

**MELROSE TOWNSHIP DDA MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of June 17, 2020**  
**At Melrose Township Hall**

**I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Chair Broc Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**Members present:** Broc Johnson, Vern Goodwin, Jonathon Borisch, Steve Whittaker, Judy Goldsmith, Dave Rentschler, Mike Strobe, and Phil Whittaker.

**Members absent:** Katy Ross.

**Also present:** Recording Secretary Tom Mackie

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Dave Rentschler motioned, Mike Strobel seconded, to approve the minutes of November 5, 2019 as presented. All ayes, motion carried.

**III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Dave Rentschler motioned, Phil Whittaker seconded, to re-elect Broc Johnson as Chair, Steve Whittaker as Vice-Chair, and Judy Goldsmith as Secretary. All ayes, motion carried.

**IV. GUESTS:**

Dave introduced John and Kevin (new owners of the Junction Inn and Pied Piper properties) and Jeff (owner of Windcrest cabins). John noted plans are still being developed, but they envision a year-round farmer's market and event center in the former skating rink. The Junction Inn would continue to operate as a bar/restaurant. The small house to the south would be renovated for a residential rental.

Additional ideas include a gas station/convenience store along with other retail and some residential on undeveloped land to the south, adjacent to US131.

John also expressed support for extending the DDA's M-75 sidewalk to the US131 intersection.

**V. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Tom reviewed the financial statements. Future reports will include a balance sheet

VI. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Township Purchase of Circle Park:** Vern reported both parties have agreed on easement terms and Ben Borisch is pursuing grant funding. The Township plans a public informational meeting in August, and a public hearing in December.
- b. **US131 Mettler Property Update:** The Township now owns this parcel but has not pursued specific uses yet.
- c. **Sidewalk Extension from Church to US131:** Vern will contact Aaron Nordman for an estimate.
- d. **17 Meter Monument Sign Maintenance:** Mike will contact a roofing business to discuss ideas for sealing the deck.
- e. **Community Art:** Broc noted this general subject has been discussed many times over the last few years and suggested it is critical to first determine what story we have to tell. Hemingway has been offered as a possible direction, and funds were budgeted for a sculpture in 2017. Jonathon provided pictures and potential wording for a sign. This version reflects an older Hemingway, long after moving from the area. Although not historically accurate for his Walloon days it does have the advantage of being more recognizable.

Broc had contacted another bronze sculpturer who has an existing model of Hemingway as a child. It would better relate to Hemingway's Walloon days and would cost about \$35,000 today (not including a base). Some type of base would be required since it is only 51 inches tall. Broc suggested this would give us a story to tell in our effort to drive economic development.

All DDA members present were asked for their preference. Some supported a more recognizable older version, but most supported a period-correct younger one. Broc will seek an opinion from the Michigan Hemingway Society. Vern suggested a younger version would be unique and draw more interest.

- f. **History Walk in Circle Park:** Broc reported he has some renderings and pricing information, but suggested we get the Hemingway project under way before considering this.
- g. **Park Bathhouse Project:** Vern reported this project was supposed to start in April but was delayed because of coronavirus, and the park is now starting its busy season. The new plan is to start in September. Some (not all) price estimates include \$11,780 for construction, \$6,400 electrical, and \$5,500 plumbing. We may get a \$10,000 grant.
- h. **Merchants Association Update:** Have not received a current report. Their last meeting was over a year ago and the group is still getting started.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Village Development Plans:** Jonathon reported the three vacant lots across M-75 from the hotel have been sold and the new owner hopes to start something this summer. He expects them to pursue a building similar in size to the hotel. Jonathon's still pursuing apartments east of the Boat Launch parking lot. The pop-up shops have been removed and some existing activities are moving to this site from Tommy's. This will free up lake-side space for additional retail opportunities.

Jonathon also reported the Barrel back, hotel, and Inn are all seeing increases in business over last year. The recent Arts and Crafts show was a big success, especially considering the minimal advertising and promotion. The annual Triathlon and fireworks show will also be happening.

**b. MDOT Plan for Walloon Junction:** Vern reported the asphalt replacement starts Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> but the high-traction surface planned for the intersection will not begin until September. Installation of a traffic light is planned for 2020/2021.

**c. Community Events Discussion:** Steve reported Wally Kidd is still planning for the Walloon Woodies show in August but there will be no car show this year. Most car shows are all being canceled this year due to the corona virus.

**VIII. DDA COMMENTS:**

Broc encouraged everyone to look for new promotional ideas. Phil reported Katy Ross is still pursuing an antique show. Jonathon reported plans for showcasing Native American Art in Circle Park in the next month

**IX. CITIZEN COMMENTS:** John offered to help with sidewalk extension efforts to expedite this project. Jeff understands Consumers Power is planning some work in the village and suggested this could be an opportunity to move utilities underground.

**X. NEXT MEETING:** Tentatively Wednesday, July 8th, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

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Tom Mackie, Recording Secretary

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Judy Goldsmith, Secretary