DOWNTOWN LUDINGTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – September 11, 2006

John Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. in the City Municipal Building Community Room.

Members present: Tracy Thompson, Gail Lyons, Chris Pontz, Kathy Maclean, Julie Payment, Wayne Brown, Darla Keillor, Jane Carpenter and Mayor John Henderson. Also present were City Manager John Shay, Chamber of Commerce Director Alberta Muzzin, Mason County Growth Alliance CEO David Miller, Planning Commission Representative Kaye Holman, DPW/Parks Supt. Shawn McDonald and Mary Beutell. Absent were Ray Janish, Arlen McCloskey and Magee Johnson.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Brown, seconded by Keillor to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Minutes

Moved by Maclean, seconded by Payment to approve the June 5, 2006 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comments

None.

Financial Report

Moved by Thompson, seconded by Lyons to approve the finance report as written. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Business Recruiting and Retention / Marketing

Maclean stated that the Committee has received some inquiries on the façade loan program, but to date none have been approved.

Maclean presented a preliminary design for a "Welcome to Ludington" sign. The board agreed that the concept was good, but that it needed some tweaking. Maclean also stated that she and Beutell met with Tim Heinrich from Memorial Medical Center to discuss a possible location for the sign. Heinrich thought that there would be a location in front of the eastern most parking lot and agreed to take the idea to the hospital board for consideration.

Maclean stated that the Committee is requesting $3,000 for the façade program and $4,480 plus landscaping for the sign in the 2007 budget. Henderson stated that $9,000 should cover both the façade program and the sign project.

Special Events

Lyons reported that the Movies in the Park were again successful and thanked McDonald and the DPW for taking care of the flower baskets.

Lyons stated that plans for the Oktoberfest are coming together. She asked for volunteers to help with the food preparation and the activities. Keillor and Pontz agreed to volunteer. Muzzin stated that Chamber staff would prepare and serve the food.

The Committee asked for $5,000 for 2007 events.

Building and Grounds

Thompson stated that he has talked to downtown business owners and the Committee and at this time the recommendation for the gazebo area would be to remove the concrete, seed the area and possibly plant a tree.

Thompson stated that at this point there is no recommendation from the Committee on directional signage. McDonald stated that he will look into what kind of signage can be placed on the new light poles that MDOT is installing downtown.

McDonald stated that the bricks in the downtown area are settling and causing tripping hazards. He stated that the City has been involved in 3 to 4 lawsuits over the last 10 years. Maintenance to the brick areas in the past has required the bricks to be removed in order to add a new sand base to bring the level of the bricks up. McDonald is recommending removing the bricks and replacing them with a colored stamped concrete. Miller cautioned McDonald on the use of an experienced contractor based on his experience with Jackson's sidewalks and the noticeable color variations. McDonald stated that Manistee had successfully used stamped concrete in its downtown and stated that the same contractor, Carr Creek, would be used in Ludington. The cost of the concrete is $8/sq.ft. and would be paid for through the City's sidewalk budget. McDonald stated that the worst area would be replaced first, including in front of the Stearns Motor Inn and Coles Antiques.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVES

Payment stated that the Friday Night Lives were a success. She has spoken with a number of downtown businesses who were very pleased with the turnout and their sales during the events. Payment stated that the Committee is considering four events in 2007. The Committee was looking at the last two Fridays in July and the first two in August. Maclean stated that the second to last Friday in July is the Gander Mountain Fishing Tournament. The board agreed that this would not be a good date. The Committee will look at doing the fourth event the week before. The event scheduled for August 8th will coincide with the Chambers "Celebrate Ludington on the Lake" festival which will replace the Carferry Festival that was held in the past.

Muzzin stated that the Chamber received excellent feedback from residents, businesses and tourists.

Pontz stated that he has been approached about continuing the music on S. Rath later as was the case at the last Friday Night Live. The issue with this is that noise becomes a problem after 10 p.m.

Henderson stated that the Committee is going to work with the Chamber on the Santa Parade. The intention is to bring more events downtown for the evening. Possible events include caroling, snow golf, snow volleyball, ice sculptures, etc.

Muzzin stated that she has received complaints regarding the presence of Santa Claus in the downtown. She stated that it is expensive to hire a Santa Claus. Carpenter agreed to work with Muzzin to determine the feasibility and funding for Santa Claus.

The Committee requested $3,000 for the 2007 Friday Night Lives.

Ex-Officio Reports

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager John Shay stated that the grocery store project is under construction. He stated that he has a meeting scheduled with potential developers of the bowling alley block. The developers plan to construct retail businesses on the first floor, but are undecided on plans for the upper floors. The developers have looked into the feasibility of a hotel, condos or apartments.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT

Muzzin stated that Ludington was featured in a three-page article in a national magazine, Seawall Review. Maclean stated that Ludington also had a page in a magazine title Weekend Trips that discussed the fishing opportunities in Ludington.

Muzzin stated that she will be retiring in June, but has agreed to help with the Gus Macker.

New Business

The Ludington Daily News, in conjunction with the DLB will be hosting a meeting on the best practice for advertising. The idea was spurred by Terry Murphy who approached the Ludington Daily News about advertising options and assistance.

Henderson stated that he will be appointing Terry Murphy to the board to replace Magee Johnson who resigned due to scheduling conflicts. Other people interested in serving are Les Johnson, David Gibbs and Debbie Peterson.

Pontz stated that he is looking at the feasibility of having Ludington added to the folk music festival circuit that travels the Midwest. Carpenter stated that the Arts Council was looking at doing something in conjunction with the Scarecrow project and encouraged Pontz to look at doing a fall music festival.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Beutell for

Ray Janish, Secretary