DOWNTOWN LUDINGTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – November 7, 2005

John Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. at the City Municipal Building Community Room. Members present were Gail Lyons, Magee Johnson, Wayne Brown, Julie Payment, Arlen McCloskey, Kathy Maclean, and Darla Keillor. Others John Shay, Gary Castonia, Alberta Muzzin and Mary Beutell.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by McCloskey, seconded by Brown to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Minutes

Moved by McCloskey, seconded by Lyons to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comments

None

Financial Report

Moved by Payment, seconded by Johnson to accept the September finance report as written. Motion carried.

Guest Speaker Mark Sandstedt

Mark Sandstedt of MS Creative in Manistee summarized how he has worked with the Manistee DDA and the Manistee merchants to create a marketing program. He stated that three years ago he worked with the DDA to establish objectives and goals. The DDA felt very strongly about generating traffic and realized that it needed to maintain what was present in order to grow. The DDA used the $15,000 available for marketing to establish a matching grant. The "Downtown in Motion" campaign was established. Businesses were given a stake in the marketing and contributed $1,200 the first year toward the campaign. In the second year membership was changed to a two-tiered program with businesses and professionals contributing $300 and retailers contributing $600. The program has resulted in a $45,000/yr marketing budget ($30,000 from businesses and $15,000 from DDA). Success of the program is measured by reparticipation. MS Creative uses the budget to develop commercials, advertisements, maps, promotions and training events for downtown businesses/employees. MS Creative is also working on launching a new website on which they hope to provide virtual tours of downtown businesses. Sandstedt stated that the merchants meet every other month to discuss issues. He stated that those who don't pay still get benefits from the group marketing. MS Creative receives approximately 10 – 15% of the budget for consulting. This includes preparing all the marketing materials and attending meetings.

Committee Reports

Buisness Recruiting and Retention

Beutell reported that approximately 75% of the retention visits have been completed and that to date the majority of the comments have been positive.

Special Events/Promotions/Activities

Lyons stated that the 2005 Oktoberfest was successful. She stated that a majority of the visitors came during the day with very light turnout during the evening entertainment. Lyons referred to the budget included with the packet showing that the event was profitable. Lyons stated that in the future, the committee will look at adjusting the times of the event so that everything is during the day.

Building and Grounds

Nothing at this time.

Keillor questioned whether it would be the Building and Grounds Committees responsibility to look into what can be done about the snow banks in the winter. She has received comments at work that the snow banks are not welcoming in the downtown. Shay explained that the first priority for snow removal is the roads, but that once the road are clear that the DPW crews come back the following evening to remove the banks in the downtown. He stated that this has to be done during the evening due to the equipment being used. He also stated that some of the departments are being reorganized which might increase the manpower that can be utilized for snow removal. Brown asked whether the plows could go against traffic so that the snow would be pushed to the middle. Shay stated that this has been done, but it is dangerous due to traffic patterns. Maclean stated that Jamesport Brewery hires a private service to remove the snow in front of the business. Henderson stated that the Building and Grounds Committee could look into solutions for the problem.

Brand Identity/Marketing

Henderson stated that the Marketing Committee will be scheduling a meeting with the CVB to determine how to utilize the "Ludington on the Lake" theme.

Special Projects

Ultimate Makeover Beutell reported that Don Nelson of Quality Built Homes has agreed to assist with completion of the Ultimate Makeover in mid-October.

Ex-Officio Reports

Economic Development

Kratz presented the October Mason County Economic Scorecard. He highlighted the events summarized on the scorecard.

City Manager

Shay reported that the City will be presenting the 2006 budget to the Finance Committee this week. Shay stated that at some point the DLB and the City will want to discuss the pros and cons of using TIF funding to finance projects in the downtown. At this time, one of the reasons why the City is not in favor of collecting TIF funding is due to conflict with Brownfield incentives.

Chamber of Commerce

Muzzin reported that the Chamber is once again offering the wreaths and garland to downtown businesses as a holiday promotion. She asked for volunteers from the DLB to assist Linda Zaydel in taking orders.

The Christmas Parade will be held on December 2, 2005. Muzzin stated that it is estimated that 4000 people attend the parade that also offers sidewalk events and encourages businesses to have later store hours. Muzzin stated that DLB involvement in the parade would be appreciated.

Santa will be housed in the Visitors Center this holiday season. Fruit will also be delivered to the Visitors Center and the previous Healy's Garage in Scottville for pickup.

The Chamber is finalizing the 2006 Calendar of Events.

Planning Commission

None.

New Business

Henderson stated that the board needs to focus on accomplishments. He charged each committee with setting goals and a corresponding budget for 2006 by the December meeting. For instance, the Building and Grounds committee may want to focus on signage, the gazebo area, snow removal, etc.; the Promotions Committee may want to look at an overall strategy and budget for special events. He also stated that the board may want to look at quarterly meetings while the committees meet on a regular basis to meet their goals.

Discussion of the Bylaws was moved to the December meeting agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Beutell for

Ray Janish, Secretary