

CITY OF BURTON
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES
JULY 15, 2013, 8:30 A.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS
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Chairman Joey Richvalsky called the Meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fenner, Coats, Paulus, Stapleton, Richvalsky and Gilmore.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Moncrieff

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor P. Zelenko, G. Burke-Miller, Controller, A. Abbey, Deputy Planning Official, S. Bassi, Assessor and L. Young, Clerk's Office.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

Mayor Zelenko said thank you Mr. Chairman. This morning, I just wanted to say that the Council has approved the Budget. Your Budget was left intact as you had proposed it. We have Councilman Vaughn Smith in the audience today under Audience Participation. He would like to speak to you. For your presentation today we have Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineering here to give you a presentation on a DDA Master Plan. This is one of the first projects that this Board has wanted to do, is to move forward with revising their Master Plan and I think Fleis & Vandenbrink is the best organization for you. We have asked them to come in and give you a presentation today. That concludes my Administrative report at this time. Is there anything else from Administration up here?

Mr. Richvalsky asked if this was the firm that is working on the entire Master Plan for the City or not, or is this strictly for DDA?

Mayor Zelenko said this is just for your DDA. This is just the DDA portion of it. In case you don't already know I'll introduce Ginger Burke-Miller, who is our Controller, Amber Abbey who is our Deputy Planning Official, Stacey Bassi, who is our Assessor and the Clerk for the day is Lindsay Young.

Mr. Paulus asked if this the same firm that is going to be doing the City's as well because we talked about it being a combination?

Mayor Zelenko said the City has not made plans to move forward with their Master Plan at this time. You need to have one to get moving.

PRESENTATION:

Lisa Easterwood said I am a Project Manager and Planner with Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineering. I do a lot of site design and planning for many of our retail and commercial office plan development clients. I also do street scape design and Park and Recreation work for our municipal clients. I don't know if you are aware but back in 2012, we worked with the City's Park and Recreation Commission to develop the 2012 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan. We also assisted them in acquiring a Trust Fund Grant for the Kelly Lake improvements, including the boardwalk and amenities that will be going in there. I am working on the design on that, as well as a park concept for the properties on the south side of Atherton along Thread Creek, which is

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going to be a new park as part of the Burton Parks and Recreation system. I am familiar with Burton and the folks here. I have with me, Rick Stout, who is one of our landscape architects and manages a lot of landscape and street downtown enhancement projects.

Rick Stout, with Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineering, said I have been working with communities across Michigan for the last 15 years, specifically in the area of downtown improvement, enhancement and growth, economic programs and also grant applications and different things. There has been a lot of reinvestment in downtown areas. We really approach it from the focus of creating a livable community, and that can entail a lot of different aspects. Working with a community like yourselves, it is a real series of interaction, creating partnerships, facilitation and the end result, coming up with some type of Master Plan for DDA that can be implemented within 5 to 15 years, coinciding with Capital Improvements Plans. We help communities get a little bit more organization and structure and a game plan and where they want to go. Projects within the DDA that communities have done are very board. If there are goals and objectives that you would like to create in your DDA, we would love to hear about them. We have a short presentation to show our process when we work with a Community and how we act as facilitators. What we can do is walk you through that, open it up for questions and just show you some examples of what other communities have done. We deal with a lot of different communities, mostly the smaller to mid-sized communities around Michigan and we find they have a lot of common characteristics. The big aspect that a lot of people are looking at is trying to have a vibrant community and a sense of place. All these communities are trying to do the same thing you are trying to do with your DDA. A lot of communities, whether or not they are part of the Main Street program, or at least follow the model; there are some very good component parts that are good for that. What we talk to communities about is whether you are a Main Street community or not, you can still follow a lot of their processes. One of the big key components in any corridor area, we like to try to do is design on a human scale. A lot of downtowns and areas have become vehicular driven. How do you start reintroducing the human scale? That can be done by a whole host of design elements from intersection treatments, to lighting, to tree planting, to reconfiguration of the roadway itself, with traffic calming features. Those are all part of designing on a human scale. We also like to create variety and provide a lot of choices. A really neat project that we were involved in, in Fremont, was a dead quadrant in their downtown area and we did a site selection process. What it ended up being was a Farmer's Market, it also dovetailed into Newago County's Council of the Arts and it is also used for a whole host of community events. Something so simple as the location of a Farmer's Market created a lot of vibrancy and synergy. It could be anything, a Farmer's Market, a park, public spaces, as well as looking at in fill potentials, trying to provide that choice and variety downtown. That variety also goes into creating a mixed-use development. Many downtowns got away from that and became less retail oriented or having less residential. Those are some things that we try to evaluate in our Community; what are those opportunities and potentials for mixed use? Preserving the Urban centers and pulling in design elements is part of the whole process. Moving a bunch of small items forward in small increments is the ultimate goal. Many corridors like Saginaw is very vehicular driven. How do you introduce alternate forms of transportation? We are seeing a lot of emphasis placed on the MDOT enhancement program on multimodal transportation incorporating bike lanes or pathways. There is also some things like improving water quality, that are also going in that fits in with transportation options. Complete streets ties in with multimodal. Promoting diversity can have lasting dividends. Vibrant public spaces are other key components. We look at downtowns as a social interactive zone. We have done splash pads, amphitheaters and small little pocket parks for other communities. It goes

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to creating a sense of place and creating neighborhood identity. Many communities are investing in façade programs. Some are spending \$10,000 on average and some as high as \$40,000-\$50,000 on exterior improvements. It can make a huge difference if you start targeting a group of buildings to create a critical mass in the downtown area. Since you are a City with a lot of rural aspects, we look at potentials for conserving landscapes. We have done several parks near the downtown area and landscape restoration with native materials. They have a lasting benefit for the community to tie into that gathering place and contribute to overall diversity of the downtown. One thing we focus on is design but it also has to make sense. It has to be financially responsible, well thought out, well planned, easy to maintain and also have durability.

