Main Street but feels that there hasn't been much support from MEDC since COVID. She has not seen any value from the previous directors. She would like to move forward as a DDA.

DeFrance commented that Main Street directors turn over frequently and the hiring of a new director can be stalled for several months.

Carducci commented that a lot of work into Main Street and it would be a shame to walk away from it. He would support putting off the hiring of a new director for a while but trying to stay with the program.

Magee commented that he would support that idea. He asked about reporting in the absence of a director.

Sheneman commented that he is new to the board and he doesn't think he has the time to commit to Main Street.

Booher commented that he never felt the director did much work. He has not seen much benefit from the program to date.

Colestock commented that the original Main Street players are not involved anymore. She advised she cannot commit to the time requirement. She thinks the DDA can move forward like a Main Street without being a part of the program. She thinks the City needs someone to work on economic development. She would like to go back to being a DDA and contributing toward an economic development director position.

Johnson commented that he saw the amount of work involved in becoming Main Street and would be willing to contribute the time required for the program. He believes the right director could make it successful. He would like to see the program continue.

McNabb commented that Main Street is a lot of work up front and it would be difficult to get back in after walking away. He doesn't think the DDA has done much to support the program. He doesn't want to make a hasty decision to walk away. He also believes a good director could make a difference.

Ridge reviewed Charlotte's Main Street program and its success.

McNabb suggested a committee to work on getting Main Street back on track and to assist with reporting.

Colestock commented that the committee can't have a majority of members, or it would be subject to Open Meetings Act. She also warned that the County has financial issues and could take the DDA's TIF monies.

DeFrance commented that he would like to see a list of Main Street requirements and work on getting Main Street back up and running while pushing the hiring of a director out a few months. The majority of the DDA is on board to try to keep the Main Street program going.

Ridge advised she would complete the required reporting for now but would like to see a plan at the next meeting for reporting.

McGee moved, DeFrance seconded, PASSED, to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 a.m.

Laura Boomer, City Clerk