# DOWNTOWN LUDINGTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – May 14, 2007

John Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. in the City Municipal Building Community Room.

Members present: Gail Lyons, Julie Payment, Wayne Brown, Darla Keillor, Terry Murphy, Jim Lindsay, Chris Pontz, Kathy Maclean and Mayor John Henderson. Also present were DPW Superintendent/Acting City Manager Shawn McDonald, Planning Commission Representative Kaye Holman, Chamber Representatives Sara Kronlein and Community Development Director Heather L. V. Loney. Absent were: Ray Janish, Arlen McCloskey, and Les Johnson.

## Approval of Agenda

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

## Minutes

Moved by Murphy, seconded by Keillor to approve the March 12, 2006 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

## Public Comments

Tammy of Martial Arts America introduced herself to the committee and stated that she had been asked to help out with some special events. She stated that she was happy to help the committee in anyway with downtown events.

## Financial Report

Mayor Henderson gave an update on the 2007 committee budget. $9,900 was budgeted for the sign, $3,700 for special events, $1,300 for movies in the park, and $4,500 for Friday Night Live events. The total collected was $35,200. The fund balance form 2006 is $31,308.

Murphy asked Mayor Henderson to explain to the committee what constituted contractual services and Administrative support.
Murphy also inquired as to when we would begin preparing the 2008 allocations. Mayor Henderson explained that tat process would be in October.

Mayor Henderson also explained the 2 mill tax capture for the DLB and that we may want to look at other funding options in the future. The committee may want to consider what funds are available under this tax structure for businesses dealing with Brownfield sites and other contamination. Discussion was had on whether not the old bowling alley block would be remodeled soon and what impact that might have on available tax incentives.

Mayor Henderson explained that we received $28,500 in revenues from the 2mill tax.

Mayor Henderson also addressed that we would be looking into what Community Development Block grant funding would be available in the future for projects. We need to find continuity for downtown.

**Committee Reports**

A. Business Recruiting/Retention/Marketing
   - Discussion regarding Welcome to Ludington Sign – Kathy stated that after speaking with West Shore Community College, the students there would be designing the sign. She has not had time to get any further on the project. Kathy asked if someone else could pick up the project from there. Wayne volunteered to take over and follow up on the sign. Terry asked if the sign could be put up without the surround and add that portion later. Mayor Henderson stated that we would have to speak with the sign installer to determine that and what the time frame is for building the base.

B. Special Events/Promotions/Activities
   - Movies in the Park – Coming along well.
   - Flower Baskets – are going up soon.
   - Oktoberfest has been scheduled for October 6, 2007 from 12-5pm. The committee will be requesting a street closure n Ludington Ave. from James to Rath for the event. We will be having a craft show, pony rides, entertainers, hot dogs, brats, a martial arts demo, and other activities. The evening portion of Oktoberfest will be coordinated with the Beer tent at Jamesport brewing company, and will incorporate the pub crawl. A T-shirt will be added to this years pub crawl.
   - A wine tasting event needs more discussion.
   - The possibility of sending out postcards was discussed. The idea would include mailing a discount card to members of a mailing list to encourage shopping downtown.
   - Marketing to Condo owners was also discussed. Terry and Julie are working on this.

C. Building and Grounds
   - Chris Pontz reported that the committee has met and come up with several items that need to be addressed.
     - Trash cans need to be put out earlier
     - Street sweeping needs to happen earlier in the spring
     - Weeds in sidewalks, cigarette butts need to be addressed. We need to do a better job of keeping the streets cleaner.
     - Committee looked at the possibility of keeping white Christmas lights up all year for ambience. Last year there were complaints about the inconsistency of lights. Shawn McDonald explained that the new lights are vandal proof and cost less to operate. Cathy expressed concern that the electric bill for the lights is paid by the DLB and might not be the best use of our money. Darla asked if we could view samples of both lights and look at the overall costs to determine what direction we should go. Jim explained that the lights could be on a timer and would only need to be on for a couple hours in the summer. Kay Holman suggested replacing all of the lights to make them consistent. A suggestion was made to test the summer light proposal to see what it would be like. Mayor Henderson asked the committee to look into costs

and bring the information back to the committee.

- The committee suggested a Directional sign to be put at the corner of James and Ludington Ave. Jim explained that this sign would direct people down James to the other businesses. Wayne stated that a sandwich board type sign might be enough to draw patrons down James Street.
- Jim addressed trash issues and that there needs to be enforcement for trash that sits out for more than 24 hours. Mayor Henderson stated that the City would put forth more effort in taking care of weeds and would like more reports to what is going on. Jim stated that each city employee could make notes of issues while they are out to aid the process.

Chris stated that the Laura Street project will happen and they are interested in cleaning up the area.

The committee also addresses the need to enforce the building codes on paint and disrepairs to buildings. We need more accountability.

D. Friday Night Live

- Julie gave an update on the events and food options.

  July 20th is the Gander Mountain Fish Tournament. A Fish Fry will be held at that event.
  July 27th event is EMS day and a pig roast will be happening.
  August 3rd event is Sidewalk sales and the Truck Pull. Empanadas will be served.
  August 10th is the mini boat show and another pig roast will be held.

  More information on the schedule of events for Friday Night Live will be given at the next meeting.

- Bike Night – Discussion on whether this is an event the DLB wants to do. The committee felt that the DLB could help support the event but should not take it over at this time. Jim asked if the committee would be putting itself in the position to take over other events for a variety of groups. Jim also stated that we need to look at the overall impact of the event. The issue was referred to the Special Events Committee.
- Christmas Parade- Last year's ornaments did not work. Mayor Henderson presented the idea of having Straight Steel make ornaments for the light posts. A sheet of possible designs was handed out to the committee. Mayor Henderson will pursue the idea.

**Other Comments**

**Ex-Officio Reports**

<u>City Manager Report</u>

Shawn McDonald stated that sidewalk clean-up will begin soon. Memorial Day is the target to have it done.

Visitor's Bureau Report

The Permanent location for the Downtown Visitors Information Center will be located at the new grocery store. The grand opening will be May 24th from 4-6pm. Business after hours will be at Michael's on that same night.

"Ask me I live her" campaign will be kicking off again. Information is available for long time residents who would like a list of questions and answers to aid summer guests.

Be a Tourist in your Hometown events will kick off on May 19th.

The Promotional piece for Ludington was placed in the Grand Rapids Press, Kalamazoo Newspaper, and in Ann Arbor. 300,000 were printed and some will be sent out in relocation packets as well.

June 10th there will be a travel writers program in the area taking tours and visiting local sites.

Planning Commission

None, tabled for Bill LaForte

**New Business**

Mayor Henderson brought up the option of forming a Communications committee to keep business and the public informed of downtown events and initiatives. Heather Loney addressed the concerns from local business owners concerning communication. The Downtown board thought a committee would be a good idea. Terry Murphy and Heather Loney will serve on that committee.

Bill LaForte addressed the committee for their support in doing the empty store front displays. Bill stated that businesses on James Street would be advertised on Ludington Avenue and those on Ludington Ave. would be advertised on James. The Committee agreed to support the idea.

Bill LaForte also mentioned the idea of looking into a Welcome to Ludington Sign that would be located on the back of the Pere Marquette Memorial near the Marina. Mayor Henderson mentioned that there may be other plans for that sign and we should not take action on it at this time.

Bill LaForte approached the committee with the idea of painting murals on the boarded up windows of downtown buildings. Terry Murphy agreed to discuss the idea with the arts council.

A Motion was made by Mayor Henderson to adjourn the meeting at 12:20pm. Support Wayne Brown. Second Chris Pontz.