We use a 4 step process and view it as a partnership. We are here to facilitate. Your input and guidance throughout the process is absolutely critical. The first step of the process is called the Articulation Phase where we really like to get in and work with you and identify some of the goals and objectives that you have and get the different user groups that we can interview and then really start to define your priorities. When we get to the Envision Stage we start looking at things like market analysis, trends and opportunities and really getting into the visioning with the community. The public/private partnerships are really key in that point and getting them at the table and develop meaningful dialog. We do that through public meetings and workshops and have also done online surveys and have found they are all valuable tools in helping us define what your priorities are. We try to come out of this process with developing consensus, because that is the way you get plans implemented. We feel that if communities have buy in, they will move forward with a project, rather than just putting a plan on a shelf. The third step is refine as we start taking this information and start opening up the dialog to make sure we have as much information as we can get and during the refine stage we start bringing it back in and identifying real priorities. We are always looking to explore and create partnerships because they are critical in getting projects off the ground. Then we start to look at some of the phasing and cost analysis and from that point we can start putting real numbers to some of your thoughts, wants, desires and ideas and then develop a meaningful way to implement them. The last stage is the Enact Stage, which is where we start looking at funding strategies and finalizing the Master Plan. Historically, we would come back to the DDA and say make a recommendation, adopt the plan and then recommend it on to the City Council. We usually try to identify big and small things within the plan. I know you have some community events and that is something that can be focused on is the promotional aspect. Design is the area which we can be the biggest benefit in. We have the ultimate goal of economic structuring and growth. We can help with different aspects and point you in the right direction, but we are facilitators; we try not to lead, but guide the process. We have had a lot of success working with grants programs and many of the projects that we worked on would not be possible without some type of external funding. Everything from façade program, grants through MICHDA and MEDC can have a big impact in transitioning a downtown. The City of Portland, along Grand River, wanted to create a different flair for the downtown and access an underutilized part of the businesses that are facing the river. The City of Newaygo had three different grant programs that were involved, which totaled \$6,000,000 in grants. The City's contribution was actually quite small and they were able to accomplish quite a bit with the grant programs. MDOT enhancement program funded a lot of work in downtown areas. A lot of them do start out with a streetscape project. We looked at traffic matters, traffic calming and reintroduced angled parking along the streets. We take a broad look at a community and then identify what their priorities are. We also do gateway and identification projects. Our whole process is really geared towards the formation of a Master Plan. We look at priorities and we look

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at phasing and we look at the dollars involved and try to match up grant funding to make it happen. Sometimes we get into projects that are not only streetscape but back scape. In many instances there is parking in alleys and service ways that are located in the rear of the building. As I mentioned earlier, Farmer's Markets and multi-use structures are a key component for the diversity of any downtown.

Ms. Vandenbrink referenced a picture of Grand Blanc. She said this one you may be a little more familiar with in the City of Grand Blanc streetscape. This is a before and after of that view and you can see a huge difference when you bring in private development to create an old town feel. One of the things to point out about this is on the way over in the far corner there are some ugly transformer structures. One of the challenges of this project was screening that. If you have been to downtown Grand Blanc and seen that wall with the City logo, behind that is the ugly transformers that were too costly to relocate. We look at challenges like that and try to overcome them in a cost effective manner. Right behind that is a town center. They have a camera which is part of the automatic transportation management system that we set up in the City of Grand Blanc. It has been one of the components of the redevelopment of their downtown area. This was the first ATMS system that was established in Genesee County and helped the City get up and rolling and even educated the County on that process, as well. Last year and we actually won an award for that. This was actually done under the owner of Little Joe's that owns that whole stretch. We had to coordinate that during the road construction, so that is an example of how we can coordinate businesses with actual infrastructure projects and make it all come together into one nice outdoor seating area.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Mr. Stout said our office is just a stone's throw on Maple Rd. We have everything as far as in-house capabilities. We have engineers, architects, landscape architects, traffic engineers, and surveying, planning and instruction aspects. We work with different communities and look at form based code and other types of vehicles that people are using. DDAs do capital improvements, budgeting, and what we would like to do is get a better understanding of what you really envision for the corridor between Hemphill and Maple and get what some of your priorities might be and see if there is some way we can assist you in making these things happen.

Ms. Easterwood said one of the other services that we provide is that we have environmental engineers that are very familiar with Brownfield redevelopment and those opportunities that exist out there for that. We are pretty much full-service and right around the corner and have been there for years and years and now have a sign out front. We lean on Rick, who works out of our Grand Rapids office and there is another landscape architect out of our Muskegon office. We work together on projects and have about 130 employees and a host of experts in all different fields. I would like to have you go through and introduce yourselves and give some background on how you came to be on the DDA.

Pat Gilmore introduced himself and said I own Suburban Office and Janitorial Supplies and have been on the DDA for three years now.

Joey Richvalsky introduced himself and said I own Richvalsky and Sons Realty and Appraisers since 1946 and have been on S. Saginaw St. in Burton all my life. I am a certified general

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appraiser and have an idea of highest and best use issues that you might have brought up. I have been on the DDA for about 30 years.

Larry Stapleton with Winn's Electric said I have been there for 40 years and Winn Hutchinson was a board member who retired and I took his position this year.

Jim Paulus with Print and Promo Ink said I own the printing company across from Tia Helitias on Saginaw St. I have been on the DDA for a little over a year.

Steve Coates with MCLR Financial Center said I have been on the DDA for 25 years.

Greg Fenner said I own Fenner and Sons Barbershop. My Dad started there in 1965 and I have been there since 1983 and I have been on the Board for 10 or 12 years.

Ms. Easterwood said I know all your businesses because I am up and down Saginaw St. all the time going to and from Flint.

Mr. Richvalsky said I see here grant coordination and administration and I think that is something that Greg has been harping on for the last few years. We would like to get some other money, some outside money besides the 2 mils that get soaked out of our taxes each year for this little nest egg that we sit on. Are there programs and grants that we can use and apply for? Stacey, Amber, Steve Coates and myself went to a seminar in regards to the mainstreet project, which is great but our DDA doesn't qualify because we don't have enough buildings together with living spaces above and commercial down below. We are not Lapeer, we are not Davison, we are not Fenton, we are M54, Dixie Hwy., Woodward Ave.; that is our script here. We have a number of issues we would like to address and go after, however, because of configuration we cannot or are not qualified.

