

City of Iron Mountain

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Regular Meeting of the Common Council, City of Iron Mountain, County of Dickinson, Michigan to be held on Monday, April 12, 2010 at 6:34 p.m. in the Council Room.

Presiding: Mayor Rosen

Present: Council Members Jacobetti, Peterson, Alessandrini, Corombos, Villa & Farragh

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Stanchina

Public Comment

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Nicometo detailed a presentation on the Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority (DDA), using the following points:

- Overview of past operations, current forecast and future vision
- 2010-2011 Fiscal Year Budget detail and mapping to city
- 2010-2015 Preliminary Budget Concepts
- Current projects, with a review of some past projects
- Current fund raising objectives – related to this year's projects
- Broadened Main Street resource focus

Nicometo noted that the DDA initially focused on infrastructure, traffic and parking. He relayed that the DDA then shifted its focus towards beautification and the arts. Nicometo conveyed that the eventual addition of the Main Street Program added focus and opportunities to the DDA, including: promotions, business development, design assistance, an increased volunteer base, a structure to work within and an increased fund raising effort towards self sufficiency. He communicated that the goal of the DDA is to improve the Downtown Development District (DDD), the City of Iron Mountain and the community as a whole.

Rosen asked Nicometo if he felt the pledges from the local businesses are reliable. Nicometo voiced his support for the DDA being able to reach its pledge goals. Marchetti noted that the idea of developing an association is being considered. Rosen voiced his concerns for limiting membership or support of an association to just the Main Street Program. Kramer clarified that the idea of an association in is the preliminary stages and is still being developed. Nicometo relayed the idea that the DDA would like to develop into a community wide organization. He proceeded to detail the DDA's Five Year Budget Forecast. Corombos asked Nicometo to project the DDA's fund balance. Nicometo estimated that the fund balance will be around \$75,000.00.

Nicometo relayed that traffic calming has been a positive result of the way in which the DDA has been operating. Marchetti noted that there were 5,757.5 hours of volunteering as a result of the DDA's efforts. Nicometo relayed that a landscaping and stage development project will be taking place this summer. Rosen verified that the DDA's festivals will be a significant portion of the projected budget.

Peterson arrived at 6:57

Peterson asked if the city deciding not to donate its traditional \$20,000.00 would hurt the Main Street Program's standing, as far as the state is concerned. Nicometo relayed the opinion that the overall community is more of a priority to the DDA than the Main Street Program distinction is. Marchetti conveyed that the State's Main Street Resource Team has recommended that the DDA branch out. Rosen and Peterson expressed their support of the Main Street Program. Peterson voiced the opinion that the city is receiving benefits from the DDA's efforts.

CITY OF IRON MOUNTAIN *COMMON COUNCIL *APRIL 12, 2010

It was concluded that all the addenda items had been discussed, with the exception of the completed projects and their benefits.

Nicometo expressed the DDA's appreciation for the city's past support and his willingness to look at a change in the city's donation level, if it becomes necessary.

Review of the Completed Projects and their benefits

Marchetti, Ortenburger and Kramer relayed that the DDA has:

- created and distributed a quarterly news letter
- developed a website
- developed and distributed a Business Directory
- created a marketing brochure
- initiated a sponsorship program to support the Main Street Program
- created and completed multiple Adirondack Chair fundraisers
- recruited and sustained an increased number of volunteers
- created guidelines for historic renovations in the Downtown
- developed an architectural walking tour throughout the City of Iron Mountain
- provided design services through the Main Street Program
- started to brand the Downtown
- received a \$3,000.00 DNR grant to install landscaping
- developed a business development database
- performed a Downtown study and spurred the idea of a regional business challenge

Marchetti, Ortenburger and Kramer relayed the future projects that the DDA would like to accomplish:

- establishing a fundraising plan for parking lot landscaping
- designing and building a new Out to Lunch stage
- creating new committees to promote and educate businesses
- increasing volunteer activity
- digitizing the historic walking tour of Iron Mountain and making it electronically available
- enacting traffic calming measures
- developing a young professionals network
- developing a Business Assistance Team

