



Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority

MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2021 • 5:30 p.m.

Call to order - Meeting of the Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 5:32 pm by Board Chair Mary Lou Hartwell.

In attendance – Mary Lou Hartwell, Roman Plaszczak, Steve Racette, Ellyn Jones, Harold Schuitmaker, Susan Metzger, Terrie Simpkins, Barbara Carpenter, Sarah Moyer-Cale-Village Manager, Mary Springer – DDA Coordinator

Absent – Maria Diaz, Janet Wartman,

No Guest-

MOTION was made by Steve Racette to approve the March 15, 2021 meeting minutes
SUPPORTED by Barbara Carpenter. **MOTION CARRIED.**

No Grants were requested at this time

New Business:

Sarah has been looking into the idea of retail incubators and pop-up shops. This idea was high on the boards list when we took a priority poll for budget considerations. She reached out to Joe Borgstrom at Place and Main to ask if he thought there was a market for pop up shops such as etsy shops etc. There have been some thoughts of the Harmon Glass building since it has been sitting empty and is currently on the market. The building itself does not fit well into the downtown form-based codes and it was thought that a good use of it might be as an incubator for retail business start-ups. What Joe would look at and evaluate is 1. Whether there is a market for an incubator here. 2. He would evaluate available locations 3. Identify a cost 4. Help with the proforma and compare cost of development against criteria and what we are able to do. 5. Then market the space once it is developed.

Barbara Carpenter mentioned that she has available space for a pop up to set up a retail business in her building. Ellyn also has space available in the back of Sea Land Air Travel that could be utilized for FREE.

Susan used Vintage Inspired in Mattawn as an example of what a pop up could be.

Terrie also mentioned that these kind of pop-up businesses are very popular and her daughter has done something similar. Steve pointed out that Retail in the downtown is a priority and that it would be a good thing to evaluate.

Places that we have looked at that have done these sorts of retail pop ups are Muskegon and Battle Creek.

Roman suggested that we wait until after the Streetscape Project is complete to consider this project.

Susan mentioned that rent in Paw Paw for retail space is very high. If nothing else it would be nice if we had a program to help new businesses with rent.

Mary Lou said that what she liked about an incubator is that by keeping rent down a new business can get established and have a safe place to fall if they do fail. Mary Lou would like to investigate cautiously.

Sarah will invite Joe to the next meeting to discuss the idea.

Committee & Staff Reports –

Sarah and Mary Lou have discussed the possibility of dropping the number of board members on the DDA board from 13 to 11. It has been very hard to keep 13 members and 11 would be an easier number to have a quorum. It was decided that we will vote on this at the May meeting then if agreed on we will send a notice out for an ordinance amendment and ask the Village Council to take the necessary action.

Mary Springer gave the staff report.

Old Business:

Sarah announced that we will put the wayfinding sign project up to bid in late summer after the streetscape construction is completed.

Member Comments:

Ellyn mentioned that the strand was open now and Terrie mentioned that the Farmers market would be opening in the Township parking lot this year with more visibility

There were questions about whether the Chamber's Paw Paw Days event would take place and when.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm.