Ms. Bassi said that when we did the drive through of downtown for the Mainstreet Program, basically, we do not meet their vision of what a downtown should look like because we are the smaller blocks and not the long straight block.

Mr. Stout said what I always tell people to remember with the Mainstreet Program is there are grant programs that give the Mainstreet Program preference but the Mainstreet Program doesn't really give out any money. It is basically an organizational structure and it is a lot of self-help. We are working with the City of Muskegon right now with their Mainstreet Program and there is a lot of reporting processes that go into place with that. In some ways it's good that they are holding the community's feet to the fire, but there is no real super-tangible benefit as far as grant programs and dollars. You may get some additional bonus points but those grant programs are already there regardless of whether you are a Mainstreet community or not. I think one of the criteria in the Mainstreet Program is you have to hire a director. We like to take component parts of it because the organizational structure of it is good and I think they're encouraging the positive attitude. We tell communities, the whole premise behind the Mainstreet Program is bunt singles, you don't swing for a homerun. They are trying to tell you that you need to move all these different component parts ahead at the same time, whether it is an inch or a mile, it doesn't matter as long as you are going forward. You can do that whether or not you have got the sign on the City limits that says "We are a Mainstreet Community" to do the things that the Mainstreet Program offers,

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like building private/public partnerships. That is a big cornerstone in the Mainstreet, since communities should be doing that regardless. It is a vehicle and I think it is a good model, and a lot of communities it is like Historic Preservation. A lot of people want a Historic District, but that comes with a lot of strings. Sometimes it is not always the best to go to that extreme. You can do a lot of things with Historic Buildings and whatnot within the framework of modifying ordinances. We would like to hear a little bit about what you feel the issues are. We don't want to assume. I have driven the corridor and have my visual thoughts on what those issues might be, but we would like to hear what you feel some of the issues are.

Mr. Richvalsky said from a Historic standpoint and being on this Board, Ron Nino was the founding Chair, Julie Binder was the second and I have been here ever since. There have only been 3 people that have ever sat here. There was a demo project, which was the initial plan for the entire DDA, the old book was on the corner of Saginaw and Bristol. Brick pavers, trees, grates around the trees and some shrubbery, that was primarily it. For that one project for one block and that was ten trees in grates with brick pavers cost \$80,000 at the time. After Ron Nino left and Julie Binder took over the position, the thought was those are pretty expensive blocks to tackle with 2 mills. We didn't have any money to do anything more after that. So the object was to try and start banking this money, not spending it, and try to maintain what he have got there. Do some street sweeping and some basic cleanup, clean up some of the silt that had grown up between the curb and the sidewalk. The streets weren't even paved on S. Saginaw street. All those streets from Hemphill to Bristol were all dirt roads. They would drag dirt down those roads and it would pile up. One of the things that we did as a DDA was hired someone to scrape all that dirt and reseeded it. At this point it is starting to build back up again. Subsequently, we wanted to unite that district, from Saginaw to Hemphill, thus the trees, that was the thing that brought Hemphill Rd. and Bristol Rd. into some sort of district. You have to start somewhere. We couldn't do the project like it is designed to do, so let's put the trees in first. Money, money, money. We started to put a few brick pavers in and we continue to this day to sweep the streets, keep that parkway mowed and try to maintain what we have got there or at least not let it slip. Ron Nino was also a chair on a project they finally called Tube City up on N. Saginaw St. from Carpenter Rd. to Pierson Rd. At one point when it first went in it looked good with brick pavers, the tubes. Look at it today. Even though we are modest, I still think we have a better looking strip than N. Saginaw St. from Pierson to Carpenter. We have tried to sustain over the years and again we aren't spending all of our money and it does build up a little bit, but we don't have a ton of it and that is why I am back to my original question, how nimble are you at grants and how nimble are you in taking what we've got here and getting some extra money for these projects that we may tackle in the future?

Mr. Stout said I think that is one thing that we realize, dealing with a lot of communities, they are all tied in with the grant dollars. On average, people put in anywhere from 10 to 30% of local money. With the MDOT enhancement program, we have gotten community's grants in the \$300,000-\$500,000 for downtown projects. We have worked with MEDC, MICHDA, and we are starting to work with Rural Development at Farmer's Markets. The MEDC has got the food program for existing Farmer's Markets and expanding them. We tried to keep it a little less corporate today and focus more on ideas and process to give you a better idea of who we are. I think, in the last five years, \$300,000,000 in grant money and loan money is what we have targeted for our communities. Quite honestly that is how we stay in business. We tout ourselves on being very grant savvy and my approach in writing grants is really simple. I communicate quite

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often with the grant agency people directly. I try to tailor the application to what their goals and objectives are because they are trying to move money through their program to the right communities. I guess they want a win/win scenario from the grant administration side and the easiest way is just to work with them, keep in constant contact with them and if something comes up give them a phone call and a heads up and try to avoid surprises and try to be open and honest with them. That goes a long way. You see there is multiple grant sources. Grant agencies are like anyone else, no one wants to go at it alone, so if you can leverage one grant agency, usually what we do is we will go around and try to leverage 2 or 3 more on the same project to try to get a bang for the buck and make it have a critical mass. What that would be right now, we will find out as we go through the process and assisting you with some type of Master Plan for the corridor. At the end we will do some type of matrix that show you here is the grant programs, here is where we think the funding can come into play and start to identify what your local match criteria would be in order to be successful. The slight downside to grant programs right now is it is really competitive, but we try to position each project for success. We may come back and say, "In this grant program, historically, is a 10% match" and we might say, "Is there any way you can go to 20% to increase your chances?" We can write a really good narrative, but also certain projects and the timing is everything. We may come back to you with additional information and say, "Hey can you go a little bit higher above the bar to separate yourselves from someone else?" There are 20 communities out there and sometimes the line of success and failure is pretty thin. We try to identify that and communicate that back to our communities.

