

City of Iron Mountain

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Special Meeting of the Common Council, City of Iron Mountain, County of Dickinson, Michigan to be held on Monday, January 31, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Room.

Presiding: Mayor Rosen

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

Absent: Council Member Alessandrini

Also Present: City Manager Stanchina

Public Comment

Kevin Wedin - 914 West B Street

Wedin relayed that Eureka Tire, Simone Insurance and Ace Hardware would like to be removed from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Nick Simone - 118 North Stephenson Avenue

He stated that he does not have a problem supporting the downtown. Simone conveyed that his business should not be included in the Downtown Development District (DDD). Peterson relayed that one of the major goals of the DDA is Economic Development. Simone clarified that the letter which was sent out regarding this informal hearing had a connotation that the DDA Assessment could be increased. Stanchina explained the reasoning for the wording of the meeting notice that was sent out. Peterson stated her objection to the way in which the meeting notice was worded.

Bruce Orttenger - 600 South Stephenson Avenue

He stated that the Dickinson Area Partnership supports the DDA and its efforts. Orttenger conveyed that the DDA's efforts have assisted several of the members that support the Dickinson Area Partnership.

Mike Nicometto - 427 S. Stephenson

He expressed the idea that everyone needs to work together as the economy worsens. Nicometto stressed the idea that the current DDA should not be judged by the actions of previous DDA Boards. He relayed the idea that the community as a whole should push forward during these harsh economic times.

New Business

Discussion of DDA Boundaries

Rosen suggested that the DDA boundary could be amended as to omit the Midtown Mall, McDonalds and Heritage Realty. He voiced his support of the DDA's efforts towards receiving rental rehabilitation funding.

Peterson asked what Wedin expected to receive for the DDA Assessment he is paying. Wedin conveyed that he does not feel that he is part of the DDD. Orttenger explained a couple of programs that could be operated through the DDA which could benefit non-retail businesses. He expressed an interest in possibly learning more about the opportunities that the DDA may offer his business. Wedin stated the opinion that the Midtown Mall benefits more from the DDA than businesses such as his.

~~Rosen expressed his frustration about a personal experience in which the DDA did not support a local business, based on a slight difference in purchase price. Rosen stated that he is not happy because they, the DDA:~~

"Say they support businesses in the DDA. So recently they asked for a quote and this is a prime example of a double standard that is present and I am not happy, it is a principle issue. I quoted posters, 100 posters, for \$55. Fine it is a bid and I have no problem with that, but I was beat by \$7. It is a minute issue with regard to the dollars, but a big issue when it comes to principle."

Peterson objected to the manor in which Member Rosen relayed the previous experience. Rosen read a letter from Francie's Interior Designs that requested to be removed from the DDA, into the record. Peterson and Rosen voiced the opinion that the community needs to work together.

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Nicometto expressed the idea that an active community works to the benefit of all whom reside in it. Wedin stated that he would reconsider the benefits he and the community receive, if he were to be educated on the DDA. The representative from Ace Hardware expressed a desire to be part of the downtown, but was concerned at the prospect of an increase in the DDA Assessment. Farragh stated that the businesses within the district should be better informed.

Barb Kramer – 135 Bradley Street

She noted that every business within the DDD received a newsletter during the last mailing. Kramer stated that the DDA Board has just completed their strategic plan. She relayed that the DDA Board has been thinking of ways to include more of the DDD.

Mr. Dennis Chelley - Midtown Mall General Management

Chelley stated the Midtown Mall's willingness to support the community. He conveyed the idea that the Midtown Mall could do a better job of promoting it's section of the DDD by promoting it's own initiatives.

Corombos suggested that each of the businesses that requested to be removed from the DDD be removed, as long as they are near the current DDD boundary. He stated that he is not in favor of increasing the DDA millage. Jacobetti expressed the idea that a business should not be omitted from the DDD based on the fact they do not feel they are not receiving enough benefit. He noted that the goal of the DDA is to benefit the community as a whole.

Karen Mooney -Midtown Mall Promotions Coordinator

She stated that the Midtown Mall has objected to being part of the DDA in the past. Mooney relayed that she has attended several meetings and that the Midtown Mall is very serious about leaving the DDA. Mooney communicated that past efforts to work with other businesses in the DDA have failed and that the Midtown Mall is no longer willing to participate as a member of the DDA. Jacobetti asked what Mooney's expectations of the DDA are. Mooney stated that her expectations are to get out of the DDA, as they expect nothing from the DDA due to prior experiences with other DDA members. She expressed her disappointment with the Return on Investment that the Midtown Mall has received from their previous DDA contributions. Mooney clarified for Member Jacobetti that she would have expected to be included in DDA press releases and flyers for major promotions, at a minimum. Peterson expressed the opinion that the Midtown Mall's wanting to leave the DDA should not reflect upon the current DDA board. Rosen noted that having a forced membership for an organization is a slippery slope. He stated that the best environment would be having a productive DDA that businesses want to be a part of. Nicometto stressed the important role a vibrant community plays in economic development. He conveyed the opinion that the DDA is limited in some ways, as it is a volunteer based organization. Kramer stated that the DDA meetings are not currently well attended and she encouraged those whom are interested in the DDA to attend them.

Devona - 815 Margaret Street

She expressed the idea that everyone in the DDA should be working together for the good of the DDA. Chelley expressed the opinion that the Midtown Mall had tried to work with the DDA and found them to be uncooperative.

Mr. George Vornkahl- 217 and 219 East Ludington Street

He relayed the opinion that someone can not vote themselves out of taxes. Rosen stated that due diligence towards the gathering of input has been done with the mailing for this hearing. Peterson voiced her concern for the setting of precedence in this case.

It was concluded that someone from the DDA would be meeting with all the businesses within the DDD.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

It was moved by Jacobetti and supported by Corombos to adjourn.

Motion Prevailed Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.


Isaac Micheau
Clerk-Treasurer