

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025, 6:00 P.M.
GOVERNMENT CENTER, 315 BRIDGE STREET, ELK RAPIDS, MI 49629

THE DDA MEETS THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

CALL TO ORDER at 6:00 P.M.

Present: Secretary Sandy Ehlers, Dick Hults, Michelle Kline, Becky Lancaster, Janet Rentsch, Tom Stephenson, Chuck Thiel, and Christopher Werner

Excused: Chair Barbara Matthews, Vice Chair Scott Epskamp, Kimberly Leahy

Staff: Executive Director John Mach, DDA Assistant to Executive Director Nancy Taylor

In Person Citizens Present: 1

AGENDA APPROVAL: No amendment presented by the Board; the agenda stood as presented.

WELCOME to new Board member Dick Hults.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Laura Savoie, Elk Rapids resident and representative of the Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce came to invite DDA Board to dinner celebration on 11/7/25 at Turtle Creek Casino & Hotel, 7741 M-72, Williamsburg, MI 49690. The event will include introducing the new Rick Young Business & Community Impact Award; an annual award to leader who uplifts the entire community and honor those who inspire growth. Awards will also be given to Business of the Year, Nonprofit of the Year, Hometown Hero Award, and Young Professional of the Year Award.

Dates of Note:

- Thursday, October 16 at the DAM Shop
- Saturday, Oct 11 Witches Night invitation
- November 7 Annual Dinner Celebration

CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Accept Meeting Minutes

1. Regular DDA Meeting – September 10, 2025

B. Accept Financials

1. Financial Statement & Expense Activity as of September 30, 2025

C. Approve Invoices

1. Kwik Print Fall Festival Posters - \$157.20 (Marketing GL)

MOTION by **STEPHENSON**, **SECOND** by **WERNER** to approve consent agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes –Hults, Kline, Lancaster, Leahy, Rentsch, Stephenson, Thiel, and Werner, Ehlers; Nays – None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

REPORTS: Received.

A. Executive Director – John Mach

B. Village Council – Tom Stephenson, Village President

Capital improvement plans and stormwater remediation plan being put together. A smoke test in sewer system will occur 10/23 and 10/24/25. The cost will be a 50/50 match with the MI Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and MI Economic Development Corp. (MEDC). It will be an 8 to 9-year plan to expand sewer system. DDA to coordinate with Elk Rapids Village Manager. A special assessment for the spillway is being discussed for Fall 2026. Work on Dam to start on Dexter Fall 2027. Rotary Park restrooms will be installed 10/17/25.

C. Façade Grant Program, Grant Funding, & Ames Street – Janet Rentsch, Grant Administrator

Façade grants due October 24 – Three businesses attended the DDA September 18 informational meeting. The Ames Street 2.0 Lighting RFP is being prepared, and businesses have 30-day acceptance period. Currently, there are two grant opportunities being pursued: MSU Urban and Regional Planning application for the streetscape is due 11/22/25. T-Mobile Hometown Grant, worth \$50,000, is due 12/31/25.

D. Michigan Main Street – Christopher Werner, Committee Chair

The business inventory compilation for mailings/newsletter is ongoing. Committee descriptions for new and future committees are being developed. The MEDC budget for the Michigan Main Street program is stable.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Strengthening Michigan DDAs |Event Debrief – The Board discussed the Elk Rapids DDA Strengthening Michigan Downtown Development Authorities training and networking event at HERTH on Thursday, 10/2/25.

B. Wayfinding Phase 1 | US-31 Boardwalk Signage – The Board discussed Village Manager David Tait’s request that the DDA explore options for temporary signage to provide safe pedestrian passage utilizing the boardwalk beneath US-31, particularly during high-traffic community events such as Harbor Days.

MOTION by **RENTSCH**, **SECOND** by **STEPHENSON** to approve the fabrication and installation of the US-31 Boardwalk wayfinding signs at a total cost not to exceed \$4,664 from the INFRASTRUCTURE GL and authorize the Executive Director to sign the contract with Valley City Sign.

Discussion included concerns about boardwalk safety due to disrepair and maintenance issues.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Kline, Lancaster, Rentsch, Stephenson, Thiel, Werner, Hults. Nays: Ehlers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY2025-26 Budget | Approve Amendments. Higher revenues due to a variety of factors. Reallocation of funding due to approved and proposed expenses.

MOTION by **LANCASTER**, **SECOND** by **HULTS** to approve FY2025-26 budget amendments of \$114,809 as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Lancaster, Rentsch, Stephenson, Thiel, Werner, Ehlers, Hults, Kline. Nays: None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

B. Wayfinding Phase 2 | River Street Monument Amendments

Reviewed sign and design. Pricing to be discussed in 11/12/25 meeting.

MOTION by **STEPHENSON**, **SECOND** by **RENTSCH** to approve the design of the River Street Monument sign.

Voice Vote: Ayes All in Favor. Nays: No Opposition. **MOTION CARRIED.**

C. MSU Regional & Urban Planning Practicum Opportunity |Approve Matching Funds

MSU reviews applications received from urban and rural communities. If selected for the project, DDA supervision required. Applications are due 11/22/25. Notification is given on 12/15/25. Students get input from professors and other students.

MOTION by **KLINE**, **SECOND** by **RENTSCH** to allocate \$3,500 from the GRANT EXPENSES GL for the recommended contribution to the Michigan State University Urban and Regional Planning Practicum for the River Street Streetscape project

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Rentsch, Stephenson, Thiel, Werner, Ehlers, Hults, Kline, Lancaster. Nays: None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

BOARD COMMENTS: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Received.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES AND OTHER EVENTS

- ◆ **Witches Night Out:** Saturday, October 11, 2025, from 5:00-9:00 P.M., Downtown Elk Rapids and Ames Street, Elk Rapids, MI 49629.
- ◆ **Antrim County Board of Commissioners Meeting:** Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 6:30 P.M., Antrim County Building, 2nd Floor, Board of Commissioners Room, 203 East Cayuga, Bellaire, MI, 49615.
- ◆ **Elk Rapids Township Meeting:** Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 9:00 A.M., at the Government Center, 315 Bridge St, Elk Rapids, MI, 49629.
- ◆ **Village Council Meeting:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 6:30 P.M., at the Government Center, 315 Bridge St, Elk Rapids, MI, 49629.
- ◆ **Village Council Meeting:** Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 6:30 P.M., at the Government Center, 315 Bridge St, Elk Rapids, MI, 49629.
- ◆ **Antrim County Board of Commissioners Meeting:** Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 10:00 A.M., Antrim County Building, 2nd Floor, Board of Commissioners Room, 203 East Cayuga, Bellaire, MI, 49615.
- ◆ **Regular DDA Meeting:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 6:00 P.M., at the Government Center, 315 Bridge St, Elk Rapids, MI, 49629.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:55 P.M.

MOTION by **RENTSCH**, **SECOND** by **STEPHENSON** to adjourn meeting.

All present voted yes; **MOTION CARRIED.**