Ms. Easterwood said I would like to add to the process that Rick went through, is understanding what issues you have and how to address them. Also having the forethought of what kind of grants are out there and how those can fit with addressing your issues and the projects that are tailored to fit the grant applications. You have to really understand what a grant agency wants to see and knowing and having that kind of experience and understanding what the different components are that the grant agency wants to see. We know that going in to the planning process and it is a balancing act, planning to address your issues and know in the back in our mind that these grants are out there and build a program that best addresses the needs that you have.

Mr. Gilmore said there is a lot of good work up there, but it is totally separate than what our City looks like. Davison and Grand Blanc look great with the changes they made. When you drive down this corridor are you excited in saying there is a lot of potential here?

Mr. Stout said I think I go back to identifying what some of the issues are. I did understand, talking to Lisa, that you were denied for the Mainstreet Program. Typically, what we will do in a community much like yourself, is finding out your vision for that corridor. There might be some very simple things. I mentioned a form-based code, evaluating some of your Planning and Zoning ordinances. Maybe some of those need to get updated in order to have the type of development that you want out there. Whether it be zero lot line or front yard setbacks. I know you are more of a disjointed architectural downtown, where the Mainstreet Program really took a pass on because of that aspect, but there are some key components that you can start to introduce to start to create a sense of place. We have worked with Pinconning, which is very similar to your corridor and you start looking at those things like pedestrian access, lighting; very simple elements. It does start to bring a cohesive nature to a downtown. I think that is why we wanted to throw out all of these different components of a livable community, knowing full well that all of them are not going to fit, but it might spur on some thought. I think that is something that will shake out during the

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process. We have traffic engineers and the question might be Saginaw and the road width and are there opportunities there? When you start getting into the Articulation Phase, those are the things we would like to identify.

Mr. Fenner said I wouldn't think the City of Grand Blanc would qualify for their Mainstreet Program; they don't have housing and living space above their businesses. When I drive down Grand Blanc I don't see a whole lot dissimilar other than they have newer developments and nicer stuff now. They still have telephone poles in the front of their buildings like we do, they have disjointed building and not the same architecture and some of the new buildings have a strict code on how they do it, but between the jewelry store and the car wash the buildings are similar to what we have.

Ms. Easterwood said it has been a long process over 10 or 15 years.

Mr. Richvalsky said their trees are old. Those mountain ash went in years before ours did.

Mr. Stout said I think that goes back to the question of what you have now and sometimes going through this process and identifying the vision that you have for the corridor will give people like the Planning Commission a different level on what they are going to look for as far as development. You can start, over 10 or 12 years, developing the framework to get what you want, but to do that you have to have a vision. I think what you will see is once you develop that plan, everything you do will be working towards that vision. There will be some small little incremental things, but over the long haul that is where you are really going to see the benefit and really to do that you have to start.

Mr. Coates said what do you need from us to give us a proposal?

Mr. Stout said right now it is about helping get an understanding of what collectively your issues are with the corridor, what your goals and objectives are with the corridor and identify a proposal. How much public input do you want? You can do a couple of design charrettes and meetings and some public hearings or you can do 20. What is your comfort level as far as that public level of involvement? What is the best way to get that level of involvement? Is it public workshops? Oftentimes, we find people don't want to come to a public workshop. Online surveys, mailers; we have done a whole host of different things to get people engaged and a lot of that is word of mouth and grassroots.

Mr. Richvalsky said you will find this is the nucleus right here. These are the people that care, the people that I have asked and have stepped up and didn't step back. Laurie Moncrieff is not here today but she is from Small Tool and Dye. These are the people who really care about the corridor. We are the ones sitting here volunteering our time. Right here you have the most public reaction you are going to get.

Mr. Stout said I can speak from experience because I grew up in Belding and was on the City Council there for 15 years and started out on the Park and Recreation and then ended up being on the Planning Commission and was Mayor for 2 years, 5 terms. I always laugh because when someone would ask, "What do you get paid?" I would say, "If they paid everyone \$70,000 a year, then everyone would want the job." Unfortunately you only got paid \$20 per meeting. I invested

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15 years in my community because I was passionate about it and I was proud when I was done at the amount of change. I had the advantage with my background in grant programs and we had 2 or 3 grants about every year for a period of approximately 7 or 8 years so we did a tremendous amount of work in transforming our community and it is still ongoing, but without those grants it would have not have been possible for us to do all that. We started out with a program there called Build a Better Belding and that is where we used the framework and got people involved to identify these issues. We came up with an action plan on how to address them and some of the things were very simple, while others were complex. The first step is identifying them and coming up with some type of action program and how to address them.

Mr. Paulus said do you provide multiple stages of the Master Plan and what does it cost to get a Master Plan going?

Mr. Stout said that goes back to public involvement and how much we are going to be engaged and the timeframe involved. We have done simple downtown Master Plans for as little as \$10,000 or \$15,000 and some as expensive as \$125,000, if you start getting into graphics and sales tools. We want to get a clear understanding of what your thoughts and ideas of the corridor are and we can come back with a proposal. We are more than happy to put something together and develop a dialog with you folks and find the right level.

Mr. Fenner said at the end of the day, once the proposal comes in, we are going to do this and it is going to cost you this. We interviewed people in the past that didn't go anywhere. We had one guy in the past who said, "I'll charge you this much an hour." We said, "How many hours do you expect to do?" He had no idea. The other guy said I am going to do this, and it is going to cost you this.

Mr. Stout said historically we give people a set fee, but sometimes we will include variables. If you say you think you are going to have 6 public meetings, then we would say anything beyond 6 would be additional. Beyond that we give you a base line fee to go on with every project. The days of a running meter in the consulting industry are long gone and we understand that people have to work within budgets.

Mr. Richvalsky asked if it was the Mayor's prodding that got us to this point that we need an updated Master Plan to go for any kind of grant work. We need something more than our antiquated Master Plan or DDA Plan that we had.