Mooney requested that the agenda item "Council/DDA review of completed projects and their benefits" be visited in more detail. Nicometo relayed that trees and sign hangers were installed throughout the Downtown Development District (DDD). He communicated the opinion that the whole district will benefit when one part of it is improved. Nicometo conveyed the idea that the DDA is approaching the point at which sufficient funds will be available to expand their current efforts. Mooney communicated the opinion that the DDA funds have not been spent in a proportionate matter. A discussion pertaining to the Christmas Tree Event at the Midtown Mall ensued. *The idea that both the Midtown Mall and the City of Iron Mountain paid for Christmas Trees arose.*

Peterson conveyed the opinion that the Main Street Economic Restructuring Committee is a benefit to the whole area. Alessandrini relayed that the current DDA members are relatively new and should be given time to redirect the DDA's past direction. Rosen communicated the idea that all the businesses in the DDD should receive a level of benefit from the DDA.

Rosen, LeBlanc and Alwine alluded to the idea that all the businesses need to work together as a whole to succeed. Marchetti communicated the opinion that changes in the DDA need to be incremental. Alessandrini urged the Midtown Mall to sit on the DDA Board.

Public Comment

Chellew conveyed the opinion that the DDA is primarily assisting the Downtown and that the Midtown Mall is not interested in continuing to be part of the DDA. Mooney communicated the opinion that the mall and its merchants have felt slighted from the 1980's till a law suit approximately 10 years ago, attempting to allow the Midtown Mall to leave the DDA. She relayed that mall's representatives have attempted to sit on DDA's boards over the following 10 years. Mooney relayed that the mall's representatives did not feel their concerns were being adequately addressed, so they ceased participating. She relayed that Jinx Brew and Jonathan Ringel invited her

CITY OF IRON MOUNTAIN *COMMON COUNCIL *APRIL 12, 2010

to a DDA Promotions Meeting two days after she was hired. Mooney noted that the mall cross promoted for Harvest at Hughitt, Girls Nigh Out and the Downtown Christmas Walk. She expressed the opinion that she felt she was not treated appropriately at two additional Promotion Meetings. Mooney communicated that she had met with Stanchina and Ringel and they asked the mall if they would sit on the DDA Board. She relayed that when Chellew and Mooney attended a DDA Board Meeting a couple of board members expressed enthusiasm for a mall representative to sit on the Board. Mooney communicated that there was no mention of particular plans that would benefit the mall, leading to a decision to not sit on the DDA Board and to sever ties with the DDA. Mooney informed the council that she is putting them on notice that the Midtown Mall is prepared to engage in legal action if the mall is not removed from the DDA in the summer of 2011.

Peterson expressed the opinion that the current DDA has been reaching out and working hard to include the Midtown Mall. Alessandrini asked why the Midtown Mall should be forced to stay in the DDA. Rosen cautioned over promising, but assured Mooney that this matter will receive adequate attention.

Mooney read an expert from a poem that was distributed by the Main Street Manager.

Rosen conveyed that the city will process the Midtown Mall's request. Mooney expressed her concern for the City Council's objectivity, given her impression of Peterson's opinions.

Council Member Privilege

Corombos conveyed the opinion that Nicometo's projections on festival income are overly optimistic. He relayed the idea of offering a comprehensive survey throughout the DDD. Corombos communicated the idea that it is optimal for citizens to vote taxes on themselves. He suggested that a survey could be a good start to solving this problem. Corombos expressed the potential urgency of the cities financial situation.

Alessandrini voiced his appreciation for the position that the Midtown Mall and the DDA are in. He conveyed his support towards performing a survey of the DDD businesses.

Farragh thanked the DDA and the Midtown Mall for their attendance. He relayed that it would be beneficial for the mall and the DDA to work together.

Peterson conveyed the opinion that the DDA has been reaching out to the Midtown Mall. She communicated the opinion that she is very budget conscious.

Jacobetti raised the question as to the Midtown Mall's expectations for the return they will receive from the DDA. He expressed the opinion that the Downtown Area needs a lot of money, as it can bring in tourism.

Villa expressed regret that the situation between the mall and the DDA has gotten to this point. She urged the Midtown Mall representatives to try working with the DDA one more time.

Rosen thanked everyone for their attendance and assured everyone that their opinions were heard.

Adjournment

It was moved by Alessandrini and supported by Villa to adjourn.

Motion Prevailed Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.



Isaac Micheau
Clerk-Treasurer