DOWNTOWN LUDINGTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – December 8, 2008

City Manager John Shay 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, Terry Murphy, Kathy Maclean, Darla Keillor, Les Johnson. Also present were City Manager John Shay, Community Development Director Heather L.V. Loney, Chamber Director Kathy Maclean, CVB Director Amy Seng, Chamber Communications Director Megan Payment, Director Mason County Growth Alliance Julie Van Dyke.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Brown, seconded by Thomas to approve the agenda. Motion carried

Minutes

Moved by Murphy, seconded by Lyons to approve the November 10, 2008 minutes as presented. Holman, asked for clarification on the discussion regarding financial decisions and an itemization on the budget provided.
Motion carried.

Public Comments

Denise Nemitz and Sally Walker introduced themselves to the Board. They will be working on the new web page for Downtown Ludington and will be the contacts at the Ludington Daily News.

Financial Report

Maclean stated that the budget summary was handed out to everyone. Holman asked whether the fund balance would roll-over to the 2009 budget. City Manager Shay said that it will.
A detailed budget with misc revenue separated was requested by Holman.
A motion to accept the proposed budget was made by Thomas with support by Brown, motion carried.

Committee Reports

A. Business Recruiting/Retention/Marketing

Thomas shared an idea that the committee will begin to look at in regards to marketing Downtown Ludington. The idea is to do a monthly insert into the Sunday shopper to promote what is happening Downtown and specials hat are going on. It will also be a way to coordinate business marketing and present a unified approach to marketing Downtown and our 2009 Events. The board also has the opportunity to purchase a half page ad for $150.00 for after Christmas specials & sales and for promotion of winter events and activities. The committee will be working on the details for this idea.

B. Special Events/Promotions/Activities

Lyons addressed the need to set requirements for the flower baskets for 2009. the committee will be meeting this week to look at new event for 2009 and set event dates.

Planning for a winter carnival is in process in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. This event would be in conjunction with Indoor Sidewalk Sales in the winter.

C. Building and Grounds

Holman announced that the committee has not met on signage. The planning commission is currently looking into updating and changing some sign regulations. They will be looking to approve the changes at their February meeting after the January 8th merchant meeting input is given.

Lyons addressed the need for any regulations to reflect that the signs need to be able to stand up to the wind.

Loney mentioned that the board needs to gather a list of duties for the new Downtown Staff person. Interviews will need to happen in early spring in order to have someone in place for the 2009 season.

D. Friday Night Live/Christmas Parade

Payment reported that the Parade went well, even though it was cold. The Chili give away was good and many restaurants participated. The committee should consider sending thank you's to those who participated.

Ex-Officio Reports

City Manager Report

Shat reported that the City Council approved the Western Land purchase agreement.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Maclean reported that the parade went well and was a great partnership.

Maclean also reported that the Chamber Board held a strategic planning session. She will share that report with the Downtown Board when it is compiled.

Meghan reported on the new Winter Thaw-Out festival. It will highlight indoor sidewalk sales downtown and will happen in both Ludington & Scottville. Each community will have signature events. There will also be participation from local non-profits and other groups. More details will be distributed as events and partners are secured.

Planning Commission

Holman reported that they are currently working on signage issues. The plan is to have any changes in place for the 2009 season.

Convention and Visitors Bureau

Seng announced the Beachtowns Partnership. She explained that the program is underway and will open up opportunities for grant dollars for the area. It will create a historical heritage route from Benton harbor to Ludington.

Mason County Growth Alliance

VanDyke announced that Bill Kratz has been reassigned to this area by the MEDC. There are several workshops coming up that businesses can take advantage of. The Business Finance workshop is December 16 in Muskegon.

Van Dyke distributed the growth Alliance Newsletter and updates.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

- Diane Nemitz announced that the web site updates will be needed 2 weeks prior to the actual update. An email reminder will be sent. The new web page will be updated monthly.
- Loney distributed a list of possible 2009 events. The Special events Committee will meet to determine dates and any new events to be added to the calendar.
- Loney distributed a 2009 Downtown Business Survey for the committees input and suggestions. The survey will go out after the holiday the holiday season.
- Discussion was held over the Pink Christmas theme and the reactions of Downtown Business owners. This question will be a part of the survey. Suggestions were made to do an October event to aid this initiative. Keillor mentioned the Manistee Pink walk and how a similar event or initiative could be done here in October.

Motion by Maclean second by Brown to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by City Manager Shay at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Heather L Venzke Loney