Mr. Stout said we are working with several communities' right now with something as simple as updating their Capital Improvements Plan for the next 15 years for DDAs. Portland is looking at gateways and a splash pad for downtown and other streetscape improvements. We helped them do some budgeting that they are going to adopt in the next month or so. It is definitely within our framework and getting a little more due diligence on our part to understand where some things are like your ordinances or make some simple suggestions on how to tweek. When we started in Newaygo they actually have had an ordinance that prohibited people from living in the second floor of any building. That is contradictory to getting people to live downtown. You want some vibrancy. They actually had to repeal their existing ordinance to make it happen. There could be some very simple things. Freemont adopted a form-based code for the entire downtown and did an overlay district. They wanted to see any new development come in and be of a certain caliber

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and configuration and take advantage of the fact that you've got the Zoning. Sometimes the way Zoning ordinances were written back in the 40s, 50s and 60s, were to create a suburbia and not really a downtown. There might be some suggestions on just making some simple tweeks as well.

Mr. Richvalsky said I think the junkyard at the corner of Maple and Saginaw, where the NAPA Auto was, will never be a junkyard again. That was specific use in nature and now that it is gone it is gone. We don't really have to address those kind of issues, non-conforming uses that are no longer there because they have to come before you and ask for the specific use again. Attrition has almost come into play here; they were viable at one point and are no longer there and are never go back in. In essence we are reverting to what it was supposed to be. Now I am going to put my realtor hat on, and if I had a listing on it and somebody wanted to put a junkyard in there and they had cash to pay for it, I am pushing it. I would go to her and say we want a specific use and we want to put exactly what was in there back in there. It would be an uphill battle, but I would work my buns off to do it, simply from an economic standpoint, I want a commission and I want to see someone in the property, whether it is the same thing or not.

Mr. Fenner said with an updated plan for the DDA we can address stuff like that.

Mr. Richvalsky said I don't think we have a call on that. That is the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Fenner said the original DDA had a color scheme and things like that set up, so at least if a junkyard is going to go back in there, it is going to look like the rest of downtown by the time they are done.

Mr. Richvalsky said that would be the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals and we could come in and sit in the audience and do like Vaughn is going to do today, and say "I am a DDA Board member and this is what I would like to see."

Mr. Stout said there are communities that do have a development guide book, at least on the public right-of-way aspect, that dictates a certain design element and intent. What happens behind that, goes back to that private/public partnership, so you try to foster those, but at least it gives you some framework. Getting that vision will make people on the Planning Commission think a little differently about how this will fit in the vision of the new DDA Master Plan. There is a lot to be said for consistency. That is also a big benefit to staff, when people come in and say, "Here's what this vision really is for this corridor, does this really fit, or there might be another location where what they want to do fits better?"

Mr. Richvalsky said are you contracted to tweek the existing City of Burton's entire Plan?

Mr. Stout said we have been dealing with the Park and Recreation. Lisa has been a little more of a known entity to that group, working with 5-Year Parks and Recreation plan and the Trust Fund grant and some of the park improvements.

Mr. Richvalsky said that is why we budgeted some money to go towards the Master Plan in general for the entire City to have our DDA dovetail onto that.

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Mr. Fenner said we had discussed that but the City is nowhere near doing their Master Plan. I don't know that we want to wait that long.

Mr. Paulus said what does it take to get a proposal of the cost of doing a Master Plan for us? I think that is the bottom line.

Mr. Stout said if we can get a little bit more on your thoughts and perceptions and the issues that are in this corridor, for us to draft us a proposal we could probably have something back in a week with a cost.

Mr. Fenner said the next thing would be to make a motion to sit down with you guys. Did you want public there at that time too, or did you want to hear from us and then take it to the public?

Mr. Stout said I would encourage you to invite the public if you want. A lot of times we will get into these sessions and people will say, "You have preconceived ideas about what we should do." Sometimes the simplest thing that we will do is bring an aerial map of the corridor and say "Let's just open this up for dialogue. I have no preconceived ideas about what should go where, so let's just talk." Okemas had an enhancement grant for their corridor and because of personal relationships they were able to get it through. We went to the public forum with the original design intent and people came unglued. They were very unhappy and wondered why they were doing this and that. We had just come in to implement the grant funding, we didn't lay all the ground work. Finally talking with some of the people on the Township staff, we decided we needed to back up and the project ended up taking a 180 and everybody was much happier with it. We always tell people, this is just a grant application. Let's just look at this like it is an open book, let's start from square one and let's just let people have a chance to talk. Normally what we do is have a stakeholder's board to kind of help run the meeting but we are a big component of it and see if we can get some dialog from the general public. Like you said you may or may not. I have sat in a Recreation 5-Year Master Plan meetings where the only people that show up are the local officials and the general public doesn't show up. It is a mixed bag, but it is a very good opportunity to do one type of visioning workshop and say, "What are some of the opportunities there. What are some of the issues?"

Ms. Easterwood said do you think that based on where you stand today and what you know today and what you envision, you could tell us what your issues are or what you would like to see happen for that corridor?

Mr. Richvalsky said I have tried to implement it again and bring uniformity to that district; I want every mailbox on Saginaw St. to be the same mailbox. Do you think we could get something like that, heck no, because it is the United States government that you are dealing with and you can't get that. I want a good solid mailbox that will take out the front end of a car for every one of us.

Mr. Fenner said you can't put those in, most of our mailboxes are illegal.

Mr. Stout said you bring up uniformity.

Mr. Paulus said for a lot of us, it is uniformity.

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Mr. Fenner said another thing that I noticed, I will go back to the City of Grand Blanc that we are not too dissimilar to them except we have 3 different speed limits through downtown Burton. We have 45, 40 and 35. I don't know many downtowns that have a 45 mile an hour speed limit. I don't know if that is something that we can address or that is something that the State mandates because of the kind of highway that it is. It is the same Saginaw St. that runs through Grand Blanc and the same Saginaw St. that runs through Flint, only ours is 40 or 45 miles an hour.

Mr. Stout said speed limits are set by the State Police going out and tracking an area. They will set the speed limit at 85 percentile of the speed. I always thought there would be more of a formula, but they just let people drive and if they are going that fast we are going to say 85 percent of that is going to be the speed limit.

