DOWNTOWN LUDINGTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – March 7, 2005

John Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. at the City Municipal Building Community Room. Members present were John Henderson, Jane Carpenter, Arlen McCloskey, Tracy Thompson, Paul Peterson, Gail Lyons, Wayne Brown, Ray Janish, Magee Johnson and Julie Payment. Others: Bill Kratz, Gary Castonia, Alberta Muzzin, John Shay and Mary Beutell.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Brown, seconded by Janish to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried.

Minutes

Moved by Peterson, seconded by Janish to approve the minutes with the addition of Paul Peterson to the members present list and the correction of "Derrick" to "Derik". Motion carried.

Public Comments

Kaye Ferguson-Holman informed the board that the Ludington Area Arts Council is sponsoring an Artists Reception at Jamesport Brewing Co. from 5 pm to 7 pm on Wednesday March 9, 2005. Holman stated that this is a good opportunity to meet local artists.

Financial Report

Moved by Janish, seconded by Brown to accept the financial report as presented. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

<u>Business Recruiting and Retention</u>

- Henderson stated that there had not been a formal meeting and that the members are still completing retention visits.

<u>Special Events/Promotions/Activities</u>

- Lyons stated that the committee met on March 3, 2005 to discuss potential projects for 2005. Lyons summarized the ideas from the meeting notes.
- Lyons stated that after the meeting she contacted the Marketing Director from the Lakes Mall in Muskegon to discuss the proposed May promotion and other ideas. The Director stated that the Lakes Mall had a similar weekend promotion in which they gave away tote bags to customers who spent a certain amount of money. She stated that the event was well received and suggested that in the future we might want to look at a shorter time frame, perhaps a weekend, with smaller prizes. She also discussed a "Passport Promotion" that Lyons stated the committee will discuss at the next meeting.
- Lyons stated that the flower baskets are being prepared for this season. The liners will need to be replaced next year at a cost of $2/per basket. Villadsen's is requesting an additional $75 as a delivery charge based on the number of commuting times and the amount of gas that was used in 2004. The board questioned whether the baskets should be bid again. Lyons stated that last time they were bid Villadsen's was half the cost of the next lowest bidder. Moved by McCloskey, seconded by Thompson to approve a one-time fee of $75 for delivery and pick up in 2005. Motion carried.
- Moved by Lyons, seconded by Carpenter to approve a $500 advertising budget request for the May 1, 2005 promotion. Lyons stated that advertisements would be placed in the Ludington Daily News and on two local radio stations. Motion carried.

Building and Ground

- Thompson stated that the committee was pleased to see the stricter sidewalk program that the City of Ludington adopted. He stated that it will improve the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.
- Thompson stated that he received a call from a member of the Ludington Chess Club questioning whether there has been any consideration to installing chessboards in area parks or other locations. Thompson stated that he believes this could be a good idea and will look into the cost and feasibility of the request.

Marketing/Brand Identity

- Henderson stated that the last meeting was canceled and that the committee will attempt to meet again in two weeks.
- Henderson asked the board if they were still in agreement with the idea of a Maritime theme. Carpenter questioned whether the theme was just for the downtown, stating that the board didn't have control over the entire City. Henderson stated that the board would drive the theme up to other boards to make the theme area wide.

Cool Cities

- Nothing at this time.

Special Projects

Bill Carpenter, Update on Art Train

- Carpenter stated that the Arts Council received the Artrain contract and will be reviewing it with all of the projects principals. The contract doesn't appear to have any surprises. Paco Theisen is coordinating additional arts displays to coincide with the Artrain. LMTA has agreed to have busses available to shuttle people as necessary. The Arts Council is working with WSCC to develop an exit survey to show the positive or negative economic effects of the event. Carpenter stated that he encourages the Downtown Ludington Board to have companion events and encourages businesses to extend their hours to accommodate visitors to the exhibit.

Magee Johnson, Friday Night Live

- Johnson stated that beginning July 29th there would be a series of four Friday Night Lives modeled after Traverse City's event. City Council and MDOT will be asked to approve closure of Ludington Avenue from James St. to Robert St. from 5 pm to 10 pm on these evenings. Area performers will register for the event. The committee will coordinate entertainment to insure that the event is well rounded and provides a family atmosphere. Performers could include local musicians, artists, jugglers, etc. Non-profits could register as food vendors or for space to promote their cause. Food vendors will be responsible for acquiring any necessary licenses. Businesses outside of the two block area will be given the opportunity to use space on the south side of the 200 block of Ludington Ave. to display products. Henderson stated that the committee will probably be asking for a small budget to pay for a City employee to work during the event to help with potential electrical needs, rubbish, barricades, etc. Lyons stated that Jack Russell had approached her with some ideas for children's games and entertainment. Johnson stated that she will be the point person for the committee.

Ex-Officio Reports

Economic Development

Kratz provided members with the February 2005 Mason County Economic Scorecard. He reviewed the projects that were included on the report.

Kratz stated that he received an inquiry about office space in Ludington. He provided potential locations including the previous Manpower building on Tinkham and properties on S. James St. Beutell stated that there is still office space available at Harbor Front Plaza on Rath Ave.

Lyons questioned whether there was anything taking place at Harbison Walker. Kratz stated that there was no formal action, but that appraisers were looking at the site for an undisclosed customer. Kratz stated that the business was no longer viable because it relied on a product from Dow that is no longer available.

City Manager

Shay reported that the sale of the Atkinson property is final. A ceremony will be held on Friday at 11 o'clock to kick-off the project. Demolition of the additions is slated to start on Monday.

Bob Neal will be back in Ludington in April. He is anxious to begin working on the development of the south side of the 200 block of West Ludington Ave.

Chamber of Commerce

Muzzin reported that the downtown visitors center will be located in the Acker's Garage along with Maude's Garage and the Carrom Festival.

Muzzin questioned whether the board was still interested in presenting a beautification award at the Chamber dinner on April 16th along with the Business Leader of the Year and the Citizen of the Year Awards. She stated that the board would be responsible for the plaque and dinner cost for the recipient. Moved by Janish, seconded by Thompson to approve the plaque and dinner cost approximated at $100. Motion carried.

Muzzin stated that the fairgrounds contacted her office regarding bringing the ice festival back to Ludington. Muzzin stated that even though it would be held at the fairgrounds that she believes it will bring a number of people to the community.

Muzzin stated that billboards and cable TV advertisements will be starting soon with the use of the HUD grant dollars.

Muzzin stated that the five area counties will be hosting an expo to promote Western Michigan at the Ramada Inn on April 17 and 18, 2005.

Muzzin stated that the Chamber Office will be working with Mason County to promote events recognizing the 150 year anniversary of the county.

Muzzin stated that the new member breakfast will be held on 15th of March at Ramada Inn. This is a great chance to meet area business owners.

Muzzin stated that the March 24 CVB meeting will be followed by Business After Hours sponsored by the CVB. This is a great opportunity to learn what the CVB is all about.

Muzzin stated that community leaders from Manitowoc will be coming to Ludington on June 17th for exchange day with Ludington. A small number of Ludington community leaders will greet the Manitowoc officials in Manitowoc.

Planning Commission

Nothing in regards to the downtown at this time.

New Business

None.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Beutell for

Ray Janish, Secretary