DOWNTOWN LUDINGTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – March 6, 2006

John Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:22 a.m. in the City Municipal Building Community Room.

Members present: Gail Lyons, Tracy Thompson, John Henderson, Jane Carpenter, Kathy Maclean and Ray Janish. Others Alberta Muzzin, Kaye Holman, John Shay and Mary Beutell. Julie Payment was excused.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Lyons, seconded by Janish to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Minutes

Moved by Janish, seconded by Thompson to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Sue Ann Schnitker introduced herself as the owner of Cartier Mansion and stated that she attended to educate herself on what was happening.

Financial Report

Moved by Janish, seconded by Carpenter to accept the January finance report as written. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Buisness Recruiting and Retention/Marketing

Maclean stated that the committee met and that notes from the meeting were included in the packets. She sated that the committee is considering the possibility of meeting with developers to learn more about investor/business contacts. Maclean stated that there needs to be a chain of command for contacting potential investors so that actions are not duplicated and stated that the new economic development director should be brought on board to further the efforts.

Maclean stated that the committee needed direction on the marketing portion of its responsibilities. Henderson stated that his vision is that the committee would work on marketing to the business world.

Maclean stated that the committee discussed signage for the downtown and were informed by Beutell that Buildings and Grounds are also discussing this issue. The board came to the conclusion that the Building and Grounds Committee should be responsible for signs inside the city; the Promotions Committee for special event signs; and the Business Recruiting and Retention/Marketing Committee for permanent signs outside of the city and big picture marketing.

Shay stated that the committee also discussed the possibility of developing a 50/50 grant program for downtown buildings. The committee would form an Architectural Control Committee to review the plans of interested owners to insure that the proposed rehab met the city's vision. Carpenter suggested that the committee look into paying the interest portion of the façade loans in order to market 0% interest loans. Thompson stated that he saw a potential philosophical question of whether the board should be granting funds to private businesses. Henderson stated that this could be paralleled to the Ultimate Makeover project that offended other private owners. Maclean stated that the committee would reexamine the idea and look into more of the logistics.

Shay stated that he received a letter from Terry Murphy regarding developing a program to abate taxes for small businesses at start up to lower expenses. Shay checked with the State and did not find any such programs. He stated that the City does offer the OPRA program that freezes taxes at the pre-renovation rate, but that the timing does not work for some businesses.

Special Events/Promotions/Activities

Lyons summarized the committee notes and stated that the committee is making progress on the proposed wine tasting event. She stated that the committee thought that the business after hours crowd would be a good group to target for participation.

Building and Grounds

Thompson stated that the committee would research the signage needs for downtown, basing recommendations from the previous discussion.

The committee is also looking at the N. James St. gazebo area. Thompson has received suggestions regarding the area including adding picnic tables and additional parking. Both of these are costly changes. For now, the committee is looking at removing the excess concrete and seeding the area. Holman stated that she spoke to some of the Planning Commission members and they are interested in taking this on as a project this year.

Friday Night Live

Beutell stated that the committee has met twice and is actively searching for entertainers to be involved in this years events. Letters have also been sent out to area businesses asking for sponsors.

Ex-Officio Reports

City Manager

Shay reported that the trucking issue at House of Flavors is ongoing. He stated that the City is doing it's best to balance the needs of the community and the employer.

Shay stated that he believes snow removal downtown was better than in past years. Lyons agreed and thanked the City for its efforts.

Chamber of Commerce

Muzzin stated that the annual dinner was a huge success. She recommended that we invite a representative from the Red Door Art Gallery to the June meeting to present the Beautification Award since they were unable to attend the dinner.

Muzzin stated that PBS will be airing a Ports of Call program that is targeting beach towns on the cost of Lake Michigan. It will begin on March 9, 2006. Muzzin believes that this will be great advertisement for the City of Ludington.

Planning Commission

Holman stated that the Planning Commission will have to make a decision on the House of Flavors trucking issue at the meeting tonight due to the 100 day rule. Shay stated that he spoke with City Attorney Roger Anderson and learned that there are no repercussions if a decision is not made within the 100 days, that the rule was put in place to encourage action.

New Business

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Beutell for

Ray Janish, Secretary