Mr. Richvalsky said if we want the speed limit lowered, we all need to creep out and drive down the road at 25 miles per hour.

Mr. Stout said you have to have a strong justification and that might be a traffic component for that corridor, analyzing that the laneage and what are your traffic numbers?

Mr. Fenner said along with the speed limit and traffic, our corners, like Maple Rd. has no crosswalk lights. There is no "Walk" or "Do Not Walk" at Maple and Saginaw. At Judd, where I am at, we have the old system, Bristol has the brand new one because they just updated it with the little hubs and then you go back to Hemphill and they are back on the old system. When you are talking a walkable City and up to code with this stuff I would think it would all fall in line. I don't want to change our system and add a bike lane or anything, but why can't we get some ADA money and fix these corners with some grant money that should be minimal for that kind of thing?

Mr. Stout said we try to come up with realistic solutions when we go through this process. I know some of the Walkable communities' people that come in and do a dog and pony show and they get so far out there. They get wrapped up in their ivory tower like it is an academic exercise and they will promote all these things like taking out all your traffic signals and putting in 18 roundabouts.

Mr. Richvalsky said it was shameful what they did. They brought people in wheelchairs and electric wheelchairs and things like that and put a gallop on right in front of the Clock and put the girl up there and she starts going backwards on this thing.

Mr. Stout said those ADA components, if you are looking at MDOT money and Federal money you have to address them so you always have to make those a priority.

Mr. Fenner said I am looking at corners in Grand Blanc that have those with no sidewalks attached with grass around them.

Mr. Stout said that is the funny thing, they will put them in when there is nothing there in the hope that something does connect and it is part of that Federal funding.

Mr. Stapleton said the lighting is horrible. Becky has been calling Consumer's every other day and they are still cycling on and off, they won't stay on.

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Mr. Paulus said three things that we did were Clock corner but when they put the new lights in we were not part of that design, so now the mud sits there in ADA corners. We did Water Tower Park and at all the bus stops, we put in brick pavers.

Mr. Richvalsky said people were actually using the bus and standing in mud.

Mr. Paulus said there are more people using the bus system now than ever before.

Mr. Richvalsky said that is another goofy thing with MTA. There are more bus stops going south towards Grand Blanc than north towards Flint, where I think the vast majority of people want to go to the County. It is just disproportionate going south than north. The end of the route is Genesys Health Park and then into town. We need a venue at the property of Hemphill Road. I am going to try to acquire that as a real estate broker and appraiser for the DDA. It is at Hemphill and Saginaw behind the party store and is on the southeast corner. It was a Kroger store, historically and there was a Shoppers Fare that is now torn down. There is a sinkhole and it is contaminated but Windiate Park was contaminated too with the same exact materials; sludge and lead. What they did with Windiate Park, they didn't go in and drag all that out of there, they did not excavated it, they encapsulated it, graded it and then put in clay and a topsoil. The topography there is wonderful and they had a parking lot in there at one time and it wouldn't be too hard to bring back and put in a man and woman's John and a concession area and an amphitheater. Put in some decent trees and get rid of the scrub and encapsulated it because we are going to have to worry about the contamination if we are going to have it for public use. Do just what they did at Windiate, and that is exactly what I intend to do. I don't care what is there, it is exactly the same as Windiate and they are whining they can't get in there to do an environmental study, but they have an environmental study, it has been done. Bring it back now, it hasn't changed. Whatever is there now is growing weeds and scrub trees, so it can't be too bad for vegetation. We are all trained to look for dead vegetation and if vegetation can grow. There is not too much vegetation growing down on Buick City, but there is a lot more growing over here. Now we have a venue and can have concerts and something for the people. Now we can have our Moonshine Festival, and a little place to have Art in the Park or someplace to go, instead of begging Rocky's to use their parking lot. Let's have a place and make the man and woman's John prison safe with stainless steel so they have to take a sledge hammer off of the wall. We already have the parking lot.

Mr. Paulus said that is the whole goal of the whole thing is to give people a place. There is no place together or a place to put something together.

Mr. Richvalsky said unless we went into the Industrial Park there on I-475 and actually purchase something or something in that area.

Mr. Paulus said there is a Farmer's Market on Atherton and S. Saginaw on Monday afternoons.

Mr. Fenner said Grand Blanc has one on Sunday's and Flint has their famous one downtown. They are nice, I like them and I go to them, I just don't know if we are in between two other ones if that is saturation.

Mr. Stout said you can go back to something like Freemont, they wanted a structure for the Farmer's Market, but you can do more than that and when it is incorporated into a park and a

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multiuse structure with festivals and events. They use 3-4 nights a weeks to try to get some of that vibrancy and be a destination and develop a sense of place.

Mr. Fenner said I am not against that, but as far as a Farmer's Market there is the saturation issue. I guess the multiuse building I am not against at all.

Mr. Richvalsky said the Park system in Flint used to be wonderful. They had a nice stage and right in the grass they had seats planted into the grass. That is what I have envisioned for this area, but the topography lends itself nicely to put in a tin roof and a stage.

Mr. Stout said we hear a lot of concerns about vandalism. If you develop a facility, any restroom facility, we design to call them "little Fort Knox" because it has got to be very durable. The key is, if you have people down there and activities and that is the biggest deterrent for vandalism. Usually they are under the highway where they can't be seen spray painting stuff. Identifying 3 or 4 component parts and getting some synergy going is what we would really like to work with you towards.

Discussion as to whether or not Saginaw was an MDOT road.

Mr. Stout said each community has so many miles of Local Streets that you can get some funding for. That is why I was asking, because you have more flexibility there.

Mr. Richvalsky said I don't mean to cut you short but we are all working people here too, and I really appreciate you guys presenting your thoughts and basically inspiration for us to get moving on this thing. Jim, you want a motion that we get a proposal?

Mr. Stout said we can show you something and if you want tweeks or changes then we will work through it.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Vaughn Smith, 1311 Clairwood Dr., said I am excited to hear you guys talk about this. I work part-time for a company in Davison called Race Services that times races and what I have learned is that if you have a warm and welcoming environment, people will come to events for your City. I have been to Detroit, New Baltimore, which is a much nicer facility, but you don't have to have water, you just have to have a warm and welcoming environment. I believe that your vision for that area is also what I envision for Burton. I am excited to hear all the questions and the thought processes going on. As mentioned earlier by the Mayor, when we went through the budget, I am sure that many of you have heard the challenges facing our City, it was discussed that each of you have an investment in the City of Burton and we want to make sure you are aware of what could impact that investment down the road. We are in a situation, with our last budget, excluding anything you had heard about the Police, we were \$735,000 in expenses over revenues. Last year, we were \$500,000 expenses over revenue and took cuts and got that down to where we went into our General Fund by \$128,000. The year before that we were \$69,000 in expenses over revenues and the year before that we were \$308,000 expenses over revenue. What we have been doing over the last 4 years has been cutting, cutting, cutting, cutting, and we are getting to the point now that in March of 2007 the City had 101 employees and it is now down to 83. Our revenue stream,

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between our decline in Property Taxes and what we receive from the State is off 42% from 2007. We are trying to run the City on about half the money, which is why we have been cutting, cutting, cutting. That is unfortunately why the DDA was brought up the other night during the budget process. Out of that conversation it was requested by the Council that I, as Finance Chair, come and tell you guys what is going on. You are key players in this community, not only as business owners but also informing people as to what is happening in the South end.

I have a couple things that I am pulling out of our City of Burton financial assessment from March 2013. I have tried to keep it brief with the numbers because it can go on and on. We are operating on 42% less revenue than what we were a number of years ago. The property taxes, even if the economy starts going great guns, because of the headway it is going to take us years and years, maybe a couple decades to get back to where we were 6 or 7 years ago. Joey, I am sure with you being a realtor this doesn't surprise you with assessments or anything. The Charter millage rate is at 4.707 and they only have a Police millage or levy of 1.98 and we have a 1 mil file levy. Right now the City is operating on a little under 8 mils. In 2007 a mil generated approximately \$700,000 in revenue and now it generates approximately \$540,000. That is starting to paint the picture of why we are partially here. The second page has to do with the Pension fund that the City initiated between 1991 and 1994. We currently owe a non-funded liability for the Pension of \$25,000,000. This has all happened in a relatively short period of time. What is happening with the employees is that we had pay freezes in the last contracts, but because of the requirements by MERS, which is the State pension plan, they are asking for more money because they overestimated the vibrancy of the economy. They did some actuarial assumptions, such as rate returns of 8% and employees getting 5.6 to 5.8% pay raises yearly. As you know, when you get a Public Pension, the money streams are from the municipalities, employees and the investments that the fund has. I am sure you realize how difficult it is to find a 8% rate of return over the last 10 years on a consistent basis. The end result of this is there is about ½ of the money we had and our expenses are going up not only for the pension but for everything. After we did our last budget, we looked at the \$735,000, just where we are today and keeping everything status quo, we are still in the red by \$735,000. Now we have in our General Fund \$2.1 million dollars. In 2 years we are going to burn up unless we cut more Police or a few Administrators, we don't have much left to cut, we are going to burn through a \$1.5 of our \$2.1 million that we have in General Fund, which is going to get this State starting to sniff around and looking at a potential problem here at the City of Burton. We have a Citizen's Advisory being put together, and we presently have 15 members. Steve Coates has already volunteered. Where do we want to go from here? If you eliminate some of the Administration. If you do that you are going to eliminate maybe \$300,000, but you still have close to \$1 million that you still have to cut, so where do you go next. The average Police Officer in Burton runs between \$70,000 and \$90,000 depending on where they are in their pay scale. The largest expense is by far is to keep the Police force intact. Because of what I mentioned earlier with the pensions and the health care, our cost to keep the Police force went from \$4.2 million to \$4.7 million dollars in the last budget. As for 32 officers, I am sure you remember the days we had 42. I am here not to tell you what to do, but to ask you for your input as members of this community. What do we as a community want? That is the idea of the citizen's committee. It is better than seven Council saying what the City should do. The problem is that if we don't do anything, within a couple years it will be out of our hands. We will either be under some sort of agreement with Lansing or be under an Emergency Manager. I have the budget if any of you have any inclination to want to look at the numbers. I am sure Ginger would also be happy to answer any questions. We don't know where to go. I am talking as a Council and that is

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why your \$200,000 got brought up because we are digging and don't know what the answer is, other than it is our community. It is going to take a lot of us pulling on the rope to have any chance, whatever that is. I can tell you this, it will take 1.5 mils to break even with what we got today.

Mr. Fenner said is that what you are here to say, would you guys support a mil, or mil and ½ or an increase in taxes, or are you here to ask for our \$100,000?

Mr. Smith said we are here to ask you to be involved in the Committee if you have the time. We have 15 residents, about 4 from the south side of Burton and the rest are from the northern side. You guys are key players in the south and we need to have you informed. We are not telling if you are for or against it, just get informed to make an educated decision.

Mr. Fenner said I wasn't aware that you had formed such a committee, but if I knew when the meetings were I would love to show up.

Mr. Smith said this Thursday night will be the first one, we have got a couple scheduled. It will be at 6:00 p.m. at ELGA Credit Union in the corporate office there next to Meijer for the next two Thursdays. We need ideas. The Council members are scratching our heads. We have a neighbor just to the west of us who waited too long before they started addressing some of these issues. We have a couple of years before we will really see it.

Mr. Richvalsky said this is my question and it is a simple one. You have to make those moves now or an EM is going to do it and the guy is going to be hated and loathed and spit upon when he is seen in public. If you have got to cut a cop, you have got to cut a cop. What are we going to do, we have been inking out this \$200,000 that we have and we are just starting to think about something we can do with this thing, other than what we have been doing which is keeping the streets swept. I don't know what the answer is, but it is going to boil down to who do we wrap right around Flint? Our Police force is going to be like that. I was down paying water bills down at the City and they had to call 5 cops and 2 across the street from the Sheriff's Department because of how they handle that Treasurer's Office. There are 200 people in the lobby and 2 people handling it.

Mr. Smith said I read about it in the paper, it was a disaster.

Mr. Richvalsky said I was watching the festivities and thought there was going to be a may lay.

Mr. Fenner said this started many years ago when MERS took over. The economy crashing didn't help. MERS has no responsibility in this?

Mr. Smith said we have been to MERS, both with State Senator Dave Robertson and State Representative Charles Smiley. What MERS told us was that if it had been done today it would have been illegal.

Mr. Richvalsky said then repeal.

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Mr. Smith said they have re-racked. The City signed the agreement. Basically, what they do every year is that Ginger will get a statement saying what they need from us to keep our pension viable.

Mr. Fenner said I am not a fan of MERS and I understand this happened many years ago and there is nothing we can do about it. The current Police Officers are funded completely, from my understanding, talking to a few of them.

Mr. Smith said there are two groups. The one before 1994 is funded 28%, which are the older Police Officers. The one after 1994 are funded 104%.

Mrs. Burke-Miller said there is a cost sharing agreement between the 2 groups.

Mr. Fenner said the younger guys are paying for the older guys who got the benefit from being cashed out and the new pension. There is no way to go back to MERS or the people who got the checks?

Mrs. Burke-Miller said no, unfortunately not. There is kind of a shared responsibility. When I went back and found the documents, the City of Burton did approve entering into the MERS program and did agree to enter into the program the way we did enter into the program, which I didn't necessarily agree with and I think at the time had City Council had had its Auditors been called then to be a third party to oversee it, it would have been a different outcome I am sure. There were certain people here in the powers that be that also benefited from those decisions being made.

Mr. Fenner said there is nothing that we can do about it today. I do agree that we need some kind of additional millages or something. I guess I was upset there was a suggestion that you just pull \$100,000 out of our hard earned, many years of saving money that we want to spend for Burton. When I heard that I was up in arms and may have gotten some people's feathers ruffled. That was uncalled for and whoever suggested that was the City's money, either obviously didn't know that those are extra taxes that we pay to ourselves, not to offset the City's mistakes years ago.

Mr. Richvalsky said that is brick and mortar kind of stuff. Now when I get this put together we are going to have a venue and we will have people down there.

Mr. Smith said it works.

Mr. Paulus asked what the Council is or committee that you are setting up that is meeting the 18th and 25th. Who is consisting of that and what is its purpose?

Mr. Smith said the Council is a political Body.

Mr. Richvalsky said it is a political Body, it's a fund raiser, it's a hootnanny, it's a get-down, let's all put our hands together and clap and see what we are going to do and see who we are going to put in or put out.

Mr. Smith said this is not fun.

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Mr. Richvalsky said it is serious business.

Mr. Smith said it is serious business. I dread these meetings. I feel like I am the symbol of death walking around. I have lived here since I was 5, and I don't want 2 years from now, for people to come up to me and say, "Why didn't you say something?" So I would rather say it now and accept whatever those consequences are.

Mr. Paulus said what is the purpose of the Committee?

Mr. Smith said whether or not we want a millage and if we do want a millage, what amount of mils and how do we formulate it? Should it be a safety millage, should it be a millage as a City as a whole.

Mr. Richvalsky said you are talking about a rainy day fund.

Mr. Smith said that is what we would have to discuss. How do we inform the residents? Because I am a retiree and I am on a fixed income. We are all getting hit and I know it is difficult. I still work part-time, so I am still in the business community and know how difficult it is. We are approaching people in a very difficult economic climate. It has taken a while to get the names. I have had some people call, some people approached. I have about 5 or 6 but I don't want them all from the Kearsley area. We need help from the south end, because if we don't have both the north and south end pulling together on this, it is going to be very difficult. The next question is going to be, which touches on what was discussed earlier, with the Police. That \$735,000 is the 32 Police Officers, that is right where we got it. We have made some short-term arrangements because what we have going on next to us, of possibly bringing some more Police Officer's on. Does the community want that or not because there would be an additional cost. These are the things we have got to discuss as a community in this committee to see what we want to do because it will take a mil and ½ to keep us going right where we are at. It doesn't fix anything, we still have our structural deficit, so they are going to keep building.

Mr. Richvalsky said what really galls me about the cops is that when I lived in Westgate, my ex-wife had a residency requirement, we formed a crime watch and I am telling you communities have got to start banning together like we did at the southwest crime watch. We had 31 break-ins in December the year before the crime watch was formed, one year later in the December following that there were 2. We don't have to have the Martin case happening here in Burton, we don't need vigilantism, but what we do need communities coming together and helping cops out versus not having anything. I think that is a place to go and focus there instead of saying "Lets hire some more cops." You can't do it, you don't have the money to hire cops, but I tell you every one of these guys volunteer, they aren't getting paid a dime. Get somebody in the community out there driving the streets, walking the streets, biking the streets, whatever they got to do. That is how you save money, you got to have a community pulling together, not hit them in the pocketbook, let's hire more cops, or hit them in the pocketbook so we can pay more pensions out.

Mr. Fenner said I will be there.

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Mrs. Burke-Miller said most of you are probably aware of this but both Paula and I attended the Emergency Manager meeting that the Department a couple years ago and under an Emergency Manager, you have probably heard that they make 6 figures. They also bring in their own accounting group and lawyers and it is very expensive and the City residents do pay for that, the State does not pay for that. The bill goes to the residents. That is something that needs to be kept in mind as well.

Mr. Richvalsky said when he was down to the City paying the water bills, guess who strolls in. Ed Kurtz comes in and I said, "Hey Ed, why don't you man one of those Jewish pianos and lighten this crowd up." He told me, "I am just here to get an envelope." He walked in when there were 5 cops there, not when people were upset. So you are right, Ginger, that is not the way to go. If you can avoid them, avoid them like the plague.

Mr. Smith said we have a little time gentleman, and hopefully you will be part of the solution. I don't know what that solution is yet, but hopefully you will be involved. Are there any other questions?

BOARD ACTION: